PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SIXTH SERIES—VOLUME 120

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 1987-88

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IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
[WHICH OPENED 25 JUNE 1987]

THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 120**

THIRD VOLUME OF SESSION 1987-88

House of Commons

Monday 20 July 1987

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

TRANSPORT

Road Safety Publicity

1. **Mr. Wardle** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what are his future plans for road safety publicity.

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Paul Channon): A top priority is to reduce the number of road casualties. To do so we need the most effective mix and use of measures, including publicity. For this reason, an interdepartmental review of road safety was set up. This looked, among other things, at the role of road safety publicity in future. A copy of the review is in the Library. I shall be circulating it more widely to interested organisations next week.

Mr. Wardle: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for that reply. Is he satisfied that enough is being done to bring down the number of road casualties?

Mr. Channon: We shall never be satisfied, and we must not be complacent, but at the moment the figures are extremely encouraging. The latest figures for the first quarter of 1987, compared with the first quarter last year, show that deaths are down by 12 per cent., serious injuries are down by 13 per cent., and the casualty rate per mile is down by 13 per cent. That is very good news. It is not good enough, but it is good news.

Mr. Higgins: Does my right hon. Friend recall that some time ago his Department held a "Think Bike" publicity campaign directed at motorists? In view of the appalling standard of motor cycle riding in London, which means that motor cyclists often disregard central barriers and squeeze in between cars and barriers, will my right hon. Friend consider whether a similar advertising campaign should be directed at motor cyclists, to seek to ensure better safety records?

Mr. Channon: I shall certainly consider what my right hon. Friend has said. It is a very interesting idea. In fact, a set of leaflets on motor cycling and safety is to be launched this week as part of the Cheshire motor cycling day, which should be useful to those taking up motory cycle riding. I shall bear in mind what my right hon. Friend has suggested.

Mr. Tony Banks: Has the Secretary of State any information about the number of road accidents caused by people using car telephones? Will he consider banning the use of hand-held car telephones? Clearly they must be a contributory factor in road accidents. I should be very interested to know the thinking of the Secretary of State on this matter.

Mr. Channon: I do not think that we have any figures directly related to the number of people using car telephones when accidents occur. However, it is obviously extremely dangerous to use a car telephone while driving, and the police take a very serious view of the matter. Furthermore, I should have thought that anyone who could afford a car telephone could afford a remote microphone.

Sir Philip Goodhart: Will my right hon. Friend bear in mind the recommendation of the Select Committee on Transport that road safety publicity would be much improved if his Department would improve the collection and publicity of road accident statistics?

Mr. Channon: Yes, Sir. I shall certainly do that. I have announced some road statistics today and I hope my hon. Friend will study the interdepartmental review. I should very much welcome his views on it.

Drink-Driving Campaign

2. **Mr. Hannam** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the representions he has received on the current campaign against drinking and driving.

The Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Peter Bottomley): The effective advertising has been warmly welcomed.

I thank the media for their support. I hope they will continue to raise awareness. As my right hon. Friend has just said, we need everyone in society to highlight the dangers and stop themselves and others, wrecking people's lives.

There are suggestions of tougher police, court and legislative action. These are possibilities. The first requirement is to change public attitudes to the unacceptable crime of drinking and driving.

Mr. Hannam: I congratulate my hon. Friend on his efforts to curb drink-driving. What will be the main feature of the next campaign and will he pay particular attention to the need to educate the organisers of parties and functions to ensure that plenty of non-alcoholic drinks are available? That would prevent much unwitting over-indulgence.

Mr. Bottomley: I completely agree with my hon. Friend. We are working on further new major initiatives with the Brewers Society. Drivers need to see and notice low-alcohol or non-alcoholic drinks in pubs, clubs, restaurants and at functions on private premises. However, I should prefer people to choose not to drink before driving. They should make the choice rather than have the Government or the law make the choice for them.

Mr. Beith: Would it not be the height of irresponsibility to make fundamental changes in the licensing law without first being certain that it would not further contribute to the problem of drinking and driving? Is the Minister taking part in serious consultations on this aspect, or is there no overall Government policy on alcohol?

Mr. Bottomley: There is overall Government policy on alcohol, and it is likely to be further refined. I shall send the hon. Gentleman the excellent article by Godfrey Smith in *The Sunday Times* two weeks ago, rightly approving of the remarks which I made in public that drinking alcohol for two hours in a pub before driving is wrong and that extending drinking time to four hours or having flexible licensing hours does not make much difference to the basic decision that drivers should not drink alcohol.

Sir Bernard Braine: Is my hon. Friend concerned that the proposal to extend drinking in public houses throughout the afternoon may bring people who have drunk too much on to the road at peak travel time, particularly when many children are coming home from school?

Mr. Bottomley: My right hon. Friend, like the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith), raises a serious issue. The key issue is whether drinking alcohol before driving continues to be socially acceptable. I believe that it is not. The precise points raised by my right hon. Friend and the hon. Gentleman are matters for the Home Office.

Mr. Boyes: I welcome the Minister's remarks about drinking and driving. Will he consider introducing random breath tests? Has he had an opportunity to study the effects of random breath testing in other countries? I understand that there has been a good effect in reducing the number of deaths on the road and the number of convictions for drinking and driving. Will the hon. Gentleman consider preparing a report on that matter?

Mr. Bottomley: It is worth the House remembering that some countries which brought in random breath tests and imposed stricter limits than those that we have by law found that they did not have much effect until the public attitude changed. I ask every hon. Member to concentrate on changing the public attitude to the unacceptable crime of drinking and driving rather than to use a change of law as a talisman and substitute for each of us moderating and, if necessary, changing our behaviour.

North Devon Link Road

3. **Mr. Speller** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he is satisfied with progress on the construction of the north Devon link road; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We are making excellent progress towards completing this new 47-mile length of new road for the summer of 1989.

Mr. Speller: Is my hon. Friend aware, first, that better roads are safer roads and, secondly, that the west country is duly grateful to this Administration for at long last giving it the roads that it needs? Will my hon. Friend let me know when we may expect a start on the remaining portions of the north Devon link road?

Mr. Bottomley: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. The contract for the next section has been let and we hope that work on the Barnstaple bypass will start within a few weeks.

Miss Emma Nicholson: We are most grateful for the Bideford bridge in the constituency of Torridge and Devon, West which joins the north Devon link road. Can my hon. Friend confirm the date on which the road will be completed?

Mr. Bottomley: We hope that the road will be open by the peak summer holiday season of 1989. I know that if we can achieve that it will be as welcome as the east of Okehampton stretch, which we opened last week.

Children's Fares

4. **Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department has assessed the impact of the Transport Act 1985 on children's fares; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister of State, Department of Transport (Mr. David Mitchell): Some local authorities have used the powers introduced under the Transport Act 1985 to provide for new or improved children's concessions. But in most areas there has been no change.

Mr. Pike: Is the Minister aware of the threat posed to the future of children's fares? In Lancashire, Ribble Motor

Services is saying to Lancashire county council, "Unless you pay for this concession, we will make all children pay the full fare." This matter is to be discussed again on 28 July. Is this not an appalling situation? Will the Government give a clear indication that transport undertakings must give children a fare reduction?

Mr. Mitchell: Our information does not confirm that there has been any widespread withdrawal of such concessions. I know of only two operators who have withdrawn children's fares, and one has since reintroduced them. Ribble Motor Services has threatened to withdraw child fares, but the matter is to be discussed on 28 July. I suggest that we wait until then. It may help the hon. Gentleman if I add that new schemes introduced as a result of the Act have operated in Cleveland, East Sussex and Milton Keynes.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: Is my hon. Friend aware of the discrimination against children in the private sector of education? Before deregulation, all children in the county of Nottinghamshire were allowed a concessionary fare. As an act of political vandalism, our county discriminates and will now give that concession only to children in the maintained sector. Is that not disgraceful?

Mr. Mitchell: I agree with my hon. Friend that it is disgraceful that there should be such regrettable discrimination. The matter rests with the local authority. Perhaps my hon. Friend will succeed in changing control of it at the next election.

Mr. Worthington: Does the Minister also agree that it is deplorable for a private bus company, as has happened in Strathclyde, to withdraw that concessionary fare?

Mr. Mitchell: That is a commercial decision for the operator concerned. Under the Transport Act 1985 the local authority is empowered to make arrangements for substitution.

Mr. Adley: Does my hon. Friend agree that the impact on children's fares under the Transport Act would be as nothing compared with the impact on children's fares of any proposal emanating from Brussels to put VAT on public transport? Will my hon. Friend make it clear beyond peradventure that the Government will veto any such suggestion?

Mr. Mitchell: I note my hon. Friend's views.

Bus Deregulation

6. **Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what studies his Department has conducted on the effects of bus deregulation on urban and rural transport in the north of England.

Mr. David Mitchell: Research being carried out by the Department's Transport and Road Research Laboratory into the effects of bus deregulation includes a number of studies in the north of England, including Merseyside.

Mr. Alton: Does the Minister remember his comments on Merseyside during the general election that deregulation had not been the success there that he had hoped for? Is he aware that 36 per cent. of fare-paying passengers have been lost from the Merseyside buses since deregulation and that fares have risen by almost 50 per cent.? Will he tell the House how Merseyside passenger transport executive can continue running services when the guidelines that have been set by the Government are £36 million less than the sum that it estimates is needed for its requirements?

Mr. Mitchell: When I was on Merseyside, I said that as yet the benefits of deregulation had not become as apparent in Merseyside as I had hoped, and as I expect they will. It is true that fares on Merseyside had been kept artificially low for many years. The cost of transport service provision on Merseyside amounted to almost £50 per man, woman and child, and that huge and excessive amount is being trimmed back. Last week I met representatives of the passenger transport authority in that area, and we are considering the comments that it made.

Mr. Holt: Would my hon. Friend care to note that in Cleveland, as a consequence of deregulation, the subsidy by the ratepayers has been reduced from £5·8 million per year to £1·8 million, a saving to the ratepayers of £4 million, without any effect on the services, except perhaps to improve them?

Mr. Mitchell: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. What he says is borne out by the interim report of the Transport and Road Research Laboratory, which confirms what Ministers have been saying — that deregulation is a success. Bus mileage has been broadly maintained, there have been no massive cuts in services as forecast, the number of operators is about the same, and competition is starting to introduce new and innovative forms of service such as minibuses in over 200 towns.

Mrs. Dunwoody: Is the Minister aware that some of those advances are very unfair to people in my constituency? In rural areas, many of the bus services are much worse, the fares are much higher and, above all, it is singularly unfair on those who work in the bus industry, who are being forced to renew their contracts by a one-sided abrogation by Crosville that will lower the terms, conditions and wages of the bus men?

Mr. Mitchell: Obviously, the latter matters are for the Crosville management, not for Ministers. Many rural services are loss-making. It is for the county or the PTE to decide whether they are socially necessary and for them to make the necessary provisions.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: As the widespread perception is that deregulation has caused a severe loss of quality in bus transport, especially in rural areas, and as passenger transport authorities do not believe a word that Ministers say, does the Minister agree that an independent survey should be published as soon as possible so that we can discover what is really happening?

Mr. Mitchell: I welcome the hon. Gentleman to his new position on the Opposition Front Bench and congratulate him on reaching that particular bed of nails.

As for an independent inquiry, the TRRL will provide such a report, which I believe will be very valuable.

Channel Tunnel

7. **Ms. Quin** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how advanced the plans are for a direct rail link from Newcastle and the north-east of England to the Channel tunnel.

Mr. David Mitchell: British Rail is well aware of the commercial opportunities that the Channel tunnel will

bring to provide services from the continent to many parts of the country, including the north-east. It will be making detailed plans over the next two years.

Ms. Quin: I am disappointed at the Minister's reply. Will he give an assurance that on the day when the tunnel opens there will be a direct link to areas such as the north-east of England? Does he accept that if that is not the case, areas most in need of economic recovery will be further disadvantaged?

Mr. Mitchell: Clause 39 of the Channel Tunnel Bill requires British Rail, by the end of 1989, to produce a plan for the dispersal of passenger and freight traffic to various points in the country, subject to various commercial criteria. At present, planning is naturally at a very early stage and the pattern of services will depend on British Rail's assessment of demand.

Mr. Fallon: Will my hon. Friend confirm that the Government are investing £300 million in electrifying the east coast main line, one of the biggest infrastructure projects ever undertaken, for the benefit of the north-east? Is he further aware that industry in the north-east welcomes the Channel tunnel because it will provide a cheaper, faster freight transport link to European markets of a kind never before enjoyed?

Mr. Mitchell: Electrification of the east coast main line is the biggest investment by British Rail in 25 years, and it will bring substantial benefits to the north-east, as will the link with the Channel tunnel.

Mr. Snape: Does the Minister accept that the link is especially important for freight traffic and that it is vital that freight and inland Customs clearance depots be provided in the north-east in the short term so that rail-based traffic patterns can be established well before the tunnel opens in 1993?

Mr. Mitchell: I am expecting the director of British Rail Freight to give me some guidance this summer on the pattern of freight depots that he expects will be required. I shall take into account the point that the hon. Gentleman has made.

Heavy Traffic (London)

8. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the trend in the volume of heavy vehicle movements in and around the metropolis following the completion of London's M25 orbital motorway.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Surveys indicate that the effect of the M25 has been substantial. The number of heavy goods vehicles using London's roads has fallen by 20 per cent.

Mr. Chapman: I welcome that trend and consequence, which was a prime purpose of the London orbital motorway. Does my hon. Friend agree that the time is now propitious for the introduction of lorry action areas in at least part of the metropolis, banning heavy vehicle through traffic from inadequate roads when alternatives such as the M25 are available?

Mr. Tony Banks: The GLC lorry ban.

Mr. Bottomley: Some people who have brought their voices from the other side of the Thames seem to have forgotten that many local lorry action areas are not controversial and are well supported. I should perhaps agree with what my hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman) said.

Mr. Tony Banks: In effect, the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman) has asked for a GLC lorry ban. It is a great pity that the Minister, because of his ideological objections, has not seen fit to support that ban. What proposals do the Government have to increase the capacity of the M25, as it is clearly becoming one of the longest circular traffic jams that the country has ever seen?

Mr. Bottomley: Before ascending to the realms of fantasy, the hon. Gentleman might allow me to interpret the comments of my hon. Friend rather than doing it for me. The M25 is a circle on the map, but it is designed to be used for half its length or less. There will be a review to see what extra can be provided, but the changes already made at some junctions have helped to cope with some of the problems because half the traffic comes off at successive junctions.

Mr. Watts: When does my hon. Friend expect work to start on the widening of the M4 through my constituency——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question relates to the M25.

Mr. Watts: Yes, Mr. Speaker—which I believe was envisaged in the roads White Paper to deal with the additional volume of traffic that is generated by the M25 in the area of Heathrow?

Mr. Bottomley: I am not sure whether to answer that question. Obviously, getting extra capacity where it is needed is important. I shall try to make sure that we continue to make announcements on the widening of the M4, and, for that matter, the M25 when we can. I expect that we shall continue to see improvements without covering the whole of the countryside with concrete.

Sir George Young: Is my hon. Friend aware that, despite the welcome completion of the M25, heavy vehicles—indeed, other vehicles—move with extreme difficulty on the north circular road through Ealing? When does he propose to come to a decision on the inspector's report, which has been with his Department for about two years?

Mr. Bottomley: Shortly.

Mr. Snape: Will the Minister now reconsider his reply to his hon. Friend?

Mr. Bottomley: I do not think that that would meet with my hon. Friend's approval.

Mr. Cash: Does my hon. Friend accept that much of the jamming that takes place on the M25 and other motorways is the result of the cone cloning that has developed over the past two years? A few weeks ago I wrote to my hon. Friend about the matter, in respect of which he said that he would let me have a reply, but I have not yet received it.

Mr. Bottomley: We try, when we can, to send cones off on holiday during bank holidays. On other occasions when work is going on, as my hon. Friend will have heard from my right hon. Friend in answer to question No. 1, we take road casualty reduction seriously. We do not want to see heavy traffic going past workmen. We often see cones because concrete is hardening. There is always some good purpose for cones being there.

Air Fares and Routes (Deregulation)

10. **Mr. David Atkinson** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on progress on the deregulation of European air fares and routes.

Mr. Channon: The Transport Council was unable to adopt a unanimously agreed package of air transport liberalisation measures, which Spain blocked rather than see Gibraltar included. The Government are now doing all that they can to find ways of saving the package, without compromising the legitimate rights of the people of Gibraltar.

Mr. Atkinson: I thank my right hon. Friend for his reply. Will he assure the House that the proposals that he and his European colleagues discussed last month in Luxembourg would have resulted in true competition and lower fares? Does he agree that the proposed merger between British Airways and British Caledonian only makes the matter even more urgent to resolve?

Mr. Channon: I had better not comment on the last part of my hon. Friend's question. On the first part of his question, I can assure him that what we discussed in the Transport Council would have widened the choice of fares on European services, would have widened the choice of services, would have introduced real competition to many major routes for the first time, and would have been much in the interests of British travellers. I hope that a way can be found to achieve that.

Mr. Colvin: My right hon. Friend must have a view on whether progress towards deregulation will be helped or hindered by the proposed merger between British Caledonian and British Airways. May we hear it?

Mr. Channon: I am sure that my hon. Friend knows perfectly well that the matter is being considered by the Director General of Fair Trading. He has to report to my right hon. Friend. In the circumstances, it would be quite wrong for me to make any comment.

Mr. Skinner: Is this the same Government who, several years ago, welcomed Freddie Laker and his enterprises?

Mr. Channon: As usual, the hon. Member has put an important point.

Mr. Steen: Does the Secretary of State agree that there is little point in having deregulation if there is no competition left in this country? Will he also agree, with his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, to see the chairman of Virgin Atlantic, who is concerned about international routes, the chairman of Air Europe, who is concerned about European routes, and the chairman of British Midland Airways, who is concerned about domestic routes? Will he make sure that such a delegation is seen by him and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry before any decision is made about the British Caledonian and British Airways merger?

Mr. Channon: All those people should, in the first instance, put their views to the Director General of Fair Trading. I have some experience as Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, and I know how these things operate. It is for the Director General to make a recommendation to the Secretary of State, who can then decide whether to accept or reject it. This question deals with the deregulation of European routes, and does not go nearly as wide as my hon. Friend's question.

Mr. Robert Hughes: The Minister must realise that there is a connection between deregulation, whether internationally or in Europe, and the merger between British Caledonian and British Airways. Would it not have been much better, since, as I understand it, he was advised of the talks early last week, to have had a thorough discussion with the two airlines and with the other operators in order to arrive at a sensible and rational solution to the issues, instead of the unseemly scramble that is going on to try to get routes from British Caledonian and British Airways? If the matter is to go to the Director General of Fair Trading, will the Minister advise the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to make a reference quickly so that the matter can be resolved as early as possible in the interests of all those concerned in airline aviation?

Mr. Channon: I take note of what the hon. Gentleman has said, and I am sure that my right hon. Friend will consider the hon. Gentleman's representation. This question deals with the deregulation of European air fares and routes. The House might be interested to know that British Airways serves 52 European destinations from London. British Caledonian serves eight, and competes with British Airways on seven of them.

Local Authority Airports

11. **Sir Fergus Montgomery** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what has been the total capital expenditure at local authority airports since 1979.

Mr. Channon: Since 1979, capital investment at local authority airports has totalled more than £260 million.

Sir Fergus Montgomery: How much did the Labour Government invest in local authority airports? How much of the £260 million was invested in Manchester airport?

Mr. Channon: The Labour Government invested about £16 million, as opposed to the £260 million invested under the Conservative Administration. Of the £260 million, £93 million was invested at Manchester alone.

Mr. Alton: Will the Secretary of State confirm that Liverpool airport, which is owned by the local authority, is having to meet repayment charges on revenue of about £3 million a year and debt charges of £2 million a year? What additional assistance can be given to Liverpool airport? Where does it fit in his plan for regional airport policy, and what is being done to resolve the shareholding issue among the five district councils?

Mr. Channon: I want Liverpool airport to be run by a Companies Act company very soon. The passenger transport authority has so far failed to produce a scheme which transfers ownership of the shell company which it formed to the five Merseyside district councils. I am urgently considering what action to take in respect of the problems at Liverpool.

Mr. Ashby: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is very necessary for those airports to continue their investment, and does he envisage that investment coming from the private sector? Will he ensure that the local authorities float their shares on the public market so that we can have wider share ownership and financing for the necessary investment from the private sector rather than the public sector?

Mr. Channon: It is a matter for the local authorities. They now have the advantage of powers to privatise their airports. It has not so far been suggested that there should be compulsory privatisation of local authority airports, but I have considerable sympathy with what my hon. Friend said about private sector investment.

Mr. John Evans: Will the Secretary of State give the House an undertaking that he does not intend to introduce legislation which would force the local authorities to relinquish control of Manchester airport?

Mr. Channon: That is not an issue at present. Manchester airport has received investment of £93 million since the Conservative Government came to office, so no one can doubt our desire that Manchester airport should flourish and be an outstanding success, which it is.

Mr. John Mark Taylor: If my right hon. Friend is interested in the welfare of east midlands airports, does he believe that it would be advantageous for the northern continuation of the M42 to be a motorway, not a dual carriageway?

Mr. Channon: That is a very ingenious question. I shall look at the matter urgently.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: Does the Secretary of State recognise that the £93 million worth of investment in Manchester airport was done by the local authority and had nothing to do with the Government? Will he answer the question posed by my hon. Friend the Member for St. Helens, North (Mr. Evans) and say categorically that the Government will not allow plans for the privatisation of Manchester and similar municipal airports?

Mr. Channon: I have no current plans to privatise compulsorily local airports. Indeed, I cannot understand why Opposition Members make such a fuss about it.

Uninsured Drivers

12. **Mr. Nicholas Baker** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what action he will take to reduce the number of uninsured drivers on roads in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Driving without insurance is illegal. Reducing uninsured driving involves vehicle owners and drivers, insurers, enforcement authorities and the Government. The road traffic law review is considering possible changes to penalties, including those for insurance offences.

Mr. Baker: Is my hon. Friend aware of estimates suggesting that there are no fewer than 1 million uninsured drivers on the roads? Is he also aware that the insured drivers cough up and have to pay about £30 million a year towards the cost of meeting claims in respect of those uninsured drivers? Is it not time to consider a scheme whereby drivers are required to display on their vehicles some sort of disc to show that they have insurance cover?

Mr. Bottomley: The difficulty is that our insurance system varies from those of other countries that have such a system. Our insurance policies can contain exclusion clauses so that the vehicle may be covered for one driver, but not for others. The insurance would need to be vehicle-specific. Perhaps I can write to my hon. Friend giving details of some of the inhibitions.

Roads Programme

13. **Mr. William Powell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what additions have been made to the roads programme in the last 12 months.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Since 1 July 1986, 86 schemes have been added to the trunk road construction programme. Details are given in the roads policy White Paper, Cm. 125, published on 28 April 1987.

Mr. Powell: Is my hon. Friend aware of how welcome the improvements and additions have been in the county of Northamptonshire, especially in the eastern part of the county, and not least the A1-M1 link the construction of which will begin shortly? Will my hon. Friend accept that the huge industrial and commercial success of the town of Corby is making it necessary for the roads in the Stamford and Peterborough areas to be considerably improved so that the carriageway to parts of Boston and King's Lynn, and further across Norfolk, can be made a great deal easier than is currently the case?

Mr. Bottomley: I cannot give a detailed answer to the second part of my hon. Friend's question. However, on the first part, it is true that better roads help economic development as well as road safety and the improvement of the environment. The Government intend to continue to manage the economy so that we can continue to have gradual improvements to the road network.

Mr. Haynes: The Minister knows full well that the Government are providing money for the extension of the road surface programme. However, when will the Minister have a word with the Secretary of State so that he will ask at Cabinet meetings for the provision of money for resurfacing roads when that is required? The roads in my constituency are full of potholes. The Secretary of State should be ashamed of himself. He should open his mouth in Cabinet meetings so that we can have such holes filled in.

Mr. Bottomley: My right hon. Friend is responsible for about 4 per cent. of the road network. The other 96 per cent. is the responsibility of the local authorities——

Mr. Haynes: The Government have cut the rate support grant.

Mr. Bottomley: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will allow me to finish. The amount of money that has been spent on road maintenance has increased under the Government in roughly inverse proportion to the amount that was cut by the Labour Government. I hope that we shall receive the hon. Gentleman's support for what we are doing and for our continuation in office.

Mr. Boswell: While accepting that the A1-M1 link is now to be a fact, will my hon. Friend give us the firmest possible assurance that he will treat the problems of the intervening villages along the access roads with the greatest possible sensitivity, because there is great concern?

Mr. Bottomley: On both the national roads and in our dealings with local authorities about local highways we try to make sure that the greatest advantage is taken from improved roads such as the A1-M1 link.

Mr. Hood: Is the Minister aware that the most dangerous stretch of roadway in Britain is the A74, which is connected to the M74 in Scotland, 32 miles of which go

through my constituency? Is he also aware that the Conservative manifesto for Scotland pledged to upgrade the A74 to the M74? People are still being killed on that roadway and as recently as last week a family of three were wiped out. Will the Government carry out their commitment to upgrade that roadway to motorway category as soon as possible, because we are now told that it might take 10 years. That is not acceptable. The Government must complete that roadway to save people's lives.

Mr. Bottomley: I fully understand why the hon. Gentleman makes those points, but they would be more appropriately made to my hon. Friend the Minister responsible for roads in Scotland. The hon. Gentleman emphasised the point that, with more than 5,000 people killed on our roads a year, many lives may be saved by having roads built to the appropriate standard, whether low-cost, high-return engineering work, motorways or something in the spectrum in between. I shall continue to do what I can, as will my colleague in the Scottish Office.

Routes and Road Improvement

14. **Mr. Squire** asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will review the scope for reducing delays in the procedure for determining routes for road improvements; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Bottomley: All pre-construction procedures are kept under continuous review with the aim of minimising the time taken and improving efficiency.

Mr. Squire: I thank my hon. Friend for that answer. As he is aware, in the time since I tabled the question my hon. Friend has announced after 13 years the re-routing long sought by my constituents in Rainham, for which I am grateful, as are they. Nevertheless, will he consider, on reflection, that 13 years is rather a long time to await such a decision for which we pressed in 1975?

Mr. Bottomley: Yes, Sir.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

State Security

56. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Attorney-General if he will request the Director of Public Prosecutions to reach a decision on prosecution by 24 July in the case involving the search of BBC premises in Glasgow in relation to the Zircon satelite project.

The Attorney-General (Sir Patrick Mayhew): The Director will reach his decision, if necessary in consultation with me, when all the relevant police inquiries have been completed and the evidence obtained has been carefully considered.

Mr. Dalyell: When will the Zircon material currently in the possession of the police be returned to the BBC?

The Attorney-General: That is a matter for the police on which I am not qualified to reply today.

Mr. Hayes: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that if the police had not searched the BBC premises they would have been accused of incompetence and endangering national security?

The Attorney-General: Critics of the police, to say nothing of the Law Officers, do not lack versatility.

Mr. Galloway: This invasion of BBC Scotland took place in my constituency and one of the makers of the Zircon film, Mr. Brian Barr — a film maker of distinction — is one of my constituents. Is the Attorney-General aware of the deep sense of violation which is still felt in BBC Scotland about this raid and the unjustified cloud of anxiety about prosecution that still hangs over my constituent and his family? When will this sinister farce be brought to an end and the book on this matter closed?

The Attorney-General: Responsibility for a possible prosecution rests with me, as I superintend the Director of Public Prosecutions. I repeat the answer that I gave, which is that the Director of Public Prosecutions will reach his decision, if necessary in consultation with me, when all the relevant police inquiries have been completed and the evidence obtained has been carefully considered.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that many Conservative Members are delighted that the police raided the BBC and that we accept that the BBC is not above the law on matters of national security?

The Attorney-General: The Director of Public Prosecutions makes any request to the police for investigations, regardless of any partisan considerations. He acts impartially, as do the police, in all circumstances.

Mr. John Morris: When will the decision be taken?

The Attorney-General: I hesitate to give the same answer three times in one Question Time, but, as I have said, the decision will be taken when all the evidence has been fully considered. I intend next to meet the Director of Public Prosecutions on this matter later this week.

Mr. Dalyell: In view of that unsatisfactory reply, I beg to give notice that I shall seek to raise the matter on the Adjournment.

Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984

57. **Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on progress on the working of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act provisions for overnight prisoners in police stations and their access to legal advice.

The Solicitor-General (Sir Nicholas Lyell): Arrangements are now well established to enable prisoners in police stations to have access to free legal advice, day or night. Cases before 88 per cent. of all magistrates' courts and 94 per cent. of busy courts now originate in police stations covered by a duty solicitor service. The Law Society continues to encourage improved coverage at local level.

Mr. Taylor: Will my hon. and learned Friend take note of the fact that the overnight duty solicitor scheme, far from providing advice and assistance to suspects whose civil liberties might be at risk, is being exploited by old lags who could perfectly well wait until 9 o'clock in the morning? Surely that is not the intention of the scheme and is not good for the morale of that scheme.

The Solicitor-General: The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 constitutes a balance between proper and effective powers for the police, which may get the old lag into the police station, and a safeguard of the rights

and liberties of the subject. The right of access to legal advice is an important safeguard. We believe that that balance is working well.

Mr. Fraser: Will the Solicitor-General discourage the police from the practice of taking incriminating statements oral or written first, and then allowing the prisoner access to legal advice?

The Solicitor-General: I warmly welcome the hon. Gentleman to his new post. The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and the code of practice are perfectly clear as to the right to legal advice, and they should be followed.

Mr. Hind: Will my hon. and learned Friend consider a review of the procedures of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act relating to the detention of prisoners at a police station and the interviews in the light of the fact that so many hours are being spent by police officers on those statements? That task is reducing the effectiveness of policing on the streets and is causing widespread worry among the police force and the public.

The Solicitor-General: I note carefully what my hon. Friend has said. Our evidence is that the Police and Criminal Evidence Act is, on the whole, working well. However, I shall take my hon. Friend's remarks into account.

Official Secrets Act

58. **Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Attorney-General how many prosecutions under the Official Secrets Acts he has instituted in 1987.

The Attorney-General: Since becoming Attorney-General I have not consented to any such prosecution.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: If Wright's allegations have damaged the security service, which was part of Sir Robert Armstrong's case in the Australian courts, why have no prosecutions under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act been brought against *The Observer*, *The Guardian*, the *Sunday Telegraph*, *The Sunday Times*, the *Daily Mirror*, the *London Daily News* and *The London Evening Standard*? Could the answer be that the Attorney-General knows that when he brings proceedings for criminal contempt and injunctions there are no juries to adjudicate and examine those matters, whereas if he brings the case under the Official Secrets Act there will be a jury and he knows well that the courts and the juries would simply reject his whole case?

The Attorney-General: The hon. Gentleman is very ingenious at constructing any number of potential reasons for the exercise of the discretion of the Law Officers. These are matters for discretion and, at present, I take responsibility for them.

Mr. Aitken: Given the tidal wave of legal actions that are now going on around the world on such issues as what is and is not an official secret, or what the press may or may not publish, does it not worry my right hon. and learned Friend that these issues are being resolved and new law being made ostensibly by the judges while Parliament declines to reform the now discredited Official Secrets Act? Surely it is time for Parliament to make the rules and draw the lines in clear places.

The Attorney-General: My hon. Friend is aware that responsibility for any reform of the Official Secrets Act lies with my hon. Friend the Home Secretary. Equally, he knows that the predecessor Conservative Government attempted that reform, but it did not find favour in the House of Lords. Meanwhile, the Attorney-General, as first Law Officer of the Crown, has a duty to ensure that the due administration of justice is not interfered with. The Government, collectively, have the responsibility to take such steps as seem appropriate to protect the duty of confidentiality owed by former members of the secret service.

Mr. Beith: When are the Government going to cut their losses on the Peter Wright case and recognise that the amount of material already available and the significance of the issues raised totally outweigh the Government's capacity, now virtually non-existent, to strengthen the issue of confidentiality by further legal proceedings?

The Attorney-General: I am criticised for losing in the courts—as I was by the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) on "Newsnight" last Tuesday and I am criticised for winning, as I did in the Court of Appeal on Wednesday. I do not believe that the hon. Gentleman's question can be answered until we see whether, and if so to what extent, the Government have lost.

Mr. Favell: Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that Mr. Peter Wright is regarded by many people in this country as a squalid little man who has betrayed his oath and now will betray his country, and that others should be deterred from doing exactly the same thing?

The Attorney-General: I must hold to the practice of myself and my immediate predecessor of not commenting on matters that remain in issue in the Australian proceedings.

Mr. John Morris: While I would expect the Attorney-General to say that the Prime Minister has no hand in prosecutions under the Official Secrets Act, can he give the same assurance regarding the inference that, had the Court of Appeal ruled against the Government last week the Prime Minister would have instructed him to obtain an injunction against *The Sunday Times*, and the further inference that could be drawn from the Treasury solicitor's call to Theodore Goddard, *The Sunday Times* solicitor? Do the inferences that the Prime Minister was involved have no basis?

The Attorney-General: I can answer that question clearly by referring the right hon. and learned Gentleman to the written answer given to him on 8 December last year by my immediate predecessor. In matters that relate to proceedings of a criminal nature, which embraces criminal contempt, proceedings and the question whether to take them are entirely a matter for the Attorney-General. The proceedings that I took on Sunday last and Thursday last week fell into that category. They were taken by me without reference to the Prime Minister or any other Minister. Civil proceedings to protect by injunction the duty of confidentiality, to which I referred this afternoon, are a matter for the Government collectively. The Prime Minister, other Ministers and myself properly have a say in those matters.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Aid-Trade Provision

61. **Mr. Holland** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures he is taking to ensure that overseas aid spending through the aid-trade provision serves the development needs of the overseas countries concerned; and what share of official development assistance has been absorbed by the aid-trade provision in the latest available 12-month period, relative to 1979-80.

The Minister for Overseas Development (Mr. Chris Patten): Our appraisal procedures are designed to ensure that ATP projects represent a sound investment for the recipient country. In 1979-80, expenditure on ATP was approximately £29 million, or about 3·5 per cent. of the total gross aid programme. In 1986-87, expenditure on ATP was approximately £81·3 million, or about 65 per cent. – I meant to say, 6·5 per cent. – of the total gross aid programme.

Mr. Holland: We hope that the ATP will not rise to 65 per cent. of the aid programme. However, it is clear that the long-term trend under the Government is that it has risen, is rising and is likely to rise still further. I commiserate with the Minister, granted the attack by the Minister for Trade on the development criteria for ATP, as reported in Wednesday's edition of the *Financial Times*. He should be concerned to ensure that development context of ATP provision. If he does, I am sure that he will have the support of both sides of the House and of my hon. Friend the Member for Eccles (Miss Lestor), whom we welcome to the Front Bench.

Mr. Patten: I wish the hon. Gentleman well, although not too well, in his new responsibilities. I read the characteristically supportive speech by my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade, to which the hon. Gentleman drew attention. As I said at our previous Question Time, we shall respond to the report of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs in due course. I know that the Department of Trade and Industry will make a valuable contribution to the Government's response to that report.

Mr. Raison: Does my hon. Friend agree that it is much better that decisions about the allocation of ATP money should be made by him, with proper regard to developmental considerations, than by my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade?

Mr. Patten: I note my right hon. Friend's remarks. As I said, we shall respond to the FAC report in due course, but I should not want in any way to criticise my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade.

Refugees (UN Aid)

63. **Mr. Mullin** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he proposes to take in the light of of the recent Oxfam paper on the use of United Nations aid to refugees on the Thai-Kampuchean border, a copy of which has been sent to him.

Mr. Chris Patten: The refugees on the Thai-Cambodian border, who are there as a result of Vietnamese military operations in Cambodia, have no means of support other than the international humanitarian assistance provided by donor countries such as Britain. Most of that assistance is channelled through United Nations agencies. We shall continue our contribution to the international relief effort for the refugees and our political support for efforts aimed at securing a peaceful solution to the problem.

Mr. Mullin: Does the Minister not consider it shameful that British taxpayers' money is supporting what is in effect a front organisation for the Khmer Rouge and Pol Pot?

Mr. Patten: No, because it is not.

Mr. Alton: Is the Minister aware that the Jesuit Refugee Service estimates that there are now about 386,000 displaced persons in Thailand, 54,000 of whom are Kampucheans? Can he say that the Government will not take into account political considerations when determining what aid to give those people who are living in squalid conditions in refugee camps? What help are the Government giving to ensure that a political initiative is taken whereby Vietnamese troops will be withdrawn from Kampuchea?

Mr. Patten: We have provided £13 million through United Nations agencies and international relief organisations for refugee programmes in the area. I agree with what the hon. Gentleman said about the importance of continuing to give that humanitarian assistance. We are also prepared to consider humanitarian assistance projects within Cambodia, but we are not prepared to consider support for developmental projects in Cambodia that would support the Government there and the occupying forces of Vietnam.

UN Children's Fund

65. **Mr. Tom Clarke** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his policy towards the United Nations children's fund's proposals entitled "Adjustment with a Human Face"; and if Her Majesty's Government will promote these policies at the forthcoming annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Mr. Chris Patten: We share the concern of the United Nations children's fund for the welfare of the poorest people when developing countries are carrying out structural adjustment. At the annual meeting of the IMF and World Bank we shall continue to encourage Governments to take steps which will protect the poorest vulnerable groups during adjustment. But without adjustment, continuing economic decline would deepen poverty for many poor people.

Mr. Clarke: Is the Minister aware that hon. Members will welcome the Chancellor's spoken initiatives on African debt, based as they no doubt are on Judith Hart's negotiating achievements? Does he accept that there is a crying need for the Chancellor to press hard on the call for a more equitable approach to structural adjustment, and that he will be given a brilliant opportunity to do that at the important meetings in Washington?

Mr. Patten: I hope that we shall be able to follow up what was said at the spring and the autumn meetings of the fund and the bank, to which the hon. Gentleman referred. He is quite right to draw attention to the

important initiative that my right hon. Friend has taken on African debt. I very much hope that that initiative will receive the support that it deserves from other countries.

Developing Countries (Aid)

Miss Lestor asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will next be meeting Ministers at the development assistance committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to review aid flows to developing countries.

Mr. Chris Patten: I expect to attend this year's high level meeting of the development assistance committee in early December.

Miss Lestor: Does the Minister agree that the people of this country have responded incredibly well to all the efforts that have been made to combat some of the terrible tragedies that have occurred in the Third world? Does he not therefore think it a good idea, when he attends the discussions, to set a target of reaching 0·7 per cent. of gross national product as aid in order to encourage these people? Repeatedly, we see reports of the declining level of our aid, which must bring no comfort to the Third world and even less to the people of this country, who have responded so well to the appeals that have been made.

Mr. Patten: May I begin by welcoming the hon. Lady to her new responsibilities. I know that she is highly knowledgeable about the subject on which she will be speaking.

I agree with the hon. Lady about the response of the public to appeals for assistance for other countries. I am also pleased that at the last development assistance committee review of British aid, the DAC complimented the continued high concessionality of the British aid programme, the large share of our resources that is devoted to multilateral programmes and the relatively large proportion of our aid budget that goes to the poorest countries, compared to the OECD average. We have a quality aid programme, and I am pleased to be responsible for it.

Mr. Latham: When my hon. Friend next meets his fellow Ministers will he discuss with them what can be done to help Zambia, so as to persuade it to stop blocking funds due to be repatriated to this country to constituents of hon. Members, such as one of mine, who is currently on supplementary benefit?

Mr. Patten: I note what my hon. Friend has said. I have taken up the issue of remittances with a number of Governments in sub-Saharan Africa and will do so again when I have the opportunity.

Aid Statistics

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has as to the combined average percentage of gross national product given to developing countries as official aid by Belgium, France, Holland, Italy and West Germany.

Mr. Chris Patten: Total net official development assistance provided by Belgium, France, Holland, Italy and West Germany, as a proportion of their combined GNP, is estimated to have been 0·55 per cent. in 1986.

Ms. Ruddock: Does the Minister accept that that percentage is considerably in excess of what Britain is making available? Does he realise that, notwithstanding his earlier answer about the quality of our aid, quantity is clearly important? What steps will be take to ensure that Britain's aid to the poorest countries is increased to a higher proportion of our GNP, and when will it reach the United Nations recommended level of 0·7 per cent. of GNP?

Mr. Patten: Our position is exactly the same as that of all previous Governments, who have not been able to give a timetable for achieving the target. The hon. Lady mentioned the proportion of our aid budget going to the poorest countries and I am sure that she will have noted what I said to the hon. Member for Eccles (Miss Lestor).

Mr. Forth: Does my hon. Friend agree that aid given voluntarily by individuals is intrinsically of much more value than taxes levied on an unwilling population and distributed according to an arbitrary figure decided by outside sources? Will he encourage individual giving to charities of people's choice as the best means of helping the Third world?

Mr. Patten: I believe that individual giving and contributions by the taxpayer can make an important contribution to the development of countries that are less advantaged than our own.

African Agriculture

68. **Sir Russell Johnston** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his Department's aid to African agriculture.

Mr. Chris Patten: Preliminary estimates indicate that some 30 per cent. of our bilateral aid programme for Africa in 1986 was spent on agriculture and related activities, and that total British aid expenditure on these activities last year, through both bilateral and multilateral channels taken together, amounted to about £140 million.

Sir Russell Johnston: Nevertheless, does the Minister agree that small-scale agricultural development is vital in establishing self-sufficiency in food in African countries and that in 1984 only 15 per cent. of our bilateral aid was allocated to agriculture and related economic developments, compared with about 55 per cent. that was devoted to energy developments?

Mr. Patten: I am not sure that I can agree with the hon. Gentleman's figures. About 30 per cent. of our bilateral programme goes to agriculture and related projects in Africa. I agree with him about the importance of supporting small-scale agriculture, and agriculture generally. That is why we made a contribution to the International Fund for Agricultural Development's special programme for Africa. That was one of the motivations in our successful efforts to reform the European Community's food aid policy.

Mr. Peter Wright (Memoirs)

3.32 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the Prime Minister's recent role in the Peter Wright case."

I have to persuade you, Mr. Speaker, that the matter is definite, important and urgent. It is definite, because news has come into the public domain that shortly before 3 pm on Wednesday 8 July the Treasury Solicitor's office contacted Theodore Goddard, solicitors, informing them:

"The Prime Minister is tied up for the next hour or so. But as soon as she comes free, I anticipate being told to ask you for an undertaking not to publish any further extracts from Wright's book."

At about 4 pm on the same day, the Treasury Solicitor's office called Theodore Goddard and demanded just such an undertaking by 5.30 that afternoon.

I have to persuade you, Mr. Speaker, that the matter is important. It would appear to be an example of the Prime Minister stepping into what Parliament has always believed to be the sphere of decision-making of a Law Officer, as a Law Officer. Is it not clear that, in the absence of a subsequent decision by the Appeal Court, the Attorney-General would have been in the position of having been instructed by the Prime Minister to seek an injunction? Of course, we cannot know what the Attorney-General's reaction would have been.

I also have to persuade you, Mr. Speaker, that the matter should have urgent consideration. Surely any prima facie case of the blatant abuse of a Law Officer's responsibilities as a Law Officer by a Prime Minister or any other Minister ought to be a matter of urgency for the House. During questions you will have perceived, Mr. Speaker, that when the straight question was very properly asked from the Opposition Front Bench by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) no answer was forthcoming other than a reference to a parliamentary reply on 8 December. Thanks to the Library, I have in my hand just two of the replies and there may be a third. Certainly, one of them has nothing to do with the Prime Minister. Ministers get into the habit of making references to previous replies that do not answer the question that was asked. On this occasion the question stated:

"Mr. John Morris asked the Prime Minister what are the current instructions to Departments as to the need to consult the Attorney-General when questions of public interest arise; and if there has been any change since the present Government took office."

The Prime Minister replied:

"Appropriate steps will continue to be taken to see that Departments are aware of the Attorney-General's responsibilities and functions." — [*Official Report*, 8 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. *4-5*.]

In this case, that clearly has not happened.

The behaviour of a Prime Minister in her public capacity is a matter of lasting importance for Members of the House of Commons, and it is on that basis that I believe that you ought to consider giving this matter precedence.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he thinks should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the Prime Minister's recent role in the Peter Wright case."

I have listened with great care to what the hon. Gentleman has said, but I regret that I do not consider the matter that he has raised to be appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20, and I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House.

Orders of the Day

Finance Bill

As amended, considered.

New Clause 1

TRANSFER PAYMENTS AND PRESERVED BENEFITS

'(1) It shall be permissible for the trustees of a pension scheme which is an exempt approved scheme under section 21 of the Finance Act 1970, to amend the rules of the scheme in regard to the calculation of transfer payments and of preserved benefits on behalf of any member ending pensionable service before the normal age of retirement under the scheme in accordance with the provisions of this section.

(2) For the purposes of this section "trustees", in relation to a scheme which is not set up or established under a trust means the managers or administrators of the scheme.

(3) To comply with the provisions of this section, the amended rules of the scheme shall require the trustees in respect of any member withdrawing from pensionable service before the normal age of retirement under the rules of the scheme at the withdrawing members' option either—

(a) to pay to an approved scheme a transfer payment in respect of the withdrawing members' entitlement of the sum that would be required by the withdrawing member's scheme for the purpose of admitting a new member of the same age, sex and pensionable remuneration as the withdrawing member in order to credit him with the same number of years pensionable service as the withdrawing member, (but subject to modification in accordance with (4) below), or

(b) to award preserved benefits to the withdrawing member of the same actuarial value as that sum.

(4) In a case where an actuary certifies that on the date of the certificate the scheme is not fully funded, (which is to say that the scheme does not have sufficient assets to meet its liabilities in respect of the whole or any specified part of the accrued rights to benefit of its members), the transfer payment, or as the case may be, the part of the transfer payment which corresponds with that specified part of those accrued rights, may be reduced by the percentage by which the scheme is so shown to be deficient.

(5) A scheme which after 1st January 1988 does not have rules so that the transfer payments and the preserved benefits payable under the scheme are to be calculated on terms at least as favourable to the beneficiaries as those specified in this section shall not qualify as an exempt approved scheme in respect of liabilities incurred after that date except by the permission of the Occupational Pensions Board.

(6) The trustees of an exempt approved scheme may apply to the Occupational Pensions Board for deferment of the latest date for the amendment of its rules in accordance with this section and to retain its status as an exempt approved scheme in respect of its liabilities incurred after that date to a date not later than 1st January 1989.

(7) The Secretary of State for Health and Social Security shall lay before Parliament regulations under this section subject to affirmative resolution of the House of Commons which shall specify the grounds on which the Occupational Pensions Board may approve applications for deferment under subsection (6) above.'. — *[Sir Brandon Rhys Williams.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

3.37 pm

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams (Kensington): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time. I am very glad to express my thanks to you, Mr. Speaker, for selecting for debate this afternoon my new clause 1. Perhaps I could explain my reasons for being especially grateful. They are that, in Committee, I embarked on a somewhat similar proposal and had the opportunity to express preliminary thoughts on the question of transfer payments in occupational pension schemes. As I pointed out in the course of the speech that I made in Committee, I was attempting to discuss the rules for dealing with early leavers who changed their jobs in relation to the new type of pension scheme that is introduced by this Bill. I took care not to expand too much on the ways in which I though we should deal with the transfer payments of people who are in the more conventionai and long-standing occupational pension schemes.

We have had private sector occupational pension schemes funded by employers certainly since the 1920s. After the war, the movement expanded considerably. I think that the numbers involved in occupational pension schemes in the private sector probably reached their peak of somewhat more than 12 million employees during the 1960s. Since then, the expansion in the numbers of people in occupational pension schemes in the private sector has been rather disappointing. I think that the tendency, if anything, has been somewhat downwards. The value of the assets of people in the private sector schemes has enormously increased, however, not just because of inflation but because employers have steadily improved the quality of these schemes. Therefore, with the passage of years the stake of an employee who leaves his job early has grown enormously in real value.

Without wishing to speak too long on this subject, I should like to say why I think that first-class employers, who set up schemes which they intended to be excellent pension schemes, have fallen into the error of producing rules for their pension fund trustees that are extremely unfortunate for early leavers. These rules are working against the best interests of industry and business, because, by confining people in jobs where they are not particularly happy or where they do not feel that they are achieving as much as they could, rather than giving them all the freedom possible to better themselves by taking other employment and participating in other pension funds, the schemes have had a restrictive effect. Undoubtedly, many people today are working out their time in the service of an employer where they are not earning as much as they could or contributing as much as they should because they have found on making the calculation that the loss of their pension rights is so serious that they would be better to carry on doing a dull job that does not fully stretch them rather than to take the leap into a new firm, with all the risks that go with taking a new job, and certainly forfeit a large part of their pension rights.

A number of years ago I calculated that by the time an employee who is in the sort of job where he would expect to have a regular increment in his salary, as he progresses in the firm, and reaches middle life, the value of his assets in his pension fund is likely to be at least as great as the value of his house. If we imagine the reaction of an employee who was asked to write off the value of his house in changing his job, we then realise that we are anchoring potential mobile senior executives in pension funds and ensuring that they are not able to extricate their real asset.

The schemes have grown up wth this unfortunate built-in feature because in the 1920s and subsequently it was thought progressive and ideal to copy the features of the public sector pension schemes which were set up in the 19th century. I believe that this was a mistake, although one might say that the Civil Service scheme of the 19th century was an extremely handsome benefit. I do not think

that it was appropriate in the private sector, however, and although I do not want to dwell on this for too long I think that it is a good thing to realise why we have the problem that we have, which the new clause is attempting to overcome.

The Government schemes that were set up in Victorian times were unfunded schemes. The taxpayer took on the obligation of meeting Civil Service pensions as and when they became payable, and did not put money aside in a real sense to accumulate on behalf of the beneficiaries. The taxpayer simply accepted a rising obligation, and when the officials concerned retired, the taxpayer met that obligation out of current revenue. There was no way in the public sector schemes of identifying a real personal asset belonging to any individual employee. That was not the way in which those schemes operated.

There was a disadvantage with such schemes, because they did not add anything to real saving by the community and equally did not produce a class of people, or a tradition, directed to managing pension funds in the same way as occupational pension schemes, which rely on a real asset accumulating and increasing year by year as the liabilities of the scheme increased. That has obviously had to happen in the private sector.

We did not come to private sector schemes with a ready-made theory about the way in which funds should be managed and the individual assets of individual employees could be identified. The public sector scheme just did not lend itself to that type of thinking. When it comes to argument about the valuation of the rights of early leavers in private sector schemes, we have no tradition to build on when determining the way in which these things should be dealt with in the private sector.

The other big mistake, as it seems to me, from the start in the public sector schemes was that they were final salary schemes. This, of course, was intended to be generous. Somebody who rises to considerable seniority in the public sector becomes accustomed to a high income, and to fall on retirement to a much lower standard of living would be harsh and unsuitable. The idea that the pension scheme gives continuity in retirement—at any rate, something like a half or two thirds of final pay—was seen to be a humane and reasonable aspect of personnel management in the public sector.

A final salary scheme which is unfunded can be as generous as it pleases to the high risers—or the people who end up on very substantial salaries. Attention is not drawn to the fact that a final salary scheme is a money transfer scheme if it in fact relies on a fund. If a real fund has accumulated for all the beneficiaries in common and there is a final salary handout, that fund is given preferentially to the people who have risen to the top, to the disadvantage of the people who have remained on relatively humble salaries.

There is an undesirable money transfer going on in the private sector final salary schemes which people do not entirely detect. However, it tends to make the calculation of each individual's entitlement at any one time difficult, because it rests on a fund held in common. It is not like a bank account, where everybody who has money in the bank has an identifiable asset. It is a common fund where assets are constantly sliding from one person to another according to his rate of promotion within the type of employment covered by the scheme.

Another anomaly in the final salary scheme is that young people tend to put contributions in and those contributions are used to pay the pensions of older people in retirement, so there is a money transfer going on from young to old people as well. That also makes valuation difficult for people who might be regarded as oddities—people who do not stay until the normal age of retirement in the scheme but choose to make other plans for themselves in middle life.

The non-contributory character of public sector schemes has been imitated in private sector schemes. Here again, we see an origin in thoroughly muddled thinking, as I tried to point out in Committee, the non-contributory schemes in the private sector are not genuinely such. It is a commonplace in personnel management that a non-contributory pension scheme is reflected in the salaries or wages paid to its members. If one has a handsome pension on its way, to which one is not apparently contributing, one can reasonably expect to have somewhat lower remuneration than someone in comparable employment with an employer who requires him to make contributions which come out of his gross earnings.

In public sector schemes, it is hard to identify any part of the fund as belonging to any individual person—particularly the early leaver. But some 12 million people are now in private sector funded schemes. I am reliably informed that the total liabilities of the private sector funded schemes—I am not including the obligations of the taxpayer to public servants—have now reached over £200,000 million. If the true figure is anything like that, the House will agree that we are talking about very substantial sums belonging to the 12 million people who are building up claims on these funds. Therefore, for an employee to lose his rights or forfeit part of his rights, even in a move of job which appears to be good in his immediate circumstances—can be an extremely serious or even a financially disastrous matter in the long run.

It may also help the House if I explain some of the reasons why over the years, with the topic of the transferability of pension rights constantly under discussion, inadequate progress has been made. There are good reasons and bad reasons for that. I am interested in the first instance in what I regard as a bad reason.

When employers brought these schemes in before the war, and also after it, they saw them as an aspect of personnel management which was a generous but unnecessary gesture for the benefit of their employees. In providing a private sector pension fund, they were putting money, which might have gone back into the business or the shareholders, in the pockets of employees on top of their wages and salaries. It was regarded as a bounty to the employees, something for which they should be grateful but which did not give them much of an opportunity to chisel over the rights that they might have acquired under the schemes. It was a kind of gift.

Therefore, employers felt that there was no obligation on them to allow an early leaver to take an asset out of the fund, because the fund was seen as the employer's money, even if it had been put into the hands of trustees. A good employer simply thought that, if a person changed his plan and did not stay in the employer's service until the normal retirement age, he could have his own contributions, if any, possibly with interest, which might not be very generous—and the employer would deduct what he thought was appropriate in respect of any administrative costs.

Until 10 years ago, or less, early leavers were paid perhaps only a few hundred pounds when they left

[Sir Brandon Rhys Williams]

employment, even after 10 or 20 years service. The sum was made even smaller by the fact that inflation had changed the whole aspectof the matter, because, when they made their contributions in the 1940s and 1950s, they put good money in but, when they drew it out, they got bad money back. With depreciation in the meantime, employers tended to use purely arithmetical calculations and not to uprate the amount of the employee's contributions to take account of the change in the value of money.

There was another bad reason why employers have resisted the idea of paying adequate transfer values. Employers tended to regard the pension schemes, particularly for their more senior workers, as fidelity guarantees. Employers particularly chose to make them final salary schemes to hold people whom they regarded as key employees—people whom they did not want to leave their service to work for someone else, possibly taking much of the firm's know-how with them and putting it in the service of a competitor. Employers frowned on the idea of people claiming a transfer value because they thought that, by leaving, the employee was doing something undesirable or disgraceful and that there was no reason why an employer should lean on the trustees of the sponsored pension fund to pay a huge cheque to someone who was making a move which the employer thought undesirable and not in the employer's interest.

One found that bodies such as the CBI, I am sorry to say, took a blinkered approach in the course of the campaign for the transfer of pension rights, thinking of pension schemes as a form of fidelity bond, and not realising that many of the CBI's members were looking for employees in middle life whom they needed to attract into their businesses. They were not able to recruit those people, because they were anchored by their pension funds with their first employer and were not able to make the jump into employment with a new firm.

The employers who wanted to hold on to their staff won the day and those who were actively looking for new staff were not able to influence the CBI's policy which, as I know from my own campaign on the transferability of pension rights, was decidedly hostile in the early years. I do not think that I need remind hon. Members that I have been campaigning on this subject for some 19 years, so I can look over a fairly long span of time in relation, to the campaign for transferability.

There is also a good reason why transferability is taking so long and why we still have not reached it. Valuation presents a genuine problem. There are all sorts of reasons why even very fair-minded experts, wanting to give the early leaver a fair deal, might dispute what would be the appropriate amount for the pension trust to pay out. In the first place, one has to make an assessment of the likely effect of inflation and what it may have done to the employee's rights while they were building up in the fund.

Obviously, we are not talking about actuarial precision when dealing with purely speculative anticipations as to what may or may not happen to the retail prices index over the next 10 or 20 years or even longer. It is anybody's guess what one should allow for where inflation is concerned. The fact that people did not like guessing when they were having to write a cheque at the end of the day has meant that there has been a reluctance to err on the high side: transfer values therefore tended to be kept rather conservative.

Mr. Tony Blair (Sedgefield): Ha, ha.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: I did not like the hon. Gentleman laughing at that point, because conservatism is connected to rectitude.

Mr. Blair: I was certainly not laughing at the content of the hon. Gentleman's speech. I was just wondering when he would summarise the effect of new clause 1.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: The hon. Gentleman should be patient. I was coming to the precise effects of new clause 1. Without wishing to be critical, I am rather amazed that a man of the hon. Gentleman's intelligence and acumen has not immediately fluffed what new clause 1 will do.

Mr. Blair: I immediately sussed out what clause 1 means. I am wondering when the hon. Gentleman will get to it.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: I have been working on the subject for 19 years, so I think I might be permitted to resume my campaign for just 19 minutes. If I do not go over this ground, my attempt to do something for the early leaver today will be as futile as my other attempts over the last 19 years. Therefore, I hope that the House will give me the indulgence of allowing me to explain my case in my own way.

The genuine difficulty that still remains and that I am seeking to address head-on in my new clause 1 is that, in a final salary scheme, the calculation of the amount of benefit that the employee would get if he or she stayed until the normal age of retirement has to relate to what the person is earning at age 62, 65 or whatever is the normal age of retirement in the scheme. If someone goes to their employer at age 45 when they are not earning anything like the full amount that they might hope to get if they stayed with that employer and continued to get annual increments, promotion and the rest, somebody has to make a guess as to what the person might get if they followed their normal trajectory to retirement and got as much as they could, even staying in a firm that, in the opinion of the employee, will not give him or her the full amount of entitlement that the employee is entitled to and that they think they will get if they go to another firm that might put a higher value on their work.

Even if one stayed with an employer where one thought that one was not being fully used, once one has achieved a certain level of seniority, it is a reasonable expectation that one will continue to get increments and possibly promotion that will take one up to a final salary when one eventually leaves that will give one a handsome pension. However, if one related one's pension to what one was earning at the time of severance 10 or 20 years before, one is worse off, because one might be only half way to one's ultimate final remuneration, quite apart from the effects of inflation.

Under the system that is almost invariably in use at the moment, when someone notifies their employer that they wish to leave, they tend to have their transfer — or preserved value, if they chose to leave their money in the first employer's trust—valued on the basis of what they are earning in mid-career, which is not the same as what

they might reasonably expect and hope to earn if they stay another 10, 20 or however many more years it might be, in that pensionable service.

In calculating the final salary on the basis of the salary in mid-career, the employer's trustees are taking advantage of the early leaver in a way that is sometimes exceedingly damaging, quite apart from the inflation expectation. Although we have made progress in recent years, we have not made nearly enough. I am reliably informed that the amount of money that early leavers are losing every year from their entitlement under the present regime is of the order of £1,000 million. The House must reflect on that figure.

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): Could my hon. Friend give some indication as to how that figure was calculated?

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: It has already been suggested that I am speaking too long. I would prefer to take aside my hon. Friend—who problably knows more about those subjects than I, and tell him how I derived that figure. It would be wrong if I disclosed the origin of that figure, because it was given to me in confidence. However, I would be glad to discuss it with my hon. Friend afterwards. I think he will agree that, if anything, I have erred on the low side, as that is what I am reliably told.

The figure of £1,000 million being lost from pension assets by people seeking to better themselves and to make the most of their contribution to the economy is so serious that the House must return to the subject, to see whether what we are doing at the moment is enough. I feel very strongly that it is not enough.

4 pm

Under the state earnings-related pension scheme, the guaranteed minimum pension is protected from inflation and employers have to respect that accruing entitlement. That is a plus, in that it is a sort of portable pension. Unfortunately, however, SERPS is on such a small scale that we are not really concerned with very large assets. I cannot say what the SERPS entitlement is likely to be, but I suppose that it is about a quarter of the amount that would accrue for a similar earnings record for a person working in the public sector. That means that the employee in the private sector will not do very well if he or she relies on SERPS. On retirement, the income from the occupational pension would probably be just about enought to rule the person out of entitlement to supplementary benefit, without doing him or her much more good than that. I do not believe, therefore, that the guaranteed minimum pension concept in the SERPS provision has solved the problems.

Since 1985, it has been obligatory for employers to protect the assets of the early leaver on the basis of a certain calculation, the merit of which is that it goes right back to the start of the employee's service, not just to 1985. For people who started working in the mid-1960s, therefore, under the new provisions everything that they accumulated since they began pensionable service now has to be protected.

The method of protection, however, is very partial in terms of inflation. I am on such technical ground here that I may risk misleading the House, but I believe that if the early leaver opts for preservation of the asset in the original employer's fund, inflation is put at a maximum of 5 per cent. That may not be a disaster in view of the present Government's record in defeating the vagaries of inflation, but some other Government may be returned at some time in the next 20 or 30 years which allows currency depreciation to start up again. In that case, a fund which increases at only 5 per cent. per annum will slowly chisel into the real value of the asset. If an asset is exposed to that risk, anyone seeking to set a value on it now is likely to say that it is not a cast-iron asset because in certain circumstances it could depreciate seriously. That being so, if the employee insists on taking a cheque equal to the value of the preserved assets at this stage, it may well have to have the corners knocked off. Therefore, if the employee opts to take a cheque rather than leave the money with the original employer, the inflation maximum set on the provision for inflation will mean that the cheque will not be quite so good as it should be.

Secondly, I understand that the obligation to revalue applies only to that part of the entitlement which accrues after January 1985, so if a person has 20 years service before that date, a substantial part of his of hers accrued rights will not be inflation-protected. Setting a value on the preserved asset will inevitably take that into account, to the benefit of the employer, so when the employee takes his transfer value and advances with it to the trustees of the fund that he is entering, instead of having 20 years service with his first employer automatically credited, he may be offered five added years or some other very disappointing figure. Clearly, that will reduce the value of the final pension so substantially that the employee will be calling for a golden hello or whatever also in order to make up the difference. Difficult negotiations then ensue, often resulting in the breakdown of discussions and a decision to remain with the first employer, which is not really to the advantage of anyone.

In addition to those two aspects of inflation protection, which are clearly inadequate, there is the problem of the trajectory. I do not know of any fund where, in the valuation of a preserved or transferred asset, a serious attempt is made to decide what the employee would have earned if he had stayed and thus what the fund owes him on the basis of a good average calculation of what pension he might have received had he stayed with the first employer. The employer does not feel under any obligation to make that calculation and does not pay out on that basis.

Yet when the actuaries advise the employer how much money is needed for the fund to meet its liabilities over time, they will say that, although they do not know which employees will reach the top, it is certain that some of them will. The employer therefore has to put money into the fund to cater for the fact that some present employees will be receiving much higher salaries and therefore will qualify for much higher pensions by the time they finish their service. If the employer is to maintain an adequate fund, that money must be put in, but it is not paid out to the early leaver. The money that should go to the early leaver remains in the fund, with the result that the fund becomes over-funded and the employer is advised either to put in less money in future or to take some money out. However, that aspect can perhaps more appropriately be dealt with on another new clause.

I have reached the point at which I am able to gratify the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) by describing my reasons for the proposals in new clause 1. An avid reader of the Order Paper such as the hon. Gentleman will realise that it is virtually identical to a new clause that I moved during the report stage of the 1986 Finance Bill. I

[Sir Brandon Rhys Williams]

have not significantly altered the proposals, save perhaps to remove certain ambiguities. The point to which I would like to draw attention is the method of valuation.

The new clause suggests that the transfer value should be equal to the amount of money that the scheme that the employee is leaving would insist on being paid, by way of an incoming transfer value, in order to take on an employee with precisely the same status as the man or woman who is leaving. That takes into account all the points that I have dealt with thus far, including assessment of the trajectory to retirement.

I know that there are difficulties in valuation, but I am confident that, if the House accepts that this is the right formula, the actuarial profession and experienced trustees will very soon adapt their thinking to produce standard guidelines for valuation which would provide at any rate rough and ready justice for every early leaver. Unless we adopt something along those lines, the problem will continue year after year and the early leaver will remain exposed to injustice, and I am sure that that is wrong.

I will dilate just a little longer on what I am proposing. Clearly, I am speaking of final salary schemes. With money purchase schemes, the position is clear, just as when a person takes money from one clearing bank and puts it into another. There is an identifiable figure and everyone knows what it is. Final salary schemes, however, are fluid. They are collective funds and the valuation of the individual's assets at any given time presents great difficulties; but if one insists that all the questions of trajectory to final retirement, length of service, salary and other terms of employment should be taken into account on precisely the same terms that the first employer's scheme would have to accept in reverse, one arrives at a fair transfer figure.

If that transfer figure is then taken to another fund that is run on quite different lines — perhaps having a different age of retirement, different rates of accrual, or different types of benefit — it will not matter, because one would be speaking about a cash value. Once the cash value has been put at a fair figure, it is up to the employee to negotiate for himself when he goes to his new employer and seeks to acquire added years or whatever it may be in the new fund.

Mr. Blair: The new clause addresses an important matter. How does it get around the difficulty of the early leaver who may go on to much better things in later life if one makes his transfer payment the same as will be required by his scheme on the admision of a new member with exactly the same service and all the rest of it? I am not sure how the problem will be resolved by the new clause.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: People are going to take different views about the quality of a man in mid-career who is footloose and wants to change his employment. The first employer may say, "He has been working for us for 20 years, and we know his limitations. We do not think that he will ever make it to the board or to the head of his department. We do not think that he is of that calibre. Therefore, his trajectory, if he stays with us, will not be that progressive. You may think that he is a wonderful chap and you may be willing to pay him all sorts of bonuses to take him over, but our opinion is based on experience. Therefore, we do not think that his trajectory should be as high as all that." That may be the case; but at any rate my formula takes a realistic trajectory into account with the first employer. If the second employer is putting a rather ridiculous premium on the man, that is up to the second employer. He can use golden hallos, or whatever it may be, to tempt the person across.

It is not only salary or pension rights that have to be taken into account in the negotiations to tempt a senior person to change jobs. Other factors may include location, housing or many other matters. But we have to arrive at a fair method of assessment of the size of the asset that has accumulated for the employee in his first employer's fund. Therefore, one has to get the first employer to focus on the eventual salary that that person might receive if the stayed in that employment, rather than the figure that he happened to be earning when he got so fed up that he decided to leave the firm. At that stage the employee was probably making a fair assessment that he was underpaid for what he could do; that would be why he was thinking of going.

Mr. Blair: Will the effect be to make the transfer payment out the same as the payment in would be if they were welcoming an incoming member of exactly the same status into the scheme?

4.15 pm

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: That is precisely the purpose of the formula that I have arrived at. Let us imagine that the firm has to fill the vacancy. Suppose it decides to recruit precisely such a person as the man it has got and starts to consider what it will have to pay and what pensionable service would be appropriate to credit the man joining the scheme for someone whom the firm perhaps does not consider to be a man whom it is recruiting for ultimate promotion to the board but whose trajectory would be precisely parallel with that of the person whom it does not evaluate particularly highly who, nevertheless, is in a fairly senior job in middle life. The conventions and casework could soon build up. If the House decides that this formula is appropriate, it will not be long before professionals would be able to come to an agreement that will result in a clear settlement on a figure.

In the early days, once the House accepted this formula, there would be room for disputes. There will always be room for disputes. Professional opinion will quickly come to a consensus, however, and I am sure that in 99 per cent. of cases an early leaver will be willing to leave it to his advisers to settle on a figure, and that figure would be accepted. We will not see endless disputes after a year or two if the House accepts my formula. At all events, that is what I am advised by people who work in the profession.

When an employee gets to his new firm, he will have a cheque of perhaps quite a large value. He must negotiate with that cheque to get what terms he can. If the new firm's scheme is totally different — it may be contracted out, whereas the other was contracted in, or it may be based on a different age of retirement of totally different accrual basis — he must negotiate his entry into the new firm. That is up to him; but he will bring a cash value with him equivalent to what he has withdrawn from the previous scheme.

I have to draw attention to a serious point in my new clause. In a case where someone is leaving a firm in which the pension fund is not fully funded, if he insists on taking out the whole of his asset, he is diminishing somewhat the amount of money that is available to meet the liabilities

of the fund to the other employees who remain with the first employer. If we are talking about just one or two people leaving a large firm over the course of time, that may not be important, even if the scheme is seriously underfunded for one reason or another. But if, for instance, a firm is hitting a bad patch and is in difficulty in funding the scheme anyway and many people decide to leave or are encouraged to leave early because the firm is not able to offer them much of a future, and if they use my formula as the basis of valuation, the early leavers might take so much out of the fund that it becomes totally unable to meet its liabilities to those employees who remain faithful to the firm. That is not my intention. It would merely put an early leaver in a position to cheat the stayers. That is not what I want.

I have therefore made the provision that, when a scheme is underfunded, an early leaver has the option of either taking a transfer value that is reduced by the percentage to which the scheme is underfunded, or leaving a preserved asset with the employer that would constitute the full amount of the asset. The employer would then have to honour the commitment at the normal age of retirement, which might be many years afterwards. That is not an attractive choice for the early leaver. If he is leaving the firm because he has doubts about its viability, he may not be too happy about leaving his preserved asset in the hands of trustees who may not have all the money that they need, even 20 years hence, to pay out according to the real value of his asset. Equally, if he takes a transfer value that must be diminished by 10 per cent., 20 per cent. or 50 per cent. because the fund is underfunded at the moment he insists on his cheque, he puts himself in a bad position when he negotiates with the new employer, or, for that matter, puts his money into a private pension scheme under the options that are now opening up under my right hon. Friend's proposals.

It is an invidious thing to be leaving a fund that is in low water. In that case, one may find that one's private sector pension scheme does not give the same security that one would have if one had been in the public sector. We must take that fact into account. Inevitably, private sector schemes are subject to the vagaries of the market and the future of the employer and other factors, whereas schemes that are underwritten by the taxpayer have a sort of cast-iron security that the private sector finds it difficult to match.

The House has been extremely indulgent with me in allowing me to explain all these points. I look forward to hearing what other hon. Members may have to say, particularly what my right hon. Friend may have to say. The Departments concerned with occupational pension matters have had an opportunity of looking seriously at my proposals. They are not new. I introduced them a year ago in a similar situation. There is an overwhelming consensus that the present way of dealing with early leavers is unjust and contrary to the national interest. If my right hon. Frend accepts that fact but does not accept my new clause 1, the House is entitled to insist on his putting forward a better alternative.

Mr. Tim Smith: I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams) on his ingenuity in devising the new clause, getting it on to the Amendment Paper and ensuring that it is debated, because it is not a clause about taxation at all. It relates to occupational pension schemes, and my hon. Friend has included within it a device to ensure that it is a taxation clause because he wants to withdraw tax privileges for any occupational pension scheme that refuses to comply with the arrangements which he believes to be desirable.

The first objection to the new clause is that that is the wrong way to go about it. It is justifiable for the law to intervene in occupational pension schemes notwithstanding the fact that they are voluntary. Social Security Acts have done so in the past, and will no doubt do so in the future. To use the blunt weapon of tax privileges to say, "Either go along with my new clause by 1 January 1988 or lose your tax advantages", is rather unreasonable. Unless I have misread it, that is what my hon. Friend's new clause would do. He must make a better case. The new clause includes the words, "It shall be permissible", as though it would be permissive, but it is not. If the occupational pension scheme does not comply with the new clause within a very short period, it will lose all its tax benefits.

My hon. Friend has a great interest in these matters, but sometimes he goes too far. He is hostile to the final salary scheme to the point where he would like it to be broken up so that each member can have his own pension scheme. I think that it is good to have a diversity in pension provision and good that, in the future, individuals will be able to choose between an occupational scheme and a personal pension scheme.

When the time comes, it will be important properly to explain the differences between the two, because as 1 January approaches and people decide whether to opt for personal portable pensions a great campaign will be launched by the companies that wish to sell the schemes. They will be trying to sell the virtues of opting out of SERPS and occupational schemes and going into their personal schemes. It will be important for employers and others to explain to employees the benefits of occupational pension schemes. Listening to my hon. Friend, one would think that there were no benefits worth talking about in occupational pension schemes. But I believe that there are, and that those benefits have been substantial at times of fairly high inflation. The opportunity to have a guaranteed pension related to one's final salary has been a great advantage, and I hope that when the time comes there will be a balance in the debate that takes place and that employees will be told about the pros and cons of both.

The other day, I received a paper from the National Association of Pension Funds which is naturally concerned about the matter and which will do what it can to explain the virtues of occupational pension schemes.

The new clause deals with the problem of the early leaver, and there is no doubt that, in the past, the early leaver has been ripped off. I have been ripped off as an early leaver. But we have made improvements since then. My hon. Friend belittled the improvements that were made in the Social Security Act 1985. One has to strike a balance here. As well as having been a member of a private occupational scheme, I have had to run one. We must realise that the schemes are voluntary and that, in theory at any rate, an employer could wind them up at fairly short notice.

What is the object of an employer putting money into a scheme? He does so to attract employees to his company and to make them stay. He wants people to stay with the company, not to leave early, so he sees no reason why he

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should bend over backwards to help the early leaver. That is why the legislature is justified in intervening and making sure that the early leaver gets a reasonably good deal.

The question then arises: what is a reasonably good deal? Where should the balance of public policy be on this matter? At present, the Social Security Act says that if one takes out a deferred pension now, it must be revalued by the increase in the retail price index every year up to a maximum of 5 per cent. My hon. Friend belittled that and said that inflation may increase above 5 per cent. He is right, but there must be a ceiling. An open-ended commitment for a pension scheme would be unfundable, and at present 5 per cent. seems to be a reasonable figure.

I am sorry that I did not have the opportunity to hear the debate on the new clause last year, but, as I understand it, my hon. Friend wants to give to the early leaver all of his expectations up to retirement, to say to him, "You might have been very successful in this company and you might have been promoted to chief executive, so we should take all that into account and try to evaluate what your final salary would have been on a rather optimistic basis", and then offer him a guarantee on that basis. If that is what my hon. Friend wishes to do, it is going too far.

We must allow the actuarial profession some discretion in these matters. My hon. Friend is trying to impose rules upon a profession in which a considerable amount of judgment is involved. All sorts of assumptions must be made when calculating the value of a transfer payment, especially about interest rates, inflation and earnings growth, and to impose rigid formulae on the actuaries would be unreasonable. It is not surprising to me that the actuary acting for an employee leaving a scheme may take a different view from the actuary dealing with an employee entering a scheme.

My hon. Friend's new clause would calculate that amount by reference to the amount which would be payable by someone coming into the scheme. That is a purely notional concept, because people bring into a scheme something that is related to their previous pension scheme. My hon. Friend is talking about something that does not exist in practice—a notional sum that would be needed to fund all the back service of that individual had he been the individual who was leaving in the first place. That can be calculated only by reference to the current salary. It does not take us all the way that my hon. Friend wishes to go.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: I am following my hon. Friend extremely closely, but I think that what I suggested was something which, arithmetically, is quite easy to arrive at. One knows the age of the person who is leaving, so that is not a matter of dispute. One knows the salary which he is earning at the time of his leaving, so that is not a matter of dispute. One can calculate the conditions of the scheme which would determine the capital value of the asset, because it is the scheme which the employer operates. One need not even guess what the pension scheme might be. One knows the scheme, the age and the salary. Where does the dispute arise?

Mr. Smith: None the less, it is a notional amount and it is subject to the criticism that was made by the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair). It cannot anticipate the future performance of an employee, so it does not give to the employee the benefits which I think my hon. Friend said the early leaver would gain from the new clause. If that is the case, it would be a good thing, because it is wrong to go as far as my hon. Friend wishes to go.

Although I have great sympathy with the early leaver, it is wrong to go as far as my hon. Friend wishes to go and to impose such substantial obligations on occupational pension schemes as the new clause would do.

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Norman Lamont): During the Second Reading of the Finance Bill, my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams) spoke after two maiden speakers and told them that he always worked on the Jericho principle. He recalled the story of Joshua's troops, who finally brought down the walls of Jericho by going round and round the city. He said that one should not be put off if an angel came along and said that it was hopeless. He said that one should go round the walls yet again and eventually they would fall.

We have not been round this city six times, but we have certainly been round it three or four times during the debate. The walls are trembling a little. My hon. Friend has advanced his case and educated hon. Members, including me, although the House will be indebted to my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) for putting the counter case for the final salary scheme.

My hon. Friend the Member for Kensington has consistently advocated the money purchase scheme and underlined the problems that the final salary scheme creates for the early leaver. I have great sympathy for what he says and I do not believe that we have a solution that entirely meets all the aspects of the problem of the early leaver. Such a solution would impose considerable costs on industry.

4.30 pm

It may be for the convenience of the House if I underline the way in which the problem my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington has described arose. To take a simplified example, suppose someone worked for 10 years for employer A and earned £12,000 a year. If that person left in mid-career, on normal rates of accrual—one sixtieth final salary for each year of service—his deferred pension would be ten sixtieths of £12,000, which is £2,000. If that person then worked for 10 years for employer B and retired with a final salary of £24,000, his pension from employer B's scheme, on normal rates of accrual, would be ten sixtieths of £24,000, which is £4,000. Therefore, his total pension, assuming for these purposes zero inflation, would be £6,000—that is his pension entitlements of £4,000 plus £2,000. If that person had stayed with employer A and served 20 years to retirement, his total pension would have been twenty sixtieths of £24,000, which is £8,000.

It is in that case that we come to the problem of the transfer value because if he had transferred his rights from scheme A to scheme B when he changed jobs, on present actuarial rules his transfer value might have been about £18,000. This would not buy him 10 years' additional service in scheme B. It would buy him only additional benefits equivalent to a pension of £2,000 a year. The transfer value to buy him the equivalent of 10 years' additional service would have to be £36,000. That would be double his present entitlement under the rules of the scheme.

In his new clause, my hon. Friend has set out certain proposals relating to transfer values, paid by occupational schemes, which provide benefits based on the length of

service at final salary. My hon. Friend is proposing that the Government should effectively require schemes to provide transfer values on that improved basis. My hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield was quite right to say that it is not quite as permissive as the clause seems at first sight.

When we discussed this matter in Committee, the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) tabled a similar amendment as did my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington. I made the same objection then, although it was probably true of one but perhaps incorrect about the other. As my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield has said, it would require the schemes to provide higher transfer values because my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington would use the weapon of the tax system. Although the new clause would give schemes the option to change their tax rules, if they opted not to they would cease to be tax-approved. I must make it clear to my hon. Friend that if we were to go down that road, as my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield pointed out, the requirement would be a matter for the DHSS and not the Revenue. As my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield underlined, Revenue tax approval rules are concerned with setting maximum benefits, and the Revenue rules on transfers follow the DHSS.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington knows, the question of transfers was considered in detail two years ago when the Social Security Act 1985 was before the House. Following that Act, regulations on transfer value were made following extensive consultations. Those regulations came into force on 1 January 1986. As I have advised my hon. Friend previously, in considering proposals for further changes, DHSS Ministers have taken the line that it would not be right to impose new requirements on schemes so soon after the recent legislation until there has been sufficient time to assess their effects.

Notwithstanding this, however, in my view the proper place for a provision on these lines proposed by my hon. Friend lies in social security legislation. As I have said previously, I shall ensure that my hon. Friend's proposals are reconsidered by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services together with either myself or my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary.

I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington was not very receptive to this when I put it to him in Committee, but we must have regard to the cost of pension provision to employers. The funding position of occupational pension schemes is reviewed by an actuary every few years to determine the level of contributions that is needed to keep it solvent. My hon. Friend's suggestion could impose considerable extra burdens on industry. In reviewing the funding of the scheme, the actuary must take account of the fact that some scheme members will leave in mid-career taking with them a transfer value based on their final salary and their service up to when they depart. If, as my hon. Friend proposes, the transfer value for every early leaver had to be calculated on a higher basis, that would inevitably depress the scheme's funding position. The actuary would have no option other than to recommend a higher level of contributions and the main brunt of that extra cost – in most cases, all of it – would fall on the employer.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield for at least putting the case for the final salary scheme, which provides some certainty for some employers. My hon. Friend the Member for Kensington has said that he does not like that because it leaves the problem of the early leaver. However, as my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield has said, we are moving towards a time when there will be wider choice and more and more people will be able to take out personal pensions which are more akin to the model which my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington supports, and which will help to overcome that problem.

My hon. Friend the Member for Kensington points out that in recent years many schemes have become overfunded – so much so that they have been able to reduce contributions or even to make a refund to the employer. Of course, that is right, although I do not believe that it applies across the board to all schemes, nor do I necessarily believe that it is unfair that employers should enjoy some benefit from the good years when it is only about 10 years since the bad years, with negative investment returns, and when employers had to make contributions of 25 or 30 per cent. of payroll to keep their schemes solvent. I am sure that my hon. Friend remembers that. We are talking of a different world now. In the early 1970s the world appeared different.

Again, as my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield has pointed out, the fact is that occupational schemes are voluntarily established by employers for their employees. Because employers who establish final salary schemes are taking on an open-ended commitment, it is important to allow them as much freedom of choice as possible, including the freedom to promise whatever benefits are considered affordable.

My hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield emphasised that if employers were effectively required to provide benefits that they did not think they could afford bearing in mind that, above all, pension schemes are a long-term business – the danger is not only that employers would not set up new schemes but, as my hon. Friend has said, that some schemes might be wound up. I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington will not be persuaded entirely by my argument. However, I advise him that we shall certainly consider the matter further and myself and a Minister of State at the DHSS will discuss it with him.

We have said repeatedly to my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington that such a radical reform could not be introduced through the tax system at this stage in a Finance Bill. However, I agree with him that considerable problems still relate to the early leaver. Those problems must continue to be addressed. They are paramount and we must consider them extremely seriously. For that reason I am afraid that it would not be right to accept the new clause as it is, so I fear that I cannot accept my hon. Friend's recommendations, persuasive though they are.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: With the leave of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I should like to reply to the points that have been made.

My hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith), whose opinions I greatly respect, said that it was good to allow final salary schemes as an option. I do not disagree with that. However, the employer has a responsibility to put something aside for his employee all the time in the form of deferred pay. That should be an identifiable sum. Preferably it should go into one of our tax haven schemes, build up compound interest and be

[Sir Brandon Rhys Williams]

available to provide an annuity at the end of the day. That does not mean to say that an employer cannot have a final salary scheme on top of his minimum obligation.

The minumum obligation that is imposed through the SERPS rules is far too small and I suggested in Committee that employers should put at least 10 per cent. on top of wages into provision for retirement. Anything less than that will leave many employees in a position where, when they come to retire, they must apply to the taxpayer for benefit in the form of supplementary benefit. That is an unsatisfactory state of affairs. To compensate for that extra burden on employers, I threw out the hint that the Inland Revenue might agree to forgo national insurance contributions, which are simply a form of income tax. I am not hostile to final salary schemes, provided the employer has first met his minimum obligation, which means to all employees, not just early leavers, whom I am dealing with in the new clause.

My hon. Friend said that final salary schemes were welcomed during the long period of inflation because they were protected up to the time when the employee left service at the normal age of retirement. Thus the inflation which took place during the course of his career was borne by the scheme and at the date of retirement his pension was awarded on the basis of the value of money at that time. That is true; but look at the deplorable record of occupational pension schemes in looking after beneficiaries after retirement. I believe that only 2 per cent. have undertaken to give full uprating to pensioners after the date of award. Therefore, the final salary scheme does not do so much for beneficiaries after they have left employment.

Mr. Tim Smith: I cannot allow my hon. Friend to get away with that. It is difficult for trustees of an occupational pension scheme to give any guarantee. Again, it is open ended and no one knows what the rate of inflation will be. Large occupational pension schemes — I think of our multinational companies — have a tremendous record on uprating pensioners' benefits after retirement.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: I know that occupational pension schemes have often in good faith made a gesture to their pensioners after retirement and have sometimes uprated benefits substantially. The figure up to 1983 that I was given in a parliamentary answer — if the figures were up to date they might be different, and admittedly they were out of date — was that only 2 per cent. of schemes had uprated fully by the amount of the retail price index. That does not seem to be a frightfully good record. I understand that it is difficult in dealing with fluid funds and unidentifiable assets to give justice to all concerned. That is an intrinsic fault of the final salary system. Money purchase obviates that weakness altogether, because the position is as clear as if one had one's money in a bank account.

My hon. Friend then said that the schemes were voluntary and that it was possible for employers to wind them up. I mention that as one of the bad reasons why we are where we are. Employers still tend to regard their pension funds as a bonus, not as an obligation. In the 1920s or 1930s it may have been a reasonable aspect of personnel management to run a pension scheme as a sort of Venus's flytrap, to get people to join one's fund and then to find themselves stuck because if they leave they have to write off so much. I do not think that nowadays that is regarded as an acceptable form of personnel management.

It is not healthy to have senior people in one's firm who wish to leave if they could only do so without losing their pension rights. To keep people doing work which is less good than they are capable of is only breeding sickness. I can speak from personal experience of working in industry where people were kept back by their pension fund and did not have a happy end to their career. Unfortunately, one sees similar effects in many Civil Service departments, where people mark time and block promotion lanes because of the nature of the final salary scheme.

Naturally, the employer who runs a super-generous scheme can change the policy and wind it up. But in setting the state earnings-related pension scheme and deciding to retain it, which the Conservative Government wrongly did, we have accepted that there is an element of deferred pay in the pension scheme and employers are obliged to pay deferred pay. We now need to bring the private-sector pension schemes up to the level of the public-sector schemes. I do not see why people working in the private sector should be second-rate citizens in retirement. We must do something about all our thinking regarding the deficiencies of the occupational pension schemes in the private sector.

4.45 pm

My hon. Friend said that my new clause was obligatory, not permissive as it seems. With respect, he has not quite penetrated to the actual meaning of my suggestion. Suppose the sponsors or the trustees of the scheme refused to do what I am suggesting in this new clause after it has become law. They would not lose their tax concessions in respect of the whole of that accrual of value up to the date when my new clause would become operable. That is why it is not a retrospective provision. One must find a way of overcoming the argument that anything which benefits the early leaver who has a long record in his fund will be of a retrospective character. I would like to suggest to my right hon. Friend that he has not given sufficient attention to this aspect of the problem.

If one benefits someone who has had perhaps 30 years in the pension fund in relation to those assets which he has accumulated over that period, it might well be said that one would be making a retrospective change in the law, because the pension fund did not originally expect that it would have to give a fair deal to the early leavers — to those who chose to leave before the normal age of retirement. If we make it obligatory on the fund to do so in respect of those past years, we are putting a debt on the fund in respect of years which have gone by and where the accounts have already been closed. That is why it is important to say that it is only in respect of future years that pressure will be brought on the fund by the new clause.

Why should we not bring pressure on funds which are holding people unjustly in jobs where they are not doing their best? Why should we give tax concessions of this enormous value to funds which are not acting in the public interest or in the interest of their employees? My right hon. and hon. Friends must ask themselves why we give these enormous tax concessions to these schemes if they are not delivering the goods, but are treating people unfairly and acting against the public interest.

My right hon. Friend the Financial Secretary mentioned extensive consultations over the problem of the future of occupational pension schemes in general. It is true that there have been consultations, but one of the difficulties is that all the people who understand the law and practice of occupational pension schemes are employed by the sponsors of those schemes. They tend naturally in time to orient themselves towards the employers' interests because they get their bread and butter from the employers' side. Eventually, they find good reasons why claims made on behalf of employees should be set aside. They argue themselves into a firm belief that what the employer does is invariably right and what trade unions or individual employees argue on behalf of the wage or salary earner is in some way ignorant, excessive or biased, or at any rate not worthy of serious consideration.

For that reason, if one talks to the experts about the problems of occupational pension schemes, one tends to hear the employers' view. No one speaks confidently on behalf of the employees. The fact that no one from the Labour Benches has attempted to come to the support of my new clause once again emphasises my point. People who think it is their responsibility to speak for the employees fear to tread through these technicalities because it is a difficult subject. In my view, the consultations which have taken place have resulted in a raw deal for the beneficiaries. Therefore, I question their real worth. I believe that my right hon. Friend needs to widen his circle of advisers to take in people who will speak for the beneficiaries too.

My right hon. Friend said that it would be wrong to impose new requirements on schemes yet a while because of all the upheavals that have recently taken place. In Committee I drew attention to the fact that we are putting almost impossible administrative burdens on occupational pension schemes. That arises from the fact that we have dual control. The Inland Revenue is issuing extremely complex instructions relating to the Revenue's perspective of the way such schemes should be controlled—namely, in regard to the eventual benefits. In the last week or two, the Department of Health and Social Security also issued no fewer than 20 statutory instruments with meticulous instructions as to how those schemes were to be run. I am sorry to say that some of those statutory instruments are quite controversial and do not emanate from the discussions that we had in Committee. However, they are quite enough to burden these schemes with an enormous amount of administrative expense and problematical decisions.

I quite agree that the providers of occupational pension funds are probably sick to death of being told what to do, but that does not mean to say that we should allow them to continue to do what is wrong. We should simplify the regulations to the absolute bare minimum, so that everybody can understand the rights and wrongs and know what is expected of them. That is perfectly possible if we clarify our own ideas first as to what the pension schemes are all about. If we knew what the philosophy was, we would have no trouble with the details.

I cannot accept that this is simply a matter for the DHSS and that the Inland Revenue can wash its hands of the matter. The Inland Revenue must look after the taxpayers' funds. In occupational pension schemes, there is not only money put into trust by the employer or by the employee, but also a gradual roll-up of an enormous element that constitutes money belonging to the taxpayer. The taxpayer has a huge stake in these enormous funds. The taxpayer will recover that money when the pension comes to be paid because tax is payable on the pension. I do not accept that this is simply a DHSS matter and not a matter for the Finance Bill. If the public are expected to extend tax concessions to the schemes, the public are entitled to expect the schemes to be run in a proper manner. At the moment, that is not happening.

My right hon. Friend spoke of the considerable extra burden on industry. If I am right in saying that the beneficiaries are losing anything like £1,000 million a year and that that ought to be rectified, that £1,000 million must come from somewhere because it is going to go to the beneficiaries. That might be said to place an enormous burden on industry, which industry cannot bear. At this time, the papers are full of the Government's problems wages are rising faster than productivity. We are all delighted to read that profits in industry are rising rapidly at this time. I am sure that that is a welcome sign. That means that the average employer is in a position to put more money out for the remuneration of employed workers, salary and wage-earning employees. Why not put that money into the pension scheme, that is, into the capital account, instead of putting it into the wage packet, which constitutes the current account? We all know that there is a risk of incipient inflation taking off again because, to quote the well-known phrase, "There's too much money chasing too few goods." Why not encourage employers to put more money into the capital account? The money would only be recycled by the occupational pension fund trustees, on the basis of the advice they receive, back into industry in the form of investment. Industry would not lose the money; it might even be argued that it would gain it in the form that is most required.

If pensions were better, wage increases might be smaller just now, but there would be less immediate inflationary pressure and there would be more money flowing into investment on capital account. Surely that must be good, and if anything it would tend towards lower interest rates and a better, more efficient capital market.

I do not wish to ask the House to go further with my new clause. I am grateful to right hon. and hon. Members for listening to my arguments. I will reluctantly ask leave of the House to withdraw my new clause; but I hope that the arguments that I have put forward will not be wasted and that some of the things that have been said against my new clause—I believe those arguments were inadequate to beat it down—will be reconsidered in the not too distant future.

I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion and clause, by leave, withdrawn.

New Clause 3

PERMITTED EXCESS OF THE FUND

"In Schedule 12 to the Finance Act 1986 the prescribed maximum by which the value of the assets of an approved retirement benefit scheme may exceed the liabilities of the scheme for the purposes of paragraph 6 of the Schedule shall not be less than 10 per cent.". *[Sir Brandon Rhys Williams.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

[Sir Brandon Rhys Williams]

I believe that this is a matter that can be dealt with quite briefly because this clause provides an opportunity for my right hon. Friend to explain his position rather than that I should be obliged to expound my argument at any great length. Therefore, I hope that my right hon. Friend is ready with his case.

If I may explain briefly, this new clause arises from a perfectly proper decision taken by the Chancellor some 18 months ago that the tax haven status of occupational pension funds should not be exploited by corporate treasurers putting money into the fund far in excess of any reasonable expectation of liabilities of the fund over time, in order to take advantage of the tax haven status. That status gave complete exemption from tax on putting the money in and, as things used to be, complete exemption from tax on taking that money out. It was a glorious opportunity for large and small corporations, which temporarily had a surplus of funds, to put the funds to employment in a way that exploited the tax advantages which were intended for the pension fund beneficiaries, but which actually flowed back to the firm and were an abuse of the intentions of the Inland Revenue.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor decided, perfectly properly, that money recouped from trusts that went back to the employer should pay a substantial rate of tax, recognising the fact that when the money was first taken out of the general funds of the company and put into the pension trust it was a tax-exempt transfer. To make certain that these things went right, my right hon. Friend suggested that funds that had got themselves overfunded should bring their funds down to 105 per cent. of their liabilities forthwith and incur the tax on making the adjustment.

Of course, there was a great deal of agitation in the pensions movement about those proposals. Compromises were suggested, some of which were right. It was suggested that, before the pension fund repaid the money to the employer, much should be done to improve the way in which the pension fund operated for its real purposes—namely, to provide benefits for the employees. I believe that much more could still be done. That is obvious from what I said on new clause 1. There has been and still is genuine concern that the 105 per cent. of the liabilities of the fund, as calculated at any one time, may not allow enough margin as things develop over time — inevitably unpredictably — for a prudent firm to say that it is operating its pension fund sensibly. If the trustees repay the fund to the employer and incur a lot of tax in so doing, it may well be found that 5 per cent. is not a sufficiently large margin to cater for all the changes and chances of this fleeting world.

When we heard the reasons why 5 per cent. had been chosen and why the Government intended to stick to 5 per cent., it appeared to me that the benefit of the doubt should be given to the Government Department concerned. However, as I know that there has been a continuing anxiety that, in some cases, 105 per cent. does not allow enough latitude even for prudent firms to manage their affairs in accordance with their predictable liabilities, I hope there might be some room for movement. I have suggested the figure of 10 per cent. simply because it is a round figure and because this subject should be kept alive and we should not leave the Finance Bill without giving my right hon. Friend the opportunity to tell us about the discussions that have taken place and to explain his future intentions.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I hope that I may be able to allay some of the fears of my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams). Although we are not immutable on this matter, I believe that my hon. Friend's fears are a little exaggerated.

5 pm

My hon. Friend the Member for Kensington said, quite rightly, that we had two aims when we brought forward our proposals last year — first, to discourage employers from parking spare profits in their pension schemes in order to delay or escape a tax charge, and, secondly, to reduce the uncertainty about when and in what circumstances an over-funded pension scheme can pay part of a surplus to an employer. Action was necessary not only to require heavily over-funded schemes to reduce surpluses, but also to clarify the rules regarding the possible scope for payments by schemes to employers, subject always to the overriding need fully to protect the prudential interests of scheme members.

The case for action was generally accepted, but, as my hon. Friend said, considerable concern was originally expressed that our proposals did not contain adequate safeguards. In particular, it was at first claimed that the proposed safety margin of 5 per cent. beyond which a surplus need not be reduced was too low.

As we made clear last year, the safety margin has to be considered in the context of other changes. I think it is fair to say that the criticisms that were made under-estimated the strength of funding methods and the security of the actuarial assumptions which will apply for these purposes. On the advice of the Government Actuary, these were deliberately chosen as being at the top end of the range. A 5 per cent. surplus on this basis is a much larger surplus than the funding methods and actuarial assumptions adopted by most pension schemes in this country.

During the passage of last year's Finance Act through Parliament, we issued draft guidance notes on how the new rules would operate. These set out in some detail the proposed funding method and actuarial assumptions and they immediately reassured many of those who had previously expressed concern about these proposals. I must say that I am slightly surprised at what my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington has said about the reaction because it does not entirely tally with the reaction as it has been relayed to me.

Subsequently, the detailed provisions setting out the new rules were implemented when, under the powers conferred on it by schedule 12 of last year's Act, the Inland Revenue laid the Pension Scheme Surpluses (Valuation) Regulations. These provided, among other things, for the strong actuarial basis which would operate for these purposes, and for the margin of 5 per cent.

The question of pension scheme surpluses generally and the related issue of the investment policy of schemes have attracted a certain amount of attention. My hon. Friend the Member for Kensington, and some Opposition Members, argue that, as a matter of principle, first priority should be given to members. That is a separate matter, which goes rather wider than this new clause, and rather wider than my hon. Friend went.

We must remember that occupational pension schemes are arrangements made voluntarily by employers to

provide retirement benefits for their employees. The requirements of the Inland Revenue, in considering whether schemes should be tax approved, take no view on such matters as the level of benefits. Provided that the maximum limits are not exceeded, the Revenue leaves schemes free to fix benefits at whatever levels are considered appropriate.

Another argument is that pension scheme surpluses belong to members. I am aware of this line of argument, but in law, of course, members of occupational schemes have only a contingent right to benefits when they reach the relevant retirement date. They have no direct legal interest in any of the assets in the fund, whether or not they have paid contributions. As the House will know, many schemes are funded entirely by the employers' contributions.

Then, of course, there is the question which exercised people very much last year of employers raiding the pension schemes – a danger which, I think, has perhaps been exaggerated. Occupational schemes are, as the House knows, established under irrevocable trusts, and the interests of members are protected by general trust law. Moreover, the 5 per cent. additional margin and the 40 per cent. free-standing tax charge on refunds will act as a powerful safeguard against employers seeking to withdraw scheme funds without proper regard to the interests of their members.

Mr. Blair: One of the matters that concerned people was whether the 5 per cent. excess of the assets over the liabilities took sufficient account of the difficulty of assessing precisely what the value of the assets and liabilities may be, given the number of variables involved. Has the Minister been satisfied from the representations received subsequent to the Finance Act last year that the 5 per cent. margin covers any margin of difficulty in assessing the true value of assets or liabilities?

Mr. Lamont: I am satisfied. I was about to say to my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington that his fears are exaggerated. They do not correspond with what I hear.

The precise point put by the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) is, of course, a technical matter. It would be a lengthy matter for me to seek to say how the Government Actuary chose to define 5 per cent., which was on a different basis from that presumed by the pensions industry when it initially reacted to the 5 per cent. figure. I could go into the matter, but it was debated at considerable length in Committee last year.

The criticisms that were initially levelled at the 5 per cent. figure now seem to have abated and the anxiety expressed about it receded when the full details of the new rules were made clear. However, if at some point in the future it became necessary to revise the 5 per cent. figure, we would amend the regulations, which I assure my hon. Friend is the more technically appropriate way to set about the matter. But we have not reached that point and, for the reasons that I have hinted at, I do not think that we are about to in the foreseeable future.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: With the leave of the House, I should like to comment briefly on what my right hon. Friend the Financial Secretary has said.

This short debate has been useful, in that it has brought a statement from the Front Bench on this subject, which I know is regarded as controversial, certainly by some schemes, if not by all. I recognise that if the assets are valued on the same basis as the liabilities, the margin of 5 per cent. is very likely to prove acceptable in many cases, but it is possible to feel some anxiety that circumstances might change. I think that the House will have been interested to hear my right hon. Friend say that the figure of the excess of 5 per cent. might also be modified with the passage of time and in the light of experience. That was a helpful clarification of a concession that we did not appreciate that we had had before.

The situation that it is not impossible to imagine is one in which wages rise faster than productivity. In final salary schemes, that would place higher obligations on the pension trusts than they might have anticipated, although it would also produce higher contributions than they might have anticipated. If wages rise faster than productivity, it seems inevitable that the real profits of the investments will fall and the assets of the pension trusts may not respond as the trustees hoped. There may be smaller dividends because the money is flowing out to the wage earners which they hoped would flow out to the investors, or there may be less capital growth because of various factors, when people do not put the same stock exchange valuation on assets because the dividends are proving to be somewhat disappointing. If that was so, a 5 per cent. margin might prove to have been inadequate and a refund to the sponsoring employer might prove to have been a most mistaken decision on the part of the trustees.

My right hon. Friend the Minister explained that in those trusts the beneficiaries do not have a direct claim on the fund, as I understand it. I regard that as in urgent need of change. That is why I place emphasis on the identification of the employees' assets and on the clarification of the duties of pension fund trustees, even where the pension fund has not been set up formally under a trust. The administrators or managers of these schemes, and the insurance companies that operate them, should recognise that they have the status of trustees, and that the money has been put in their hands for the beneficiaries and not to be refunded from time to time to the employers.

The circumstances in which the trustees are entitled to refund the money to the employer seem very unusual, and there should be far more pressure on the funds that have large sums at their disposal – possibly well in excess of their apparent liabilities – to find ways to distribute that money to the beneficiaries. If all occupational pension schemes accepted it as a liability to uprate fully with the RPI as public sector schemes do, in many cases they would prove not to be so fully funded as they think. There are plenty of other ways in which they could treat their beneficiaries more generously if they have funds to dispose of in trust for the beneficiaries that are not specifically allocated to meet their clear obligations. Nevertheless, as my right hon. Friend is aware that 5 per cent. may prove, with the passage of time, not to be a sufficiently generous figure, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion and clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Order for Third Reading read.

5.12 pm

Mr. Norman Lamont: I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

When a Bill is committed to a Standing Committee, it is customary to thank hon. Members at the end of the proceedings. However, as the Bill was discussed in Committee on the Floor of the House, it was not possible

[Mr. Norman Lamont]

to pay tribute to hon. Members at the end of the Committee stage. Had it been possible, I should have liked to pay tribute to two hon. Members. First, of course, I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams) who has advanced his views on pensions with remarkable resourcefulness and lucidity. We have all become well educated on pensions as a result. I only hope that my hon. Friend is not too despairing and truly believes in the Jericho principle that he enunciated on Second Reading.

The second hon. Member to whom, in the best non-partisan way, a tribute should be paid is the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) who has handled over 100 clauses absolutely on his own. All hon. Members who have listened to the debates will agree that he has done remarkably well. Now that the Opposition reshuffle has taken place, I am extremely sad that we are not able to welcome the shadow finance team here, because I wanted to point out that it has increased its numbers. For the first time, a shadow team outnumbers the real team; there are six shadow Ministers, compared with five real ones. There are only two explanations for that. One is that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer is the Gary Lineker of politics: he has to be marked by three men at once. The alternative version, which the Opposition may prefer, is that the hon. Member for Sedgefield has done such sterling work in Committee that they cannot find two people up to doing the work that he has done so well. The hon. Gentleman may choose the interpretation that he prefers.

I must say something about the pension provisions because they are the largest group of clauses in the Bill. They contain important and far-reaching changes. Much has been done to widen the choice of pensions. Many employers have established occupational schemes for their staff with the help, as my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington has emphasised, of generous tax reliefs. At present, more than 10 million people are members of such schemes, but there was clearly considerable scope for more to be done. Some 10 million employees are still not in occupational schemes and make no private provision for retirement. A central feature of our strategy is to bring private pensions within the reach of those employees, for two reasons: first, to provide them with a pension of their own, and, secondly, to increase their independence.

The new personal pensions will be available to all employees who are not in an occupational scheme, to the minority of employees who choose to opt out of their occupational scheme and to the self-employed. These schemes will be available from next January. The legislation is based on the present, broadly similar, retirement annuities provisions but, in addition to being brought up to date, the new measures incorporate a number of new features that have been widely welcomed. The Social Security Act 1986 enables employees to contract out of the additional component of the state scheme through a personal pension. The Finance Bill provides the necessary tax procedures to achieve that. Everyone will agree that these are important proposals, and my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington, who has been frank in some of his criticisms of the pensions regime, was kind enough to describe them as "inspired and imaginative." I hope that he will not mind my reminding him that those were his words.

In addition, the Bill enables a much wider range of pension providers to establish personal pension schemes. As well as insurance companies and friendly societies, the field will be open to banks, building societies and unit trusts. The Bill also contains provision to allow members of occupational schemes to make additional voluntary contributions to a pension plan that is completely separate from their employer's scheme, up to the tax approval limits on contributions and benefits. That, too, has been widely welcomed as something that will increase the choice of providing for retirement.

A number of hon. Members expressed concern about two aspects of the AVC proposals. First, they argued that benefits should not, as we propose, lose the right to be commuted. I am afraid that the Government do not accept that, because the tax reliefs for AVCs are intended to assist provision for additional pension benefits. Secondly, it was argued that the present benefit limits should not apply to free-standing AVCs which, it was suggested, were analogous to personal pensions. Again, I had to disagree with some of my hon. Friends and made clear my view that AVCs—whether in-house or free-standing—are not only personal pensions under another name. They provide benefits that supplement those available to someone in an occupational scheme. Therefore, I cannot accept that the benefit limits should not apply; nor do I believe that the necessary monitoring arrangements that the Revenue will be working out in consultation with the industry will make free-standing AVCs unworkable.

A further purpose of our reforms is to remove as far as possible the pensions obstacles to job mobility. My hon. Friend has emphasised time and again the problem of the early leaver. There is no quick and easy solution to that, but the new pensions opportunities which have been brought forward and which I have described will greatly reduce some of the worst aspects of this problem. I hope that my hon. Friend will at least agree with that. The improvements that we propose can be justified only if the tax reliefs for pensions are not abused. We have felt it necessary to impose some limited restrictions to guard against misuse of the tax reliefs, particularly by a small number of very high earners. The tax rules for pensions were never intended merely as a tax shelter for investment generally, with scope for postponement and, when it comes to lump sums, complete elimination of a tax liability. These restrictions will have no impact on the vast majority of pension scheme members. For ordinary working people, the opportunity for abuse has never been available.

During the debates in Committee, a number of hon. Members suggested that some aspects of the proposals—in particular, the rules on accelerated accrual of pensions—would restrict job mobility. My hon. Friend the Member for Slough (Mr. Watts) was extremely concerned about that. I am still not persuaded that any change in our proposals is justified, but I can assure my hon. Friend and the House that we shall keep the position under review, and if the rules appear to have a wider and more adverse impact on job mobility than I expect, we shall urgently consider the case for modifying them. I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Slough will note that.

I could not leave the subject of pensions without again referring to what my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington has said about final salary schemes, although in the debate on new clause 1 we covered that ground fairly

well. My hon. Friend is right that the question of early leavers still poses problems that we need to address in certain ways.

Mr. John Redwood (Wokingham): Does my right hon. Friend agree that if in some future legislation we manage to move nearer to money purchase in the way described by my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams) we would solve the problem of early leavers and the whole point of those amendments was to improve job mobility?

Mr. Lamont: My hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (Mr. Redwood) is absolutely right. I hope that in the proposals we have brought forward in this Finance Bill we have taken a modest step in that direction. As my hon. Friend said, those arguments will disappear the more we go down that road. It is to some extent a question of people's choices under the new types of pensions that are now available.

The hon. Member for Sedgefield asked whether the personal pension legislation in clause 21(2), which concerns the waiver of premium options, represents a change from the present law. The answer is no. Such an option allows premiums payable under a contract to be waived if a person cannot afford to pay them because of illness. That is possible for retirement annuities now, but does not have to be expressly legislated for. Personal pensions legislation, however, is structured in a different way.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) asked, in regard to clause 22, whether the new earlier retirement age of 50 may be applied between now and 4 January to existing retirement annuities. I am afraid that the answer is no. The present retirement annuity rules are not being changed, but there will be no objection to the amendment of existing retirement annuity contracts after 4 January so that they will be capable of approval under the new personal pension legislation.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale was also concerned about the administrative arrangements for dealing with excessive personal pension contributions. Those and other aspects of the administration of personal pension schemes will be discussed fully with the pensions industry. It is hoped that a discussion document will be circulated to interested parties by the end of the month.

In addition to the debates about pensions, we had two important debates on retrospection. The first was in the context of United Kingdom members of foreign partnerships in clause 62, and the second was in the context of roll-over relief for gains on oil licences in clause 80. I understand completely why the House and the Committee were concerned and anxious to examine those matters closely. Hon. Members will recall that in both those clauses the Government recommended retrospective legislation to restore the general understanding of the law following unexpected decisions in the courts. The general understanding of the law prior to those decisions in the first case was that United Kingdom resident partners of foreign partnerships are liable to United Kingdom tax like all other United Kingdom residents, and in the second case that roll-over relief is not available for gains on oil licences.

Right hon. and hon. Members will recall that I said that such retrospection has caused the Government very deep concern, and we had not come to the decision easily. We had to give greater weight to the interests of the majority of taxpayers than to a limited class of taxpayer. In both cases we were introducing legislation which, while restoring the general understanding of the law, was also preventing third parties from suddenly deriving a windfall benefit from the decisions of the courts for six years back.

The provisions in clause 70 on Lloyd's reinsurance to close are an important part of the Bill. The original proposals caused hon. Members considerable worry and perhaps I should remind the House why legislation was necessary.

As matters stand, the Revenue does not have an effective locus for examining claims for tax deductions in respect of reinsurance to close premiums and, where necessary, making adjustments for tax purposes. If nothing were done, Lloyd's underwriters would be in the unique position of being able to determine the amount of a tax deduction without effective review by an inspector of taxes.

There must be an effective system for ensuring that reinsurance to close premiums can be properly scrutinised for tax purposes. That is both right in principle and necessary to ensure fairness to other taxpayers whose claims for tax deductions have to satisfy examination by the Revenue.

However, the system must also be fair to Lloyd's and take account of its special features. We recognised that fact from the outset and when my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the proposals in his Budget speech he said that there would be immediate consultations with Lloyd's on the details of the legislation. Those discussions have been extensive and thorough and we have carefully considered Lloyd's representations.

Quite properly, Lloyd's has recognised throughout the discussions that there needs to be a proper system for ensuring that tax deductions for reinsurance to close are not excessive, but it was worried about the original wording, which treated reinsurance to close as a provision. In particular, it objected to the principle of equating reinsurance to close premiums paid by one syndicate of Lloyd's underwriters to another with the provisions for outstanding liabilities made by insurance companies. Lloyd's feared that if those criteria were applied to it there would be excessive disallowances of claims for tax deduction, which might consequently damage Lloyd's commercial position.

The revised clause in the Bill, with the amendments made in Committee, meet Lloyd's anxieties about the original proposals. The chairman of Lloyd's has told his members that the Lloyd's council considers that the legislation should prove to be "workable and acceptable".

Instead of equating reinsurance to close with insurance company provisions, the Bill now provides a free-standing test for the tax deductibility of reinsurance to close. The test is that the figure must be a fair and reasonable value of the liabilities, designed to produce neither a profit nor a loss for the underwriters who assume the outstanding liabilities. So reinsurance to close will be tax deductible in full if — but only if — the figure can be justified by adequate evidence.

I think that it is fair to say that clause 70 is a satisfactory outcome of the consultation with Lloyd's. It meets the twin objectives of giving the Revenue an effective locus, which it must have, and being fair to Lloyd's members. In future, the amount of reinsurance to close can be properly scrutinised by the tax inspector to ensure that tax deductions are not excessive. At the same time, the

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proposal takes full account of the unique characteristics of Lloyd's and reinsurance to close, which I accept cannot be equated with provisions made by insurance companies.

I referred earlier to the oil industry provisions in clause 80. Clause 101 contains a series of amendments to the oil taxation provisions in the Finance Act 1987, mainly affecting the petroleum revenue tax "nomination scheme", which we introduced in section 61 and schedule 10 of that Act. Many of the amendments are directed at detailed difficulties that emerged during the continuing discussion with the industry of the provisions in the 1987 Act and are designed to make life simpler for the taxpayers who are affected.

Rather than leave the amendments over until the spring Bill, we felt that oil companies, which will soon be making their first returns under the nomination scheme, would find it helpful if we proposed the necessary legislation now. In addition to these detailed changes, clause 101 and schedule 8 introduce a measure to counter certain practices that could be used to circumvent the nomination scheme. Unlike the nomination scheme itself, this will not take effect at once. It will be on the statute book only to be triggered by Treasury order should evidence of abuse arise.

One cannot avoid mentioning the changes in inheritance tax legislation. We have liberalised inheritance tax in that we have allowed transfers to interest-in-possession trusts to count as potentially exempt transfers, provided that they meet the normal qualifying conditions of potentially exempt transfers. This measure will help businesses that are often held in interest-in-possession trusts. It will also help our heritage when many of our great houses and works of art are held in interest-in-possession trusts. I again make it clear that, although we have given this exemption for transfers into interest-in-possession trusts, we intend to draw the line there and do not intend to extend this to other forms of trust such as discretionary trusts.

We had some discussions about acceptance of property in lieu of tax and the Bill now contains some important alterations about the way in which interest is calculated. The donor of the property or the painting can now calculate the interest either to the point at which the item is offered instead of tax or to the point at which it is accepted — depending on which is more advantageous from the point of view of the taxpayer. We hope that this will encourage more of our heritage to remain in Britain. Hon. Members may recall that under these arrangements we were enabled to acquire Constable's "Stratford Mill". We hope that the new optional arrangements will provide further encouragement for the continued use of the facility.

I should also mention the provisions on stamp duty. Clauses 99 and 100 are stamp duty clauses and correct anomalies which would otherwise inhibit the smooth working of the securities market. Clause 99 makes minor amendments to section 50 of the Finance Act 1987. Section 50 extended the stamp duty exemptions for gilt-edged securities to options to acquire such stock, such as "call options". Clause 99 extends the scope of section 50 exemption options to "put options" as well.

Clause 100 deals with two problems that have been encountered following the introduction of the reserve tax when shares have been sold to the public on the occasion of a listing. The clause removes charges to the reserve tax that occur when an issuing house stands as principal between the company and the vendor shareholders on the one hand and the public on the other. It also removes the double charge to stamp duty and the reserve tax that can arise in certain circumstances when a member of the public receives initially a renounceable document of title. The clause will enable the new issues market to operate more smoothly to the benefit of companies bringing their shares to the market and also to new investors.

Mr. Tim Smith: Has my right hon. Friend noticed that, since the rate of stamp duty was substantially cut, the yield from stamp duty from stock exchange transactions has risen? Does he think that there is any connection between those two things and, if so, what lessons should we draw?

Mr. Lamont: My hon. Friend makes an extremely interesting point. *[Interruption.]* That sedentary interruption is wrong. I know the answer all too well. If the House wishes we can debate for a considerable time the increased revenue that results from many areas when we cut taxes. That is a lesson that the Opposition have yet to learn and it is why so much of their argument that one can only afford more public services by increasing taxes is wrong. We can sometimes get better public services by cutting taxes.

Lastly, I should like to speak about what is perhaps the most important part of the Bill, the part which is undoubtedly a considerable innovation — profit-related pay. I am sorry that the Opposition persist in the view that the purpose of profit-related pay is to produce a low-wage economy. That is quite wrong. The purpose of profit-related pay is to produce pay that is affordable. Such pay has been wanted and pursued by Chancellors of the Exchequer in both Conservative and Labour Governments. It is very different from saying that we want a low-wage economy.

If we can have pay that is affordable, in the long run we shall have high wages and a prosperous economy. The new relief for profit-related pay is only one of several measures produced by the Government to encourage flexibility and to help create jobs by improving the supply performance of the economy. Profit-related pay means flexible pay. That means flexible upwards as well as downwards, in line with the commercial success of a business. Anyone who thinks that this necessarily means lower pay takes a much more pessimistic view of our business prospects than I or the markets do. We all want to see business success and higher remuneration and the Government are pursuing policies to those ends.

One could make the point that industrial production is at its highest ever level. Since 1979 we have seen dramatic growth in productivity and in profits. The idea of linking employees' pay to the commercial success of their business does not inevitably imply lower remuneration; quite the contrary. I make no apology for a measure that will encourage flexible pay. That is the direction in which we need to move, because although Britain's economy is making progress that would have seemed unbelievable 10 years ago, it is still hampered by rigidities and inefficiencies in its markets. That applies most of all to the labour market and to its pay system.

We have seen record falls in unemployment but we need more jobs and PRP can help here. Of course it is not a panacea, but I firmly believe that, if there were more profit-related pay schemes covering a significant part of

the earnings of a large number of employees, that in itself would be a major step down the road on which we have set out towards higher output, productivity and employment. The hon. Member for Sedgefield said that he and his party opposed the general principle of profit-related pay. Presumably that means that they believe in pay that is not related to profits. I wonder where they think that the money to pay employees comes from.

Mr. Blair I do not think that I ever said that I am against the principle of profit-related pay. I said that people were perfectly free to enter into profit-related pay bargains if they wanted to. What I am against is this provision which builds in an incentive for a specific type of incentive-based pay. That is altogether a different proposition.

Mr. Lamont: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for making that clear. Certainly some of his hon. Friends have shown opposition to the concept. They do not like the idea of pay being related to what is affordable by a company. I am glad that the hon. Gentleman departs from them on that.

The clauses that provide tax relief are designed to encourage the spread of PRP schemes. The same principle underlay the income tax relief for share schemes which were introduced in 1978 which we have turned into a great success. In the year to June 1987, a further 210 all-employee share schemes were approved under the legislation, as improved since 1978, bringing the total to over 1,300. If Opposition Members had at that time shown the same miserliness with tax relief as they now show to the clauses that encourage the spread of PRP schemes, I wonder whether we would ever have had the success that we have seen with share schemes. Profit-related pay complements the various existing share schemes, and those who support income tax relief for one should support it for the other.

The details of the proposed tax relief have been criticised for their complexity, and I would be the first to agree that the clauses have a complex appearance in parts, but that does not mean that a PRP scheme registered in accordance with this legislation would have to be complex. It could be simple and easy for employees to understand. We have gone to great lengths to allow employers to be able to choose from a great range of options what form their simple schemes should take. It is this freedom and flexibility that gives the Bill the appearance of complexity.

The Inland Revenue will be issuing guidance notes in September to assist employers. It is an encouraging sign of the widespread interest that our proposals have attracted that already over 21,000 employers have asked in advance for copies of that guidance, and in that number are 120 of the top 250 companies. I hope that they will turn their interest into action without delay. They will need to be thinking now about how to construct a scheme if they are to be registered to operate tax relief on it in time for the next profit year. Some will prefer to negotiate introduction next year and begin the tax relief in the year afterwards. Our costings anticipate a gradual take-up but I shall clarify that. A high take-up in 1988-89 would not produce the full annual cost in that year. Our estimate of a £50 million cost in 1988-89 could thus be consistent with over 1 million employees being covered by registered schemes in that year, which would produce higher costs in later years. I am sure that take-up will grow over time.

As tax relief could be very valuable — up to the equivalent of 4p off the basic rate to a man on average earnings — it will have a significant cost. I am not sure that it will ever cost £1 billion a year, which was the figure produced at one stage in the debate on the assumption that practically everyone who could be eligible will be covered by a registered scheme. A figure of several hundreds of millions a year is not unlikely, however, if the initiative has wide appeal. If it were to cover every potentially eligible employee, however, no one would be happier than the Government. That would indicate a radical change for the better and would ease our labour markets, which is something which we need very much to do. This would be a worthwhile return to the taxpayer.

The hon. Member for Sedgefield has said repeatedly that he could find better things to do with such large amounts of money. I think that we know what Opposition Members mean when they talk about better things that they would do with the money. There is probably no need to enlarge on that. They are extremely good at finding ways of spending large sums, sums larger by far than what is at stake with the proposed tax relief, and they would be able quickly to spend them. The difference is that the proposed tax relief will be a constructive contribution to making the economy work better. It will be a way of getting us away from the rigidities that have bedevilled our performance in the past. That is why it is essential that the House should support it as a way of helping businesses to do better. It will help employees to earn higher living standards and help our economy to grow and prosper in response to the challenges of competitive world markets.

In successive Budgets, the Government have held steady to the objectives of cutting taxes and simplifying the tax system to reduce distortion and lighten the administrative burden. Tax reform and reduction is a vital part of our overall strategy. We want to see a society in which enterprise is rewarded and where individuals are allowed to keep more of their money to spend or save as they wish. We want to provide greater incentives for individuals and their families. The pre-election legislation implemented vital measures to enable us to pursue these objectives. Overall, taxes were reduced by over £2·6 billion, the basic rate was cut by two percentage points to 27 per cent., inheritance tax was reformed and there was a package of measures to reduce the burden of VAT on small businesses.

The record is clear. Personal tax rates have been reduced and we have introduced reforms in business taxation that are being copied in other parts of the world. We have a system of business taxation that rightly rewards enterprise by allowing companies to retain more of the profits that they have made to spend as they wish, rather than the old self-defeating system that gave tax subsidies to encourage investment but taxed away the incentive to invest properly.

The Bill continues the process of reform and imaginative proposals, especially those relating to pensions and profit-related pay, which I predict will bring about significant change.

I commend the Bill to the House.

5.46 pm

Mr. Tony Blair (Sedgefield): First, I thank the Financial Secretary to the Treasury for his kind remarks, his courtesy, his good will throughout the course of our consideration of the Bill, and for what was the most

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detailed explanation that I have ever heard on the Third Reading of a Finance Bill. I welcome the two Ministers who have participated in the proceedings of the Finance Bill for the first time, the Economic Secretary—it is a pleasure to welcome him to our deliberations—and the Chief Secretary, who spoke on Second Reading. Since Second Reading, the Chief Secretary has stayed in the background — no doubt he has been preoccupied in trying to square the Government's pre-election promises with the realities of public expenditure.

I wish to join in the praise of the hon. Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams), whose knowledge of pensions brought expertise to our debates. To make an understatement, that expertise is not always present. The hon. Gentleman must have thought that Heaven had arrived on earth when, after years of containment no doubt by the Government Whips, he was given licence to advance a pretty well unlimited expansion of his arguments this afternoon. We are grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his contributions to our debates. If I may say so, it is greatly to his credit that he made a detailed speech in moving new clause 1 and was never once in danger of straying outwith the bounds of order. When he dies, I think that "transferability" will be found written on his heart.

I shall confine myself carefully to the contents of the Bill. It is the rump of a previous measure but it contains two especially important measures, those on profit-related pay and pensions. Though not necessarily headline-catching, these are measures that could be extremely far-reaching in their effect. On pensions, many of the measures flowed from the Social Security Act 1986, but this Bill included provisions on lump sum payments and the right to make additional voluntary contributions.

I wish to expresss one note of hesitation about the pensions legislation. The benefits of personal pension schemes are now considerable, especially in terms of accelerated rights of accrual. I hope that occupational pension schemes are able to keep up with personal schemes and that they will not become second-class schemes for those who cannot put together a decent personal pension scheme. The benefits of both need to be understood clearly and explained.

The Opposition found themselves unconvinced about profit-related pay and the claims that it would lead to lower unemployment and have beneficial effects on the relationship between workers and management of a sort that other incentive-based schemes have lacked. I do not say that profit-related pay is bad, and that is not the issue that we have to consider. We have to decide whether it was right to introduce this form of fiscal incentive to encourage PRP. The dilemma is that if the eventual costs of PRP are small because it has been little used, it will have failed because PRP, if it is to have any impact on the broader economy, must be widely used.

If profit-related pay succeeds in catching on and becomes expensive, the extravagant claims made for it will be subject to even greater scrutiny. If its costs run to hundreds of millions of pounds, as is possible — the Financial Secretary did not hotly dispute this—and its benefits prove to be vague or even illusory, we shall have made a very expensive mistake. Opposition Members felt that we could not support it for that reason.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): The hon. Gentleman seems to be worried about the scheme suggested in the Bill being a success. If it is a success because companies make a lot of profits and therefore people pay less tax, because they are in the scheme for profit-related pay, is it not the case that as the company itself makes more profit it will be paying more tax so the cost of the scheme would be counterbalanced by the additional income from the company?

Mr. Blair: Obviously, that is the hope expressed by the proponents of this scheme. However, the argument that profit-related pay will help to reduce unemployment rests on a case posited at a time of recession. It is argued that in a recession there will be less incentive to sack workers but the profits will be reduced. I am not saying that profit-related pay is about cutting wages but rather that the case for profit-related pay, as against other incentive schemes, has not been made out.

The scheme may succeed in the sense that many people use it, but it will succeed in justifying the claims made for it only if it has a favourable impact on the broader economy.

We have also discussed various minor matters, such as the corporation tax changes which allow for automatic penalties. Those introduced some of the matters recommended by the Keith committee. I repeat the warning that, without a power of mitigation, the penalties could work great injustice, and in value added tax terms they have certainly done so.

The Government have changed their mind on at least three matters. They changed their mind on the treatment of the reinsurance to close premium in relation to Lloyd's in clause 70 and on the life assurance companies, where the treatment of capital gains on policies is to remain the same pending a review of the whole question of the tax treatment of life assurance companies. The Government changed their mind, too, on clause 80 and the taxation of oil companies in relation to roll-over relief in the farming out of licences. On that, the Minister agreed to consider some form of relief at the exploration phase when no profit is made.

Clauses 62 and 80 introduce retrospective legislation. The first concerns partnerships resident abroad and the second deals with roll-over relief for oil licences. We were right to draw attention to those two clauses on the basis of retrospection alone and to restate, as a matter of general principle, the fact that we dislike and distrust retrospective legislation, except in very special circumstances. There was a measure of common agreement that retrospection should be permitted only when it restored a general understanding of the law and when the tax loss resulting from the anomaly is very substantial.

During our debates, I was never convinced of the wisdom of the way in which the Government have proceeded in these clauses. When a tax case is taken to the commissioners or to appeal, the taxpayer wins and the Revenue introduces legislation to close the loophole, the legislation usually provides—and does so in the clauses — for the original taxpayer to be put into a unique category and thus secure the benefits resulting from his appeal. That is a very strange state of affairs, especially when many other cases may have been hanging fire pending the outcome of the original case.

The Finance Bill contains 104 clauses and nine schedules. Given that I have served on three Finance Bill

Committees and that I am now moving on to other things, perhaps I may be permitted a moment of reflection. There are two enduring characteristics of Finance Bills. First, much of what they contain is highly technical, although non-controversial. When complexity is combined with lack of controversy in specialised matters such as taxation, there is a strong case for consideration by a Committee specifically formed to examine such matters. A Front Bencher, or indeed a Back Bencher — particularly in Opposition — will find that most of his time is devoted to understanding the legislation, let alone interpreting it or amending it sensibly.

Secondly, many of the clauses affect taxation of certain sectors or interests in a limited but profound way. The Government found with the clauses dealing with Lloyd's and life assurance companies that they benefited from a period of consultation. That period was forced upon them by the general election. However, in many cases the advantage of surprise on Budget day is negligible compared with the highly significant disadvantage of introducing measures without adequate consultation with those most closely affected.

At its best, this Bill is a typical Conservative measure. The Government are caring to a fault in considering the tax efficiency of foreign-controlled companies. They are painstaking in their study of detail when debating the future of inheritance tax, interests in possession or the plight of the wealthy. They welcome with open arms the slightest representation from Lloyd's. However, when it comes to hearing the voice of the under-privileged, the pleas for help of the unemployed or the cry for action on behalf of the 10 million or so people who are living below the poverty line, the Government fall strangely deaf. Their attitude becomes dismissive and their purse stays tight shut.

It is for that reason above all others — not because of the minutiae of the Finance Bill but because it affects the nature of our society — that we shall oppose the Bill tonight.

5.58 pm

Mr. Andrew Mitchell (Gedling): I rise to address the House for the first time in a spirit of great humility — deeply honoured to represent my constituency in this place.

I am particularly pleased to have caught your eye relatively early in the Session, Madam Deputy Speaker, so that I may pay tribute to my predecessor, Sir Philip Holland. Philip's love and knowledge of this place and his service to his constituency was well known and well respected — as much in Gedling as in this House.

I mean no disrespect to Acton when I say that Philip graduated from that seat, from 1959 to 1964, to Carlton, which he went on to represent for 21 years — latterly as the constituency of Gedling, following the Boundary Commission's most recent review.

Any hon. Member who chairs the Committee of Selection and yet remains so well liked and respected by hon. Members on both sides of the House must be endowed with the greatest of skills. Only time will tell whether any of my hon. Friends will take up Sir Philip's mantle as a great hunter of quangos. I have been left in no doubt over the past few weeks that Philip's many friends on both sides of the House will join me in wishing him and Lady Jo Holland a long and happy retirement.

The House may be aware that I am not the first member of my family to have taken his seat in this House; indeed, I am at least the fourth to have done so. Nevertheless, over the past three weeks I have come to the confident conclusion that not since Lloyd George have so many people known my father.

I beg to suggest that the constituency of Gedling is insufficiently well known outside Nottinghamshire. The rural deanery of Gedling, which gave its name to the refashioned seat of Carlton in 1983, is far more compact than its predecessor, having lost all the land south of the River Trent. My constituency stands at the crossroads of England, with a foot in the north, a foot in the south, but its heart in the Midlands.

Many hon. Members wax lyrical about the rural or urban nature of their constituencies and their agricultural or commercial interests. The great delight and attraction of the Gedling constituency lies in the exciting cross-section of the great variety of our national life that it provides. From the rural beauty and farming lands at the northern end to the more industrial areas of Netherfield and Colwick, my constituency includes the prime residential areas of Carlton, Woodthorpe and Arnold, perched either side of a hilly ridge. It also contains the attractive villages of Gedling, Burton Joyce and Stoke Bardolph, which include two of the most beautiful churches in the country which date from Saxon times. The Gedling colliery is achieving record productivity. It has been recruiting new members to the industry over the past six months and is an important feature of my constituency.

The quality of life enjoyed by my constituents is, by and large, excellent. We are particularly well served by the fine health facilities in Nottinghamshire which have seen a 30 per cent. decrease in waiting lists over the past four years. My constituents profit from living under the benign sway of the Gedling borough council, which is continuously singled out for praise by the Audit Commission for its standards of efficiency and service provision. Indeed, the council had its own version of the right to buy before the Government introduced their Housing Bill in 1980. We receive national and international delegations to inspect our housing schemes for the elderly and the frail elderly.

Of great significance is the fact that Gedling lies alongside the city of Nottingham. We know only too well that what happens in Nottingham today affects us in Gedling tomorrow. Gedling's wealth and success are inextricably linked to the future of Nottingham city. As I try to follow that rocky pathway which is the lot of a Government Back Bencher, travelling as it does between toadyism and revolt, I shall be hoping, Madam Deputy Speaker, to catch your eye in the future when the Government's bold plans to tackle the problems of our inner city come under discussion. We have much to be proud of in Gedling, and I am pleased to have been able to tell the House briefly some of those things.

Many of my constituents have followed the passage of this Bill with keen interest. The measures which passed into law before the election were widely welcomed. The help for business in dealing with VAT and in reducing small companies' corporation tax was warmly supported, as was the further help for the blind and the elderly. Above all, we have had the welcome reduction in income tax. Today we are asked to give a Third Reading to this Bill, the greater part of which reintroduces proposals for tax relief for profit-related pay, as well as extending the

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accessibility and flexibility of personal pension schemes. I warmly welcome both measures. As my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary said on Second Reading:

"The working of the labour market remains one of the greatest weaknesses in this country." — [*Official Report*, 8 July 1987; Vol. 119, c. 356.]

There is common cause on both sides of the House that the level of unemployment remains appallingly high.

I hope that I am being equally uncontroversial when I say that it is the supply side of our economy that must particularly command our attention and the Bill, with these two principal measures, makes a direct contribution on that front. In spite of significant progress on the supply side, there remain real restrictions on job mobility, occasioned by the lack of private rented accommodation and immobility within the council housing system.

The problems within education and training are well rehearsed, but the results are that we do not always turn out children equipped to compete in today's industries or win tomorrow's jobs. There are still problems within the labour market which hinder productivity along with our industrial performance. Above all, there is the absurdity of a system whose rigidities can attribute greater value to being unemployed than to working.

Tax relief for profit-related pay will ecourage the widespread adoption of such schemes and will help to dispel any vestige of that bizarre myth which was prevalent during the days of our economic decline in some parts of the private sector—that pay is somehow not in reality always directly linked to profitability.

These measures will help further to eradicate the them-and-us sentiments which for so long have dogged British industry. They will extend and enhance a community of interest between employee, employer and shareholder and secure a more motivated and committed work force. Above all, who can doubt that such measures, when implemented, will act to cut unemployment by ensuring less risk for an employer contemplating taking on labour as well as acting as an alternative to redundancy when times are bad?

I believe that the clauses which relate to private pensions will secure an equally warm welcome. They improve the lot of the early leaver, and perhaps I should declare an interest at this point. It is a sad fact that many who have changed careers during their working life are particularly disadvantaged in respect of their pension entitlements. The relevant clauses in the Bill will not only increase the freedom to choose in pension planning but free another rigidity in the labour market over the long term.

The Bill's provisions join the many other economic measures taken by the Government to improve choice and freedom for millions of our fellow citizens. Such measures also extend personal responsibility greatly within society. It is the extent to which these opportunities and responsibilities have been grasped throughout society which is truly remarkable. Many of these measures have been practical methods to improve the commercial operation of our economy, but they are part of a shift in opinions and ideas, and expression of a new consensus which has sprung up. They mark a sea change in public opinion. It may be that the Falklands factor disguised the extent of support for this new reality, but the 1987 third election victory is a message which cannot be ignored on the Opposition Benches. Indeed, the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) acknowledges these truths in his books and in his more recent speech in the debate on the Loyal Address. I dare to suggest that even the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) has shown an awareness of these new realities and aspirations over the past few weeks.

It was a Conservative Prime Minister returning to office in 1951 who reflected in the House that the nation required time to allow certain Socialist legislation to reach its full fruition. Although the positions are not comparable, I hope that the Opposition will accept how great has been the revolution in the spread of choice and ownership within society as well as in personal responsibilities keenly grasped. It is time for the Opposition to embrace these verities.

6.6 pm

Mr. Andrew Smith (Oxford, East): I, too, am rising for the first time to speak in the House and I should like first to congratulate the hon. Member for Gedling (Mr. Mitchell) on his speech, which I found eloquent and confident and which taught me a great deal about his constituency. It is a double pleasure to congratulate him because, last week, I had the misfortune to lose my identity pass and the hon. Member was, first, observant enough to find it and, secondly, kind enough to return it to me personally.

It is an honour to have been elected to represent the people of Oxford, East. I sincerely thank them for the privilege that they have afforded me. That Labour gained the seat with an increase in our vote of more than 20 per cent. on 1983 is a real tribute to the Labour party members and supporters in our constituency and beyond who worked hard and long to secure victory. It is a tribute, too, to the standing which Labour has built up in our community over the years. The result was proof that Labour can win new seats in southern England. I am sure that it will be followed by other similar southern successes in the next election.

It is not as though my predecessor, Steve Norris, and the local Conservative association were any pushover. Indeed, I should like to express the thanks of the constituency, as I did on election night, for his service, especially his assiduous work on behalf of individual constituents. I thank him also for his stance on issues such as freedom of information and sanctions against apartheid. As many hon. Members will know, Steve Norris is a man of very considerable ability and persuasiveness. I do not want to damage his chances by saying this, but if the Conservative party has any sense, it will forgive his achievement in securing last year the title of *The Guardian* Back Bencher of the year and get him back in the House by finding bluer waters for him to swim in next time.

For those who do not know our constituency, Oxford, East is not the Oxford of "dreaming spires" or colleges but the Oxford of the people who built them, who work in them and who are rightly proud of the city's heritage, for it is their heritage—a heritage which also takes in the Oxford of motor manufacture, very fine hospitals and a polytechnic which is second to none. It is a compact and yet varied constituency in which the pride, the sense of community and the very diversity of the parts bring something greater to the whole.

I especially place on record my gratitude to the people of Blackbird Leys estate, where I live, for their invaluable advice and support over the years I have had the privilege of representing them on the city council.

I also record my personal appreciation of the contribution of the ethnic minorities to the community life of our constituency and pledge to continue here the work to eliminate the evils of racism whereby ethnic minorities are seen as a problem rather than as an opportunity for a genuine multi-cultural society based on equality, mutual respect, and full and fair opportunities for all.

Ours is a constituency which has escaped the very worst ravages of monetarism and recession. By present national standards, the Oxford area is a prosperous one; yet we have in our midst pockets of bad unemployment, serious poverty, one of the worst housing crises in Britain and shortages of funds for health and education that are drastically undermining services held in the highest regard by all in the area. Across our constituency, people of all backgrounds and political persuasion have come to demand and expect quality in public service provision that can only be secured by harnessing to the dedication of the work force adequate resources efficiently managed and applied in an economic and political environment that backs up their collective efforts and provides a democratic framework within which the individual and the family — not just a few of them, but every individual and family — can make the most of their lives. The Government's programme, the Finance Bill and the Budget that preceded it contain nothing to enable our people to do that. It is such a waste of the potential of my constituency, as it is of Britain as a whole.

I should like to make two comments and one suggestion about the fiscal incentives for profit-related pay in the Bill. My comments are, first, that if those provisions have any merit, which I think is doubtful, in any case there is nothing whatever in them for Austin Rover workers, local authority workers, hospital workers and the many others in Oxford, East working in the public sector, as clause 6 of the Bill specifically excludes them from the scheme and further relegates them to the status of second-class citizens. If there is benefit to be had, they lose out twice. They lose out by not being eligible and, to add insult to injury, they will be paying through their taxes for any benefits that others may enjoy.

My second comment is that, if we are to provide fiscal incentives for pay to be linked to profits, any sense of natural justice would require that this be conditional upon rights to information and, indeed, bargaining on the part of employees as to how those profits are determined. The absence of any such rights destroys any benign purpose that this part of the Bill may have had.

My suggestion is that if the Government are not merely engaged in a wage-cutting exercise, as the Financial Secretary said, if they are genuinely convinced of the merits of taxpayers subsidising linked pay and profits, they could best demonstrate their conviction by going the whole hog—by applying the thing the other way round and providing the same incentives for linking distributed profits to wage levels. We could have wage-related profits. That way, shareholders would benefit only where managements succeeded in getting wages up — a true harmony of interest, to my mind. However, I fear that that is not altogether what the Government have in mind.

Hon. Members on both sides in Committee referred to Austin Rover workers and others under the control of the Crown being excluded from the profit-related pay provisions of the Bill. Even more disturbing was the response on behalf of the Government to the effect that this way was all okay because public sector activities would be covered when they were transferred to the private sector. This can only add to the anxieties that afflict the future of our car industry.

The Oxford area has seen 11,500 jobs in the car industry destroyed in the past 10 years. We have seen car workers wages' tumbling down the pay ladder not because of any lack of effort on the part of the work force; workers are working harder than ever before. It is not because of any resistance to new technology; some of the most advanced robotics in Britain are at Cowley. It is because the Government have signally failed to provide the market conditions for the success of the domestic car industry. Worse than that, they have heaped on top of the high exchange and high interest regimes that all but crippled the industry all the uncertainties about the future ownership of Austin Rover. Last year's Ford sell-off talks and the forced disclosure of commercial secrets to Ford dealt a body blow to the company at the very time when all the efforts of the work force and the completion of the new model range were starting to turn the company around.

I would hope to stay within the conventions on controversy in maiden speeches and have the support of Conservative Members when I say that the future of the car industry depends, first, on keeping Austin Rover in the ownership of the British people; secondly, on assuring investment for the models for the future; and, thirdly, on creating the market conditions in which the products the workers are so keen to produce can be sold. Long-term planning is needed to ensure the success of this key industry, not just for the sake of those directly employed and those in components manufacture who, together with dependants, total around 1 million people, but for the sake of the future of other key industries — steel, robotics, plastics, electronics and glass industries, all of which have a future linked closely to the success of our car industry.

There would be no clearer sign that Britain is the first undeveloping country than to further dismember and dispose of the only bits of the car industry in British hands. It would be a catastrophe not just for my constituency but for the country as a whole — a catastrophe of such an order that I sincerely hope that even the present Government will shrink from the prospect and instead now provide the support for the industry that its efforts and contribution to the economy so richly deserve. That way, our key manufacturing industries might generate profits for investment and profits from which workers can take a share. It is fair shares and fair opportunities for all that the Oxford, East voters and Labour Members are looking for. It is a tragedy and a great pity that those fair shares and those fair opportunities are not reflected in the Bill any more than they are in the Government's programme.

6.18 pm

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): It is a great pleasure and a privilege to follow two such charming and eloquent maiden speeches. I am pleased to be able to do so. I say to my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Mr. Mitchell) that I hesitate to make remarks about chips off old blocks, but such was his eloquence and the content of his speech, of which we hope to hear many more in the future, that it may well be said before too long that father

[Mr. Tony Marlow]

is a chip off the new block. I was pleased to hear the remarks he made about his predecessor, Sir Philip Holland, who was well respected and loved by those of us here. He had the wonderful knack of making sure that one got on the Committees that one wanted to get on and that one did not get on to those that one did not want to get on.

I liked the caution about treading the narrow path between toadyism and revolt. I understand that *Private Eye* has a competition for what I think could be described in the Chamber as the excrement of the year. It may well be that at some stage *Private Eye* will set up a competition for the revolting toady of the year. I am quite confident that it will not be me or my hon. Friend.

The hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) also showed great promise for the future and we all enjoyed his speech. He made some kind remarks about his predecessor, Steve Norris. It is one of the sad and savage paradoxes, one of the harsh ironies of politics, that "the good die young", as it were. I am sure that we all agree that Steve Norris was one of the outstanding Members in the previous Conservative intake. He had great ability, personality and charm and, as the hon. Gentleman has said, great concern for the unfortunate. The hon. Gentleman suggested that if we were wise we should hope to see him back here again. We are indeed wise and we hope to see him back before long. The hon. Member for Oxford, East also referred to the importance of the motor industry and spoke with concern and affection about his constituency. Conservative Members, too, are deeply concerned about the fortunes of the motor industry and we are pleased that reports from Austin Rover are positive. We wish the hon. Gentleman and his constituents well.

This Finance Bill has been described as a hangover from the last Parliament—the controversial bits that we could not get through before the general election—but what was controversial then is perhaps less so now. Many of the controversialists before the election now sing a very different tune. The hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) is convinced now that Conservative Finance Bills in the past few years have led to growth in the economy. The right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), who is much respected among my colleagues, also believes that the economy is in good fettle. The perhaps less respected right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) was filled with foreboding about the state of the economy, but having seen that his dire predictions are not to come to pass, he has removed himself from Treasury affairs and returned to where he was some four years ago.

Tunes have changed and from the Opposition's treatment of the Finance Bill in the past few days it seems that it is no longer a controversial hangover from the last Parliament. The hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) seemed almost to welcome many of the provisions. He was not sure whether this was the best way to do things, although he suggested no alternative, but he seemed to imply that many of the measures might have his support, if not today at least when they prove successful, as they surely will.

That has been the Government's history in the past eight years. They and their policies have been criticised, castigated and damned by the Opposition, but eventually their measures have been seen, if not in Socialist eyes as the right measures, as effective and popular measures respected by the British people. Socialist candidates are learning what to say when they knock on the door of a person who has bought his council house, his car and shares in British Gas. There was a time when it was felt that we were all Socialists. I believe that now we are all becoming Conservatives.

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): We all are Conservatives.

Mr. Marlow: My hon. Friend is certainly a robust follower of that persuasion.

This Finance Bill is one of a long line of Conservative Finance Bills which have regenerated and transformed the British economy. One loses count, but this must be about the seventh year of uninterrupted growth, with an average of 3 per cent., which is the fastest of any economy in western Europe. We used to be the sick man of Europe, but now we are the fit man of Europe. As a result of the Government's economic policy, manufacturing productivity has increased by a massive 43 per cent. since 1980—again, a greater increase than in any other advanced industrial country. That magnificent achievement is in part due to Bills such as this, but the majority of the credit must go to the British people, who have grasped with both hands the opportunity presented to them.

The Opposition always seem to give statistics about manufacturing industry, choosing one little slice of the economy and comparing it with, from their point of view, favourable figures from some past time in history. Manufacturing industry, the extractive industries and the construction industries are all creating wealth—doing things, building things and making things—and when they are all added together one sees that there has been a massive increase in output since 1979. For some reason—I think that I know why—the Opposition choose only manufacturing industry.

I see the hon. Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) on the Opposition Front Bench looking at me intently. Let us take British Airways as an example. There are people who drive aeroplanes, people who build hangars and transit facilities, people who operate those facilities, people who sell holidays and people who maintain the aircraft. There are also people who manufacture aircraft, but an airline needs all those things and all generate wealth and provide a service that people want.

Of course manufacturing industry is important, but one must consider the whole cake and not just a slice of it. Moreover, if the Opposition are still worried about manufacturing industry, the news is good. Productivity has increased by 43 per cent. and output is set to increase by 4 per cent. this year, as is manufacturing investment.

Conservative Members welcome the specific measures in the Finance Bill. I am pleased to see further action on profit-related pay. I have always been very keen on the idea of co-operatives. I cannot see why it is regarded as a Labour party idea, because the Labour party that we know—and perhaps love—has always believed in central control, believing that the party knows best and wanting to tell people what to do. In a co-operative, control is not from the top down but from the bottom up. It is about co-operation and working together for a common cause.

Profit-related pay is halfway between a normal firm and a co-operative. As with a co-operative, the better the firm

does, the better those who work in it will do, but a co-operative goes a stage further and those who work in it have an equity stake as well. As my hon. Friend the Minister and others have said, this is part of our policy of building up incentives and commitment at the workplace. The better the firm does, the better the workers will do. The greater the co-operation between workers and management, the greater the benefit. To my mind, that is a very Conservative philosophy.

I am not the only person to take that view. There has been massive interest in the scheme proposed by the Government. I understand that some 20,000 employers have requested further details because they are thinking of introducing it in their workplace. Nearly half the 250 largest companies in this country are interested to see whether they can make profit-related pay work in their enterprises. Opposition Members have said that it may well work. I am sure that it will work. I am sure that we will all be pleased by the result. It is a great step forward and it is an imaginative scheme.

One of the main issues in the Finance Bill is the broadening of pensions – the freedom and the flexibility of pension schemes that are going to be available to people. In future, people will be able to make their own pension arrangements. I, like many other people, worked for a company with a company pension scheme. I dare say that, when I retire at the age of 65, I shall get an extra two shillings and sixpence per week for five years' work. Had that pension scheme been transferable or had I been able to have my own private pension scheme and transfer that into my later pension schemes as I changed jobs later on, as people do, of course it would be worth a great deal more money to me. This is a long overdue improvement that should be welcomed.

My right hon. Friend said that it should encourage job mobility. My right hon. Friend, as we know, was a man of Industry and Energy. Now he has gone to the Treasury. Job mobility affects Ministers, and it is a good thing that it does affect Ministers. They get experience on one part and move on to another job. Perhaps my right hon. Friend will move on to become Secretary of State for Scotland or Wales after the next stage. We shall have to wait and see. For many people, moving from one job to another – career development – is valuable. I was in the services for 11 years. We used to get postings for two years, two and a half years or three years. We would do one job in one part of the services and then go on to another one. It was that build-up of experience of different jobs that helped to build up a total career and an understanding of the total operation. The change in pension schemes will be valuable in assisting job mobility. As my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) said, there is nothing worse tahn someone seeing out his time to retirement because otherwise he will lose his pension rights. That is again a much overdue change.

I said to my right hon. Friend in regard to a previous amendment that there is one area within the pensionable population that we should do something about. That is, those who have already retired – there is nothing that they can do about it any more – and have limited occupational pensions. They are not on supplementary benefit, they cannot get any other provisions that the state provides, and they have got only a limited occupational pension and limited savings. For those who are on the basic pension and supplementary benefit, and receive rate rebates, various other allowances are made. Those who have large company pension schemes are better off than they have ever been before. Those who have built up big savings, as people have been able to do over the past eight years of the Government, are better off than they have ever been before. I put it to my right hon. Friend that we should introduce measures to help that group of people whom we have all found during the election campaign.

My right hon. Friend said – I think accurately at the time – that the way to deal with that is to deal with the age allowance. I make another plea to my right hon. Friend that, when we are considering the Budget, with the great success of the economy, with increased tax revenues, with the increased buoyancy of the economy, one of the things that we should be able to do above all during the next Budget is to help that group of people who have saved, been prudent, looked forward to tomorrow and to their old age and yet, at this stage, are not enjoying the benefits of the increased prosperity of the country. Let us see if we can do something really dramatic for them with the age allowance when it comes up in the next Budget.

There is one other point that I put to my right hon. Friend before I finish. One of the first political experiences I was ever exposed to – it was very formative – was going to a public meeting somewhere in Oxfordshire. It was a Conservative meeting and it was being addressed by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in a previous incarnation. I think that he was a prospective candidate at that stage; it was quite some time ago. It was the then policy of the Conservative party to go for something called the inheritance tax. We had something called capital transfer tax, we had something called death duties, and we have now got something called inheritance tax.

This inheritance tax is a whole lot different from that suggested by my right hon. Friend in those days – that which was Conservative party policy in those days. In those days, we would tax the amount that each recipient got rather than the amount that the donor passed on. There is a great deal of benefit in that. It encourages the spread of wealth. Also, there are those who are concerned about spoilt young men getting too much money too early in their lives. If on the one hand there is one spoilt young man with 10 rich uncles and they all leave their money to him, and on the other there is one parent, no uncles and 10 sons, it makes sense to introduce a real inheritance tax if it can be arranged. I understand that it would be difficult. I ask my right hon. Friend to think about it when he is thinking about inheritance tax. Let us see whether we can put the tax effectively on the recipient. It was party policy once rather in the way that we have got it now.

It is with great pleasure that I have studied the Bill, and it is with great pleasure that I have listened to two excellent maiden speeches. I hope that the Bill will be passed by the House this evening.

6.35 pm

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): I shall make a brief contribution to what I hope will be a relatively crisp debate, although I am not convinced that it will be. The Bill has been before the House, counting Second Reading, on five full days and has been described as the tidying-up operation of what was not in the mark 1 Finance Bill. The debate has provided a good opportunity for, so far, two maiden speeches. Maybe there will be a few more. I join in the tributes that were paid to the hon. Members for Gedling (Mr. Mitchell) and for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith)

[Mr. Malcolm Bruce]

on their maiden speeches, one made after the other. Their speeches had a difference of character which, I think the House will agree, shows that we have two hon. Members who will make distinctive contributions. The hon. Member for Gedling claimed to be the fourth generation and, therefore, a member of a well-established dynasty. No doubt the hon. Member for Oxford, East hopes to be the first of a dynasty to represent his area.

My colleagues supported Second Reading and will support the Bill again tonight because of the main issues of which we have long been advocates. I say to the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow), after his usually robust knock-about that we have heard, that it is true that many economic indicators are moving upwards. But I do not think that the House should forget that we are climbing out of a pit that was substantially dug by the first two years of Conservative party monetarist policy. The House should welcome the fact that we are climbing out of the pit, but some of us are a little less than effusive about giving all credit to the Government who helped to put us into the mess in the first place.

The Government make unqualified claims about inflation. It is worth looking at countries such as West Germany, which has a negative rate of inflation. The difference between its rate of inflation and ours is about 7 per cent. After all, it is our major competitor within the Economic Community. The Government should not argue that there is any cause for complacency about achievements in regard to inflation, particularly since many pressures are working through the economy at the moment and are pushing it in the opposite direction.

Two main measures in the Bill relate to personal pension schemes and profit-related pay, most of which are necessary and which I support. I shall make a comment on pensions, take up something that the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) said and, maybe, develop it slightly further. The flexibility and portability that are developed in the Bill are welcome and essential to the way in which the economy will develop in future. It is right to be careful not to undermine the occupational pensions of those who are dependent on them. At the very least, we must ensure that everybody in society has an equal chance of making proper provision for their retirement.

It is time that the Government addressed what we should do about people who are in no occupational pension scheme, have worked all their lives, yet have made no provision for their retirement. In some cases, they should not be criticised, as they sometimes are by Conservative Members, when they reach the end of their working lives and find themselves dependent on the old-age pension and nothing else and, very often, are forced to apply for social security benefits. Many of those people have been misled by Governments of both complexions into believing that pensions would be kept at an adequate level on which to live. On several occasions, Governments have promised earnings-related provisions, but they have never been delivered.

The debate should go on from the Bill to consider how we can ensure that everyone makes proper provision for his retirement and recognises that, although the state will, rightly, provide the base, the old-age pension, most people will find life much more comfortable when they retire if they have an adequate means of topping-up the state pension. They should enjoy their retirement instead of moving from a reasonably comfortable working life to abject poverty in retirement. Far too many people face the latter, and we should tackle the problem head-on.

I prefer the expression "profit sharing" to "profit-related pay" because it creates the climate within a company which the idea properly underpins. Profit sharing implies that the work force is being treated as part of the whole enterprise and that the provision is not simply a mechanism for topping up pay. Profit sharing detracts from the suggestion that has been made by some Labour Members that profit-related pay is a means of imposing backdoor pay cuts. Although there may be pay cuts, which the Minister does not deny, it is wholly malicious of Labour Members to suggest that that is the prime motivation for profit-related pay. Some Labour Members are clearly totally opposed to the concept in principle. The Liberal party has long favoured the idea of profit sharing and profit-related pay and managed to persuade one Labour Government to introduce such measures. Therefore, I support their extension and would have gone further than the Government have done and given generous tax relief to ensure that the provision would be of greater benefit to companies and individuals to build up the significant profit-sharing proportion of pay.

I was interested to hear the Minister's suggestion that the take-up may be substantially more than the £50 million forecast. I turn that round in the negative sense: if it is not more than that, the Bill will have been a failure. If the measures are at all beneficial, one would hope to see a take-up of hundreds of millions of pounds, and I hope that it will be developed even further in future Bills.

However, as someone who represents a party which is enthusiastic about the principle of profit-related pay, may I sound a note of caution? The enterprise which is creating profit must operate properly and fairly in a genuine free-enterprise economy and in a proper competitive market. During the past two to three years, the Government's enthusiasm for privatisation has got them into a bind. They have created some monolithic monopolies, and the Minister will not have to think hard to realise that, in some circumstances, the management and work force of a private monopoly such as British Telecom or British Gas may be more than happy to get together with a generous tax-funded profit-sharing deal, knowing that they have a monopoly with which they can rip off the consumer to fund that deal. I hope that the Minister is mindful of the need to ensure that the wider issues are taken on board and that we must have a proper, clearly directed competition policy. The enthusiasm of the hon. Member for Northampton, North for British Airways should be tempered by the fact that it appears to be following the same road — or it will if the takeover of British Caledonian goes through. I hope that it will not.

Despite the qualifications that I have mentioned and my anxiety that the proposals should be developed more fully and thoughtfully, I believe that the two main measures in the Bill are a valuable, important and essential step forward. I regret the fact that the Labour party will force a Division on the Bill. Labour Members are out of touch with reality, and it is difficult to justify their opposition when one examines the details of the Bill. I and my colleagues will vote in favour of the Bill.

6.45 pm

Mr. Keith Mans (Wyre): I rise to make my first speech in the House with a mixture of pride and hesitancy—

pride because of the honour that has been bestowed on me by my constituents to represent them here, and hesitancy because of the many excellent speeches that have gone before, especially the two maiden speeches this afternoon from the hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) and my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Mr. Mitchell). Indeed, I was beginning to get a little worried. If I had listened to many more excellent speeches like those, I would have become so nervous that I would have been unable to rise.

If one believes the media, I am a rare breed of person — a Conservative Member of Parliament from the north of England. But we are not nearly as rare as some Opposition Members would have us believe. In Lancashire, where my constituency is situated, there are no fewer than 13 Conservatives out of the total of 16 Members of Parliament.

Wyre is one of those constituencies which the Boundary Commission decided, in its wisdom or otherwise, to rename and, in the process, to consign to obscurity. During the general election campaign, one person came up to me and said, "Mr. Mans, will you please put us back on the map," clearly showing that the Boundary Commission had removed us from it. That statement was a little uncharitable because my predecessor, Sir Walter Clegg, certainly put his constituency on the map and kept it there for the 21 years during which he represented the people of the area. Indeed, I find it much easier to tell people that I am Sir Walter Clegg's successor instead of the Member for Wyre.

Sir Walter was a great Member of Parliament, much loved by his constituents, and a great parliamentarian much respected on both sides of the House, as I have already begun to appreciate in the short time that I have been here. He was a born-and-bred Lancastrian who lived in the area that he represented for most of his life. He understood his constituents and they respected his judgment and wisdom, as I have done since I have got to know him. He has a shrewd legal mind, which made him a keen scrutineer of legislation and a person who could intervene effectively when it mattered. Probably much more surprising, he was a much-liked party Whip in the Conservative Administration of the early 1970s.

Many hon. Members will know that Sir Walter has not been well of late. However, I am delighted to say that he is now out of hospital and making a good recovery. He wishes all his former colleagues well.

To most people, my constituency, with its major town of Fleetwood, means fishing. But the cod war round Iceland dealt the townsfolk a cruel blow and, sadly, the industry is only a fraction of its former self. But a small revival is taking place, led not by the established fishing companies of old, but by enterprising young skippers who are buying shares in boats, going out to fish and returning to sell their catch through the excellent shore facilities that still exist at Fleetwood. With a little loosening of the red tape — especially the Brussels variety — in terms of licences and quotas, while at the same time maintaining equal treatment in terms of policing for all boats of member states, there is a fair chance that this small revival will turn into something bigger. I am certain that this is something that all hon. Members would welcome.

The decline in the fishing industry has meant that ICI, with its large chemical works alongside the River Wyre, is now the main employer in the area. In my constituency we must fight for investment against the many other areas that have assisted area status. It is a hard battle, which we do not always win. To those two industries should be added an expanding retail and tourist sector, a dairy farming sector and a high retirement population. My constituency is one of many contrasts and huge variety. Certainly there is enough in it to keep me occupied — I hope — for many years.

Wyre has one more characteristic which, I am sure you will be pleased to hear, Madam Deputy Speaker, brings me a little closer to the subject that we are debating today. Wyre is already a property-owning democracy. In fact, it has one of the highest levels of owner-occupation in the country. That figure is over 80 per cent., in a county that itself has a high level. In the past, Lancashire led the textile revolution. Today, Lancashire leads the revolution towards a property-owning democracy. The housing in my constituency is not the type that one finds in the leafy groves of Sussex or in the better suburbs of London. It is made up largely of small semis and of even smaller terraced housing. However, the people who live in and own those houses are proud of doing so and want nothing to do with a life that is dependent on institutionalised housing. That is probably the main reason why I am standing here this afternoon.

I am certain that it will not surprise at least some hon. Members to know that the borough council in Wyre is highly efficent, well run, and has a massive Conservative majority. Indeed, I could say that the benefits which it is hoped that the community charge will bestow elsewhere in the country have already been achieved in Wyre because of the high level of owner-occupation. I should add that I am not for one minute suggesting that, because we already have such a high level of accountability in Wyre, we should be exempted from the community charge.

Alongside property ownership goes the capital-owning democracy. More specifically, profit-related pay, share ownership and share ownership by employees represent an integral part of that. However, like property ownership in my constituency, profit-related pay is not new. Indeed, it is the main reason why I am speaking in today's debate. For the past 10 years I have been a member — perhaps I should say a partner — in the largest worker co-operative in the country, the John Lewis Partnership. That company has had a system of profit-related pay and of share ownership since before the second world war. I can say that profit-related pay and share ownership are successful. They work and are to be commended to other companies. I am not suggesting that all companies should have the same system. Indeed, there should be a variety of schemes, and I sincerely hope that any future Government measures are not too rigid so that decisions on the schemes can be taken by the participating firms. However, I believe that the concept itself is correct.

Unlike the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair), I believe that such schemes are an excellent use of Government money, because they encourage the private sector to take part in such schemes which, for many reasons, are good for everyone. Such schemes foster better communication between all levels of management and employed people in a company. They result in a greater commitment towards the objective that the company has set itself. They mean greater productivity, as I can vouch for in the firm in which I work. To date, I have not seen any evidence that profit-related pay means lower wages. Indeed, I suggest that Opposition Members should study carefully the wage levels of the companies that already

[Mr. Keith Mans]

have such schemes and compare them with those that have not. I am certain that if they do so, they will discover that the firms in the former category have higher rather than lower wage levels, without the addition of profit-related pay put in as a bargain counter.

Finally, and something that should appeal to all hon. Members, profit-related pay and share ownership mean greater job security. I have seen it myself and I am certain that it will be truer in the future if more companies adopt such schemes. I have the sneaking suspicion that if they were given half a chance, many hon. Members of the Opposition parties would support, not oppose, this proposal. From my own experience in industry, I know that the concept of profit-related pay and share ownership works and that it will work even better in the future, provided that the proposals in the Bill become law. Therefore, I thoroughly recommend them to every hon. Member.

6.55 pm

Mr. James Arbuthnot (Wanstead and Woodford): It is with some nervousness that I say that I am grateful, Madam Deputy Speaker, for the fact that I have caught your eye. My constituency has not had many Members of Parliament. In fact, since 1924 – nearly 30 years before I was born – it has had only two. Hon. Members will understand my difficulty in finishing this maiden speech within the bounds of propriety, or even by the end of the week, when I say that those two were Patrick Jenkin and Sir Winston Churchill. Whoever coined the phrase, "Follow that if you can", had it easy compared with me.

As one would expect, my constituents are exceptionally proud of their former Members of Parliament. However, I should like to speak first about my constituency, which is a residential suburb in the north-east of London, on the borders of Essex and London. My constituents were so proud of their former member, Sir Winston Churchill, that they put up a statue to him on Epping forest land, at Woodford Green. That is one of the more attractive parts of my constituency. One of the less attractive parts, which hon. Members may know rather better than the statue, is the M11, which starts in my constituency. Many hon. Members will probably have spent many an angry minute waiting in a traffic jam, trying to get on to the thing. I am delighted to say that that traffic jam will one day be a thing of the past, when the new link road is built.

A debate on the Third Reading of the Finance Bill is not the time to go in for a travelogue of Wanstead and Woodford. However, it is the time to mention my immediate predecessor, Patrick Jenkin, because among the many offices that he held were those of Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Chief Secretary to the Treasury. They may not be the offices for which he is most remembered, but that is only because he had so many others. For a man who served on the Conservative Front Bench for 20 years —that is nearly the entire time that he was in the House — and who was Secretary of State for three major Departments, that is quite an achievement. Indeed, when he was Secretary of State for each of those three Departments, his achievements were considerable. I know that he is remembered with great affection and respect by hon. Members of all parties. From canvassing during the general election, I can say that that is completely true in his constituency also. He will be an extremely hard constituency Member to follow. I can best describe him by saying that he was a thoroughly worthy successor in every way to Sir Winston Churchill and I cannot think of higher praise than that for anyone.

Sir Winston was elected for what was to become my constituency on 29 October 1924. On 5 November 1924 he was invited to become Chancellor of the Exchequer. I have been waiting by the telephone, but it seems that promotion does not follow so quickly nowadays. It is interesting that, in his first Budget, two of the major proposals were a complete overhaul of the pension system and a reduction in the basic rate of income tax to what would now be 20p in the pound.

I do not wish to speak too much about the pension provisions in the Bill, save to say that I was a little sad that the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair), who made a most attractive speech – I wondered whether he was on the right side of the House – was a little grudging in his enthusiasm for the pensions provisions and for the profit-related pay provisions in the Bill. They will improve the employment prospects and the enterprise culture which the Government have already begun.

I wish to concentrate rather more on a narrow provision in the Bill – clause 96 and schedule 7. For those who are unaware of what they contain, I shall describe them in a moment, but first I must say that, as a barrister specialising in Chancery work and, inside Chancery work, mostly in tax, I am speaking about these provisions with considerable diffidence. I have taken an interest in Finance Bills for several years and I have never failed to be impressed by the depth of knowledge of hon. Members on all sides. Therefore, I am extremely nervous about preaching to an audience who may know rather more about my subject than I do. Having said that, clause 96 and schedule 7 relate to inheritance tax and capital transfer tax.

In the Finance Act 1986 capital transfer tax was abolished and inheritance tax introduced in its place. The effect was to make lifetime gifts between individuals potentially free of tax. I hailed that as an excellent move. The effect of the provisions in this Bill is to extend that relief to gifts into and out of trusts in which an individual has an interest in possession. This, too, is a truly excellent move. But I wish to take this matter a step further because what has happened in this move is symptomatic of what often happens in Finance Bills.

The Government rightly believe that they should reduce the burden of taxation on individuals and companies, and I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on doing that. However, all too often Governments do not go far enough. They are cautious and the following year they must return to finish the job. This has two effects. The first is that it complicates the tax system. We have one of the most complicated tax systems that I have ever discovered. The law, particularly tax law, is the possession of the common man and it should be understandable by him, but it is not. It is incomprehensible. When a Government take two bites at the cherry, they make the law more complicated. I have a vision of a tax system which is simply worded and administered and which everyone can understand. I hope that that vision will materialise before too long.

The second effect of two bites at a cherry is that the law is changed too often. It is not the Government's job to change the law too frequently because the effect of that on individuals and companies is to cause them the immense

extra cost of paying people like me to find out what the new law is because the law is never the same. Perhaps I should declare an interest, although I am speaking against this, but I do not believe that one should pay people like me too much to find out what any law is.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has a praiseworthy habit of abolishing a tax every year. I had hoped that because there were two Finance Bills this year he would manage to abolish two, but I suppose one should not be greedy. I am sure that my right hon. Friend will have a chance and the inclination to reform our ramshackle tax system, particularly three areas of it. First, the taxation of women, which is an insulting and archaic antique; secondly, capital gains tax legislation, which is absurdly complicated; and, thirdly, the way in which the tax system relates to the benefit system, or rather, the way in which it does not. When my right hon. Friend has a chance to look at those areas, I have one plea, which is to go the whole hog the first time.

7.4 pm

Mr. Tim Smith It is a great pleasure for me to compliment my two hon. Friends the Members for Wyre (Mr. Mans) and for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Arbuthnot) who have made outstanding maiden speeches this evening.

My hon. Friend the Member for Wyre succeeded Sir Walter Clegg who, as he said, is remembered with much affection in this House. I am sure that we are all glad to know that he is making a recovery after his recent illness. My hon. Friend spoke with great authority about profit-related pay. As he told the House, he was until recently a partner in the John Lewis Partnership, which operates such a scheme, so he can speak with authority and from experience. He did not tell the House that the John Lewis scheme has recently been affected adversely by the change in the national insurance arrangements. Clearly he has a tremendous amount of tact, so should go far.

My hon. Friend the Member for Wanstead and Woodford spoke without notes, which I cannot do after 10 years in the House and I admire him for that, if for nothing else. It must also be clear to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that he is a great expert on taxation and company law as he is a barrister in Chancery. He was rather modest when talking about clause 96 and schedule 7 because every year he writes an authoritative guide on the Finance Act. Therefore, he is a great expert on taxation. I sympathise greatly with his challenge to the Government that we should have a simpler tax system. We would all like to see that, but we all know that it will grow more complicated. There will be plenty of work in future for tax lawyers, so he need not worry too much. We shall look forward to his future contributions to our debates on Finance Bills.

This summer's Finance Bill contains two major proposals on personal pensions and profit-related pay, which we have already chewed over in some detail. The advent of personal pensions at the beginning of next year will present a difficult choice for many individuals and I hope that a proper and full explanation will be given to them of the pros and cons of the options before them. In future, they may join their company's occupational pension scheme, if it is open to them, or set up for themselves alone a personal pension scheme.

I notice that a debate on the virtues of the two approaches is already under way. An article in this morning's *Financial Times* reports the comments of a partner in Bacon and Woodrow, a firm of consulting actuaries, who pointed out that the ideal arrangement under the present structure of occupational pension schemes will be for a young person to take out a personal pension in the early years of a career and later to join an occupational pension scheme, if that is possible. If that sort of advice is given to individuals, clearly occupational pension schemes will have to change their arrangements so that they are more attractive to young members. At present there is undoubtedly an imbalance in occupational pension schemes and younger members subsidise older members.

We have also debated profit-related pay at some length and we have considered the cost. If the cost was as high as £1,000 million, as the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) suggested, 2·5 million employees would benefit to the tune of £400 every year, which is roughly the maximum benefit possible.

Mr. Blair *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Smith: The hon. Gentleman shakes his head, but I calculate that 27 per cent. of £1,500 is about £400. I am talking about the average standard rate taxpayer. It seems that the maximum benefit available to the basic rate taxpayer will be £405 a year. Therefore, if the scheme costs £1,000 million a year, 2·5 million people will be able to benefit to the maximum. Of course, very few will benefit to the maximum every year so many more will participate and gain benefit from the scheme. If the scheme takes off on that scale I believe that it will be a runaway success. I agree with my right hon. Friend the Financial Secretary that, in those circumstances, we should view the cost as a major contribution to wealth creation rather than wealth consumption. Such wealth consumption would occur if we followed the advice of the hon. Member for Sedgefield and, rather than give this tax allowance, added that amount to public spending.

The hon. Member for Sedgefield referred to his experience, gained as a result of three Finance Bills. I agree with him that many of the provisions are technical and that, therefore, there is a case for a special committee to deal with those provisions. That argument has been advanced for many years by those who take an interest in such matters. It has always been argued that a distincition can be drawn between the political element of a Finance Bill—cutting the standard rate of tax and other elements that are highly controversial between the political parties, but which represent a small proportion of the clauses—and the many technical provisions.

It has been argued that it is unsatisfactory to introduce the Finance Bill so late in the parliamentary Session. Normally, the Bill is introduced in late March or early April and there is little time in which to debate the provisions. I believe that a distinction should be drawn between the two elements contained in a Finance Bill. I believe that a technical Finance Bill should be introduced at the beginning of a parliamentary Session in November so that more time can be addressed to it. Perhaps the Special Select Committee system should be used and outside parties invited to give evidence. Alternatively, a longer period of time should elapse between the publication of the Bill and the Second Reading and Committee stage of the Bill. In that way outside observers would have the maximum time in which to comment on the clauses. Indeed, the hon. Member for Sedgefield has

[Mr. Smith]

already argued that we should maximise the opportunities for consultation on technical matters. I believe that the consultation record of successive Governments has improved greatly over the years. Now it is the practice of Governments to publish, on occasion, draft clauses.

There is no excuse for bringing in technical measures at short notice after the Budget. It is right that draft clauses should be published wherever possible. In that way we can listen to the views of people outside — we need not necessarily take their advice — and I hope that the net result will improve the quality of the legislative process. There is scope for improvement.

We are often under a time pressure in Committee when considering Finance Bills. There have certainly been problems with this Bill even though some of the provisions were published in the previous Bill. This Bill has been pushed through fairly quickly and it is difficult for people outside to keep up to date. I hope that my hon. Friend the Paymaster General will discuss with his colleagues in the Treasury the way in which parliamentary consideration could be improved by allowing us more time.

7.13 pm

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): I should like to associate myself with the remarks of the hon. Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) on the fine maiden speeches that we have heard this evening. I want to make a brief contribution and comment on this, my first Finance Bill. I believe that it has been an asset to have had detailed consideration — in Committee and on Second Reading — of certain aspects of this Bill.

I welcome the Government concession in clause 80 regarding oil industry taxation. That concession is a tribute to the effect that Back Benchers' detailed examination, from both sides of the House, can have on the Government's consideration of certain legislation.

My main contribution refers to profit-related pay, which is a concept that my party and Plaid Cymru — our parliamentary allies — favour. We believe that profit-related pay is a good idea on the basis of many of the arguments that have been advanced in its favour throughout the debate. However, on Second Reading and on considering the detail of the measure, certain aspects of the Government's proposal caused me great concern.

In common with the hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith), who made an excellent maiden speech, I am concerned about the public sector. Is it right and proper that the public sector should be excluded from the benefits that are being offered to the private sector? I suppose that a reason for that exclusion could be practicality. It could be argued that it is not possible to associate the public sector with this legislation in the same way in which a public limited company or companies within the private sector can be related. I believe that the acid test of whether practicality is a reason for excluding the public sector comes with the consideration of public limited companies with majority public sector ownership. If it was purely a question of practicality, surely a public limited company, such as the Rover group, in dominant public ownership, could still be included under this legislation. It is a clear entity generating profits and it could be brought within the scope of profit-related pay.

The Government, however, have made it clear that any public sector company will be excluded from the profit-related pay legislation. That leads me to suspect that the public sector is being excluded not on the ground of practicality, but because of naked prejudice against the public sector. It is unacceptable that those who work in education, the Health Service and the social services are viewed by the Government as somehow contributing less to the economy than those who work in the private sector.

I am also concerned that the tax benefits from profit-related pay will not be restricted to the basic rate of income tax. The essence of the argument in favour of profit-related pay is that it associates individuals with the profitability of the company. On those grounds I believe that the individuals most in need of that association are those on average or somewhat below average earnings. However, as a result of the Government's proposal, most of the benefits will go to people on the highest rates of income tax. If a person pays 60 per cent. income tax, the potential maximum benefit is £900 a year. If a person is on the basic rate of income tax the maximum benefit is £405 a year. If the Government are seriously interested in transforming the supply side of the economy the reverse should apply: the biggest benefits should go to those on average or somewhat below average earnings.

If one considers the details of this legislation, it is clear that, cloaked in the rhetoric of the supply side measures, it is yet another shabby attempt by the Government to give handouts to their friends and supporters.

I am aware that many Conservative Members are puzzled by their party's poor performance in Scotland. That failure was largely due to that party's lack of appreciation of the national question. However, there is also the matter of morality. I do not believe that Scotland likes the morals of this Government. On the matter of profit-related pay we once again see prejudice against the public sector and favouritism towards those on highest earnings.

For those and other reasons my party will vote against the Finance Bill tonight.

7.18 pm

Mr. David Shaw (Dover): I welcome the Finance Bill and in particular the two main proposals, the introduction of profit-related pay and the proposal to widen pension ownership. I believe that those proposals will lead to people taking more control of their lives. With regard to profit-related pay, people will take responsibility for the success of their own companies. They will also take responsibility for and an interest in the success of the economy in relation to the benefits that they will receive from their pensions. The consequence of those proposals will mean that working people will be less alienated from the goals and objectives of management. All will be involved in the success of their companies and the wider success of the economy.

It is likely that more innovation and positiveness on the part of employees on the shop floor will result from the measures. That can be contrasted with the negativeness and destructiveness that characterised so much of industrial relations during the late 1970s. Much of it came from the friends of the Opposition, but it is interesting to see how many of the more moderate leaders of the trade unions are now becoming interested in profitability and the success of the companies in which their members are employed. I hope that my experience in giving profit-

related pay benefits to management and senior employees will be followed for a wider audience, by bringing in all the employees. Whenever I have been involved in the bringing in of profit-related pay schemes, I have seen management take a new interest and experience a new incentive to perform better. Under past schemes involving all employees, many more employees were interested in the success of their companies.

Opposition Members have suggested that such schemes could be a recipe for low pay. Nothing could be further from the truth because, in my experience of industry and business, the companies in which there is low pay are those that lack success. Where companies are successful and it is understood by the employees that profit needs to be earned, there is high pay because such companies can afford to make contributions to profit-related pay schemes and give high pay.

We have seen the benefits of employee involvement in share option schemes, which has been one of the Government's successes. I am pleased to say that in my constituency there is a share option scheme in one of the more significant industrial companies in the area. It goes right down the scale, involving those on the shop floor as well as the secretaries and typists in the pool. It also involves management. I am pleased to say that it does not matter whether one talks to someone at the top or bottom of the pecking order; everybody is intensely interested in the share price in the company from week to week and day to day. The people who work in the company are intensely interested in its success. I long for that to continue because it is by involving more people in the success of their companies that we shall engender the necessary changes.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Paymaster General will consider the letter in the *Financial Times* today, which expresses the concern of a company called Reward Consultants about the way in which profit-related pay schemes may impact on small businesses. As with all good innovations, there are technical requirements. Perhaps the Inland Revenue is sometimes over-zealous in the way in which it brings in technical requirements, when it wants to make sure that there is no tax evasion. I hope that the Minister will consider the fact that profit-related pay should be a simple concept, easily understood by the man on the floor, the accountant in the company who has to compute it, and the managing director who devises the scheme. We do not want lots of bureaucracy. I hope that the special needs of small businesses and small companies will be borne in mind when the scheme is changed. Inevitably, minor changes will be required over the years to make sure that the scheme is effective and efficient.

It has been suggested that one of the disadvantages of profit-related pay is that tax revenue is lost by that means. That is utter bunkum and rubbish. More tax revenue must result from the scheme because, in the main, profit-related pay will come out of a pool of between 5 and 20 per cent. of the increase in profits over the previous year of the companies. If that is so, at least 80 per cent. more profitability will not form part of profit-related pay. As corporation tax still exists, even in many small companies, at rates of at least 30 per cent., there will be more revenue for the Exchequer as a result of the increase in profits. Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that profit-related pay will result in a loss of revenue. As profits become larger, it should result in more money going to the Exchequer.

Benefits will result from the widening of the ownership of occupational pensions suggested in the Bill. Over 10 million people are now involved because of the widening of ownership of occupational schemes. As many of my hon. Friends and no doubt many Opposition Members are aware, that is well above the number of people in trade unions. Many trade unionists are members of occupational pension schemes. That involvement of the electorate in occupational pension schemes and the fact that each year more trade unionists are involved accounts for rising Conservative popularity not only in the most recent general election but in previous general elections. It is through the ownership of pensions that people begin to understand what share ownership is all about. It is through widening share ownership, whether directly or indirectly, that we involve more people in the benefits of the nation.

Benefits also arise from more choice in pensions, as proposed in the Bill. One can now be a member of more than one pension scheme, and one can opt out of occupational pension schemes if one wishes. That means that there will be more competition among managers of pension schemes to keep people in those schemes wherever possible. More competition is good because it will result in greater emphasis on investment performance, which is important to the economy as a whole. We do not want scandals continuing, such as the Labour councils investing pension fund money in *News on Sunday*. At the moment, those scandals are swept under the carpet because pension fund performance is not observed as widely as it should be. That will happen and such scandals will be prevented under the new proposals because pension fund performance will become more important.

Mr. Robert N. Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby): What about insider dealing?

Mr. Shaw: Insider dealing has been exposed as never before by this Government. This Government has made it illegal, which the previous Labour Government failed to do.

Fairness to those who change jobs was mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams), who has fought for it for a long time. Many Conservative Members, particularly younger Members, have perceived that the job market has never been so good as it has been in the past eight years compared with periods under previous Governments. One has taken the opportunity to change jobs. I declare an interest, as did other hon. Members. It is galling to all of us who have changed our job that we cannot take advantage of the pension fund money that accumulated in our previous pensions. It is wonderful that the Government are slowly grasping the nettle and making an improvement.

I should like to express a mild note of concern on clause 80. We are all concerned that retrospective action should not take place often, if at all. It is a matter of considerable concern that it has been necessary to include this retrospective action in the Bill. It may be a mild case of the Inland Revenue being too worried about tax avoidance or tax evasion. The clause affects oil licences, which cost money. Expenditure is incurred. When companies try to minimise the risk involved in that expenditure, it is unfair that they are heavily taxed. I hope that that anomaly will be removed. I am pleased to note that Ministers have said that they will look at that when they draft the next Finance Bill.

The Bill will bring immense benefits to our economic performance over the years ahead. I am particularly

[Mr. Shaw]

pleased with the improvements that the Bill brings to the overall financial situation of companies and private individuals, who will benefit more from their own contributions. I support the Third Reading of the Bill.

7.29 pm

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): The House has heard four excellent maiden speeches tonight. However, it will be surprised that those hon. Members who made them have not been able to be detained by the debate. Nevertheless, it would be improper for me not to say a few words about their speeches.

We heard from my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans), who took over from Sir Walter Clegg, who was an hon. Member much loved on both sides of the House. He was a distinguished and honourable Member of the House who will be remembered especially for his humour, courage and charm. All hon. Members will be glad to hear that he is making a full recovery from his illness. My hon. Friend the Member for Wyre made an excellent speech and showed a considerable feel for his constituency and a real knowledge of the matters about which he spoke—not least as he is a partner in the John Lewis Partnership, and was thus able to bring a good deal of knowledge to the debate.

I pay tribute also to the maiden speech made by my hon. Friend the Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Arbuthnot), who represents a constituency that my grandfather represented in the House for more than 40 years. My hon. Friend succeeds Patrick Jenkin, a Member of Parliament who was greatly admired for his integrity, warmth, exceptional capacity for hard work and intellect. He was Financial Secretary and Chief Secretary to the Treasury, as my hon. Friend mentioned in a witty, knowledgeable and excellent speech. I am sure that the House will look forward to hearing from him again.

Earlier in the evening, my hon. friend the Member for Gedling (Mr. Mitchell) made an excellent and attractive speech. The hon. Member for Oxford, East, (Mr. Smith), to whom I am sure the House will have warmed, paid an elegant, charming tribute to Steve Norris, who was greatly admired on both sides of the House, and who will be much missed.

I take this opportunity to welcome the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) to these debates. He will bring an economic literacy, ability and good humour that has been sadly lacking from the Opposition Front Bench, and will be welcomed warmly by all those who haunt these rather dry debates.

This is also an opportunity to say farewell to absent friends. It seems almost strange not to have the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) with us. He must have forecast gloom and disaster at least 30 or 40 times in the last Parliament—on every occasion on which he spoke in major economic debates, the economy was permanently headed for utter disaster. He proved disastrously wrong and I am sure that we sympathise with him. He has had to pay the price for his tragic performance in the past election. We welcome the new Treasury team to the Opposition Front Bench; I am sure that its members will prove to be formidable opponents.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Does my hon. Friend recall that during the general election campaign of 1983 the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook predicted that within one year of the general election inflation would reach 10 per cent? Would my hon. Friend care to comment on the value of that forecast?

Mr. Soames: My hon. Friend, as usual, raises the key point. The trouble with the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook——

Mr. Blair: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. We are perfectly willing to be subjected to a filibuster when it consists of flattery, but when Conservative Members filibuster and insult us at the same time we are entitled to protest.

Mr. Soames: I think that that is going a bit far. My hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) was oozing the milk of human kindness. It is difficult to imagine how it would be possible to be nicer. Suffice it to say that it is probably better for us all to leave summarising the career of the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook, as the hon. Member for Sedgefield says, to another occasion. I shall try to stick to this important debate.

I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and their colleagues on their excellent and warmly welcomed Budget. At the same time, my right hon. and hon. Friends will be sustained by the fact that it was so splendidly endorsed by so handsome a victory at the last election. The Government have set the framework—*[Interruption.]* Does the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) wish to intervene?

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): My hon. Friend is not allowed to speak; he is a Whip.

Mr. Soames: I am glad that they found someone to go to the Opposition Whips Office. I thought that they had all disappeared.

Mr. Snape: They would not have me.

Mr. Soames: I am not surprised.

The Government have set the framework during the past few years for the economy to prosper. It has proved to be a startling success, and even the Government's harshest critics have now had to accept the sound policy that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor and his colleagues are pursuing. The Finance Bill is a welcome extension of that overall strategy.

I want to make a point about my own constituency in relation to the legislation. Right hon. and hon. Members of the Opposition—and, indeed, my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne—will well remember the point that the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook used to make about the crisis in manufacturing industry in this country. In my constituency, which is fortunate to have full employment and a booming, successful labour economy, the local paper only the other day ran a headline saying that "Mrs. Thatcher's Britain" was "on the move". On the move it is. Manufacturing industry and service industry are booming. All the statistics and all the feelings that one gets listening to people talk show that industry and the economy are going through a great awakening. My right hon. Friend and his colleagues have achieved a tremendous renaissance in this country and we warmly welcome that. Manufacturing industry is doing every bit as well as the service industry, which gives the lie to what Opposition Members say.

I warmly welcome the profit-related pay provisions. I believe that that is one of the key points — the

centrepieces — of the Budget. Profit-related pay gives employees a far more direct personal interest in the profitability of the firms in which they work. My hon. Friend the Member for Wyre, a partner in an organisation that already practises these excellent ideas, spoke about that this evening.

Profit-related pay allows a greater pay flexibility in the face of changing market conditions. For example, a company might be able to survive a downturn in trade without recourse to redundancies if its pay bill is flexible downwards as well as upwards. One would have thought that that would have been warmly welcomed by the Opposition, in view of the so-called interest that they take in unemployment matters, as demonstrated by how many of them are here in the Chamber. The economy also gains from profit-related pay because a broad spread of PRP schemes means better productivity, increased output and more employment. Again, I should have hoped that that would have been welcomed by the Opposition. Interest in profit-related pay has been substantial. My right hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury made the point that, since the Chancellor announced tax relief on PRP in his Budget, more than 20,000 employers have contacted the Inland Revenue to establish their interest.

The measures on pensions provisions will widen individual choice in pension planning by providing tax relief for people who make their own pension arrangements. The measures will also, more importantly, contribute to job mobility — one of the sad problems that has affected all our efforts to reduce unemployment. Anything that can increase job mobility will be warmly welcomed by those out of work. It is a tribute to the Government's strategy that all sound, responsible and decent financial indicators and opinion in this country point to a remarkably successful economy.

The CBI monthly trends inquiry of 22 June showed orders at their highest level for 10 years, with exports booming. Many firms are planning increased production for the next four months to cope with a rise in orders. The average growth rate forecast by 12 recent surveys was 3 per cent. in 1987. Manufacturing industry's recovery has been underpinned by a strong and continuing growth in productivity. Since late 1980, the productivity in manufacturing industry has risen by 43 per cent. That is the best performance of any industrialised country. *[Interruption.]* Labour Members may chunter away, but these are facts and they cannot argue with them. Our economy is booming and that is bad luck for the Labour party. The Government's record was given a remarkable endorsement by the electorate, although the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) managed, yet again, to sneak in under the wire.

Mr. Gow: Before my hon. Friend leaves this part of his speech, would he care to comment on the remarkable tribute to the management of the economy by our right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer that was paid in the debate on the Loyal Address by the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould), who unfortunately is not in his place?

Mr. Soames: My hon. Friend is right to draw attention to another of the gilded and literate team that is now adorning the Opposition Front Bench. The hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) is another Labour Member who can read.

Mr. Blair: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. John Selwyn Gummer): Is the hon. Gentleman going to deny it?

Mr. Blair: About the only correct thing that the hon. Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) said was that Labour Members can read. Indeed, they can read better than Conservative Members. May I seek your guidance, Madam Deputy Speaker? On Third Reading, should we not be debating the contents of the Bill and not having a general debate on the economy?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): The hon. Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) has been a Member for some time and should speak to the subject.

Mr. Soames: I am very sorry that I was dragged off the narrow road that I was treading. I shall not pursue the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne, although it was a relevant issue.

The hon. Member for Dagenham was endorsing Government policies which were headlined in the *Financial Times* today as "the unbeatable combination" of lower taxes, lower borrowing and higher public spending. The Government's policies were endorsed by the electorate and were made possible by the sort of measures that appear in the Finance Bill. I welcome them very much.

I shall conclude before you, Madam Speaker, dive too deeply into "Erskine May". Sustained economic growth has set unemployment on a firm downward trend. The House will rejoice at that. Seasonally adjusted adult unemployment has fallen over 12 successive months by almost 290,000. Between May and June, unemployment fell by 24,000 to 2,925,000 — 10·6 per cent. of the working population. The figure is still far too high, but the House will wish to pay tribute to Government policies that are denting the unemployment figures and putting so many people back to work in important areas of the economy.

The Government's programme is enshrined and fashioned in the Bill. Lower taxes, lower borrowing and higher public spending form a programme which was ringingly endorsed at the general election. We rejoice to see the Chancellor of the Exchequer putting forward that programme again and I have no doubt that the House will endorse it.

7.44 pm

Mr. Julian Brazier (Canterbury): I shall speak only about the part of the Bill dealing with portable pensions. It will not produce headlines in the media, because it suffers from two defects — it is not particularly controversial and it is quite difficult to understand. Faced with such complicated provisions, the House could easily lose sight of the fact that the provision on portable pensions is a very important measure and may be the most underrated measure to come before us this year.

My constituency has the second highest proportion of pensioners in the country. Many of them are occupational pensioners and I receive many letters — often heart-rending letters — about their pension problems. Some complain that their occupational pensions have been destroyed by the rampant inflation caused by the profligacy of previous Governments and others have more

[Mr. Julian Brazier]

technical problems, especially in connection with losses of pension rights incurred when people move from job to job. The Bill is designed to counter that problem.

Of course, some of my constituents have no occupational pension; 49 per cent. of pensioners still have no such pension. I am glad that the Bill will enormously improve the ability of those working for companies that do not operate occupational pension schemes to get such pensions.

Sad to say, we cannot solve most of the problems of the people who write to me. The trouble is that they are worried about the difficulties that arose in the past. However, the Bill will go some way to preventing another such crop of miserable problems from arising in the next generation. The Bill should ensure that the proportion of people with occupational pensions continues to rise and that those who change jobs have a better opportunity to maintain their pension rights.

As I listened to the erudite debate between my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams) and my right hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, I remembered that when I was a mathematician at Oxford nearly all my clever colleagues—I was not one of them—went on to become actuaries, working in an extremely complex and difficult area. I am not a bit surprised that most members of the public and, perhaps, a number of hon. Members will have had some difficulty following the intricacies of the debate.

At the heart of the problems caused by people who move from job to job is a simple but intractable bias in the system. I am glad that the Bill will go some way to counter it. If we regard the 40 years of a man's working life as annual packets of pension contributions, we see that when a man changes jobs the packets get bundled together into various small pension trusts, each with its own management system, and so on.

The only employer with whom the man who changes jobs has any leverage is the one to whom he can say, "Will you offer me a decent pension package?" That is the only employer with whom that man has any negotiating power. The imbalance is brought into the system by the fact that his most valuable pension payments—those with many years to accrue—are made at the beginning of his 40 years of service. His employer of those days is lost in the mists of time and the employee has no leverage with him.

I was entranced by the debate between my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington and the Financial Secretary. I side with my right hon. Friend, because I believe that the proposals suggested by my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington would be too expensive.

Mr. Blair: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) is making an erudite speech, but new clause 1, which he is talking about, was withdrawn and, therefore, forms no part of the Bill. Is it in order for him to be discussing that new clause?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): It is traditional for the debate on the Third Reading of a Finance Bill to range fairly wide. However, perhaps the hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) is going a little wider than wide. I am sure that he will note that fact.

Mr. Brazier: I take the point made by the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair). The Bill goes a long way towards meeting the demands made by my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington.

The measure on portable pensions has an indirect effect that goes well beyond its direct effect. I shall illustrate that point. As I understand it, the measure offers the right to anybody who wishes to do so to ask to have a personal pension scheme set up. He can do that either through independent contributions or can decide to opt out of his company's pension scheme. As a result, a small number of people—and I suspect that in the beginning the number will be small—will choose at the outset to go for a pension package of this sort, one that they can manage themselves all the way through their working lives, because of the problems that they see encountered by people who move jobs.

That is the direct benefit, but there will be a much greater indirect benefit because the fact that people can do this and that employers will know that people joining them will be able to follow this course of action will encourage employers to reform their pension funds and sort out the problem of the prejudice against the early leaver. People will then be induced to stay and to keep all the contributions in the pension fund and will see an employer as an attractive one to work for.

I hope that when we debate our own pay later this week hon. Members will remember that we enjoy very privileged pension provisions. An hon. Member who sits in the House for 15 or 20 years will get, pro rata, the same pensions benefits when he retires at the age of 60 irrespective of whether he is elected to Parliament at the beginning of his working life, in the middle of it or during the last 20 years of his working life. That is not the case at present with any private sector pension fund.

I make no apology for concentrating exclusively on the pension aspect of this Bill. The measure will extend to people in the private sector some of the benefits that hon. Members enjoy. It will well be that before too long some Opposition Members will find a more attractive career. They may then appreciate the position of people in their forties and fifties who presently feel trapped in their jobs and want to move to more attractive ones. I support the Bill.

7.52 pm

Mr. John Browne (Winchester): I support the Bill. Like other hon. Members, I declare an interest in certain sections of the Bill such as pension provisions and profit-related pay. I join other hon. Members in congratulating the four maiden speakers, three of whom are my hon. Friends the Members for Gedling (Mr. Mitchell), for Wyre (Mr. Mans) and for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Arbuthnot). My hon. Friend the Member for Wanstead and Woodford spoke without notes. That would be an achievement for any hon. Member, but for a Member making his maiden speech it is worthy of note. The hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) was extremely fair in his maiden speech. I was impressed by his speech and hope that in future we shall hear more from him and from my hon. Friends.

This part of the Finance Bill, covering the areas not agreed to before the general election, is the legislative backing for part of the Budget. In itself, the Budget is a testimony to the successes of an eight-year crusade of national revival. The revival of our economy was not the

only thing that happened during that crusade, but it is the critical factor. The success of the economy depends on freedom and enterprise. Profit-related pay and personal pension schemes are part of the whole philosophy of freedom. We hope that this injection or restoration of freedom will result in a great increase in enterprise. In the eight years of this crusade a foundation has been laid. Doing that was often tough and unglamourous, but now we are entering an era during which the superstructure can be erected. There are exciting times to come, and the whole of Britain can share in them.

Government philosophy is to base economic policy on sound finance, reducing inflation and increasing growth. Those things have eluded almost every Government not only in Britain but in the West. The problem is how to break the link between inflation and growth. In the old days, when we wanted growth we ended up with high inflation. If we wanted to reduce inflation, we ended up reducing growth. The Government have succeeded in breaking that link.

Mr. Blair: Regretfully, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to raise another point of order. The hon. Gentleman is debating the general economy, and, no matter what latitude is allowed during our debate on Third Reading of the Finance Bill, that is surely out of order.

Mr. Browne *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) raised a point of order a few moments ago. I explained to him and to the House that, by convention, on Third Reading of the Finance Bill it is in order to range rather more widely than on Third Reading of any other Bill, particularly in the special circumstances in which this Bill is being discussed. I know that the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Browne) is still on his preamble, and I am sure that he will shortly relate his remarks fairly directly to the clauses in the Finance Bill.

Mr. Browne: I listened to a number of speeches in Committee by the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair). They were extremely good and delivered in an erudite manner. I might say that they were charming and elusive. I must remind the hon. Gentleman that at times he strayed into the realms of the general economy during debates on specific clauses in the Bill. I take your point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I shall get into the main part of my brief speech.

As the Bill well documents, the Government have transferred power from the producer to the consumer. I shall give one example. In personal pension schemes the measures taken by the Government are oriented towards the consumer, the beneficiary of the pension. The measures will make the competition much tougher for the pension institutions. This will result in much more competition in the market place for pension schemes and that will benefit the consumer. As a result of this general philosophy, Britain is much more competitive now than it was eight years ago.

We have restored democracy to the trade unions and that has made Britain work as a team. This team spirit will be reflected in the profit-related pay measures designed specifically to keep the team together. They will motivate the whole team, not just the directors or the shareholders. People working on the shop floor can be directly involved in the profits of their company. The Government have always tried to push, quite rightly, for incentives so that enterprise will take place and Britain will be a success. What more incentive could someone on the shop floor wish to have? What could be more directly related to their contribution than profit-related pay? A bonus has an element of subjective merit that is recognised by the management rather than by the customer, but PRP reflects recognition by the customer. The subjective judgment of management does not apply to PRP. We have already seen the British economic disease become the British economic miracle, and I urge Opposition Members to bear that in mind when they criticise various elements of the Bill.

The hon. Member for Sedgefield has said that PRP will cost too much. Four or five days ago he claimed that it would cost between £50 million and £1,000 million. If it were to cost £1,000 million, that would be a mark of its success. If the work force were able to claim to the tune of £1,000 million, think of the increased profits that would have to be won by the companies employing those enjoying tax deductions. A large tax reduction will be a good thing for the economy, because we know that lower taxation rates lead to an increase in aggregate tax revenues. That means that more revenue is available to the Government to spend on education, defence and social welfare, for example. The result is the same if a company can give its employees more take-home pay as a result of measures such as PRP.

By introducing PRP the Government have struck a good balance because the range of companies that will come within the scheme is well chosen. The Government have shown a great understanding of management and of motivation of those on the shop floor. The scheme reflects the urge to be identified with something that is small and the concept that small is beautiful. The Government are demonstrating that profit centres are to be encouraged, and their flexibility is to be applauded.

The personal pension scheme provisions will improve and encourage motivation, enterprise, mobility and freedom of choice. There will be more incentive and consequently better results and a fairer and better system. In other words, there will be a cheaper system for the consumer and, therefore, a greater incentive for the consumer or employee. That will lead to greater success for Britain.

I ask the Opposition to accept that some of the Government's policies are seen to be working. Satisfied customers throughout the world are creating jobs in our economy. Real jobs are being created at a fast rate. There have been 12 months of successive falls in unemployment and about 1·25 million jobs have been created in the past 18 months, not as a result of a Government spending gimmick. Real jobs have been created by the consumer, not false jobs by the Government, and this has been achieved on an international basis.

It has been said that PRP will be too costly, but we have seen Government revenues rise despite cuts in tax rates. Government revenues are rising along with private incomes. Therefore, the Government can give more effective care to the inner cities, for example.

I strongly support the Government in introducing the Bill, which is the second part of the legislative backing to be given to the Budget. I applaud particularly the PRP measures and the provisions that have been made for personal pension schemes. I applaud also the Government's constructive attitude in their negotiations with Lloyd's, which have been based on the provisions in

[Mr. Browne]

clause 70. It appeared that the negotiations would be sticky, but I believe that people on both sides of the fence have been pleased with the Government's attitude. I commend the Government and I welcome and support the Bill.

8.5 pm

Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory (Wells): The two major proposals in this No. 2 Finance Bill relate to personal pensions and profit-related pay, and the success of PRP will be judged later in the light of experience. It is a worthwhile attempt to improve the supply side of the economy, especially wage flexibility. It may not prove to be the great breakthrough that we want, and we shall have to wait to see what the take-up is and its effect on wage bargaining. Only time will tell us whether employees are prepared to recognise PRP as part of their remuneration package and not merely as a bonus.

Profit-related pay is worth a try because previous Governments of all parties have been inclined to concentrate too much on controlling aggregate demand within the economy whereas the central weakness of the British economy has been translating demand into efficient and effective supply. There has not been lack of demand. In other words, the issue has been the ability of industry and commerce to meet demand without that demand leading to higher prices or increased imports. This central fact seems now to be dimly recognised on the Opposition Benches. Recent speeches by Opposition Members suggest that they feel that there is too much demand in the economy rather than too little. We hear that private credit is too buoyant, that consumption is too high and that too many people are enjoying themselves. Instead of advice that we should be reflating we have a warning that we are about to have a balance of payments crisis. That warning figured prominently in the speeches of Opposition Members before the general election. It is of great credit to the strength of the economy that no such crisis has occurred.

Mr. Blair: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I well understand your ruling that on the Third Reading of a Finance Bill we have greater latitude than on Third Readings of other measures, but I respectfully submit that hon. Members cannot enter into a general debate on the economy, including economic growth and the balance of payments. I draw your attention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to page 840 of "Erskine May", part of which states:

> "While the normal rules relating to the scope of debate on third reading apply to the Finance Bill as much as to other bills, in practice some degree of latitude is frequently permitted."

I submit that that means that we can refer occasionally to the economic effect of certain clauses in a broader way than would be possible when participating in other Third Reading debates, but we cannot translate a Third Reading debate into a Second Reading debate. When discussing a Finance Bill two years ago, some of my hon. Friends were very much slapped down by the Chair when they sought to broaden the scope of the debate, and I am concerned at the breadth of the debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) has partly answered his own point of order by quoting from "Erskine May" and making the distinction, as "Erskine May" does, between Finance Bills on Third Reading and other Bills. As he has said, it is permissible to range more widely on Third Reading of a Finance Bill. The Chair must take into account also the special circumstances of this Finance Bill, which has not been discussed at great length. It has not been subject to the probing that normally takes place in Standing Committee. All these matters must be considered. In addition, I must take into account that the hon. Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory) has been speaking for only a minute or two. I am sure that he is still in his preamble and that within a few moments he will address his remarks specifically to various clauses in the Bill.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In fact, I was addressing very directly the likely consequences of an important provision of the Bill, because it is a crucial element in the strength of the economy and the absence of a balance of payments crisis that we now have the supply side improvements that profit-related pay will do everything to encourage. That is why I drew attention to the fact that the balance of payments crisis about which we heard so much from the Opposition before the election—a crisis so confidently predicted, so earnestly hoped for and so fervently prayed for—has not occurred. It has been postponed, and I believe that it can be postponed indefinitely if improvements in efficiency and productivity can be maintained. It is in achieving those aims that profit-related pay has a part to play.

Nothing that I have heard from the Opposition has suggested that they have a better approach. I listened in vain to the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) in case he had some better key to improvements in the supply side to put forward as an alternative. I listened in vain to the municipal Socialists who talk about Socialism in one borough. The only practical consequences of their policies for business are higher rates and politically inspired constraints written into commercial contracts.

I listened in vain, too, to speeches from SDP and Liberal Members. I read their manifesto with interest, but all that they had to offer was a proposal of so-called industrial investment boards to be scattered around the countryside. No doubt those will now be abandoned as part of democratic fusion. However, alliance Members fail utterly to address the central weakness of the British economy, which has never been a lack of demand but a lack of effective supply.

That is why I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Chancellor and his team for an imaginative proposal that directly and effectively addresses our past weakness. Profit-related pay represents a bold and worthwhile attempt to tackle the continuing problem of inflexibility in the labour market. However, there is still a word of warning to be sounded. Nominal wages are still rising at twice the rate of inflation and I believe that inflationary dangers could lie ahead. That is why profit-related pay deserves a welcome and a chance. If we can achieve greater awareness in the minds of employees about the links between investment, profitability and jobs, and bring to the labour market the greater flexibility to which I alluded, we shall have found the best way of keeping inflation down while promoting industrial efficiency and effectiveness.

One of the tax regimes in the Bill has not been discussed at length, either on Second Reading or in Committee. It relates to the close companies referred to in clause 61,

which was not discussed or voted upon, and I do not intend to criticise the clause. Perhaps I should explain for the benefit of the House and the less technically inclined that a close company is one that is controlled or owned by fewer than a certain number of individuals or trusts.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it in order for an hon. Member to go on at length on Third Reading about a clause which was neither discussed nor voted upon in the previous stages of the Bill's proceedings? Some of us are getting the impression that Conservative Members are going through the Bill in a somewhat tedious and prolonged way to try to delay the important Scottish business which is to follow. The hon. Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory) has hitherto not shown any great interest in the proceedings on the Bill. He seems now to have been dragged in by the Whips and by other Conservative Members as a device. I wonder whether you, Sir, could rule on whether it is in order for him to go on at such length about a clause which has not been discussed or voted upon.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Some of the earlier remarks of the hon. Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory) caused me a little concern. However, he is now referring specifically to a clause in the Bill—clause 61—and he is perfectly in order to do so.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I am sorry that my speech is being prolonged by interventions of Opposition Members. It is important that those outside the House should know that each clause gets a passing mention, either in Committee or in the House. That is why I am addressing myself to the important close company provisions.

I was explaining what a close company was. The legislation originated in the 1920s, when there was a considerable incentive for funds to be retained within close companies rather than distributed to shareholders. At that time, there was a great difference in the rate of taxation applying to registered companies, as they were known then, and individuals. Registered companies bore tax simply at the basic income tax rate, which was then mercifully low, whereas individuals could pay surtax at a very much higher rate. In addition, capital was either lightly taxed or not taxed at all. Therefore, there was every incentive to try to convert income to capital by retaining earnings within close companies. Quite naturally, the Revenue sought powers of direction so that earnings and profits in the companies could, in some circumstances, be taxed as though they had been distributed to shareholders.

I question whether those arrangements are appropriate today, for two reasons. First, before the war, a high proportion of British industry was owned and controlled by close companies, which were frequently owned by families or small groups of individuals. Therefore, the potential loss of revenue to the Exchequer was considerable. In the main, ownership has passed from close companies to public limited companies with hundreds or thousands of shareholders and the problem simply does not arise.

Secondly, the great difference in taxation as between companies and individuals is more or less ceasing to apply. The rates are now narrower. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor brought the rate of corporation tax down to 35 per cent. and the top rate of income tax down to 60 per cent. I hope and believe that in the next few years the differential will narrow still further. Also, capital is now taxed at a higher rate particularly if assets are held through companies.

Over the years, there has been provision to bring some relief to close companies if they are engaged in trading, but the definition of trading is restrictive and somewhat arbitrary. I argue that the close company legislation is becoming obsolete. I urge that it should be replaced by a more general anti-avoidance provision to catch the artificial use of close companies set up for avoidance purposes alone.

I shall not discuss clause 61 any further. I simply wish to ask my right hon. Friends two related questions. Will they establish, first, how many close company apportionments have been made over the last year or two and, secondly, how much revenue has been raised as a consequence? If the answer to both questions is "small", I again suggest that, when the future course of close company legislation is considered, it might be thought desirable to sweep away much of the legislation governing close companies which remains on the statute books and to replace it with a much simpler anti-avoidance provision.

I should like to touch on the more general matter of tax reform. I hope that my right hon. Friends will persist in their valiant efforts to simplify the British tax system. We have already achieved great success with corporation tax, bringing the rate down and reducing——

Mr. Blair: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is becoming increasingly clear that we are seeing an undignified and unworthy exercise of the filibuster to prevent the Scottish debate from taking place early. In my respectful submission, Sir, it cannot be right that we are entitled to debate tax reform on Third Reading of the Finance Bill. I draw your attention to *Hansard* of 10 July 1985 when, on Third Reading of the Finance Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker specifically ruled out of order a more general discussion on taxation. He said:

> "On Third Reading debate is restricted to what is in the Bill. Discussions at previous stages are not relevant. The discussions to which the hon. Gentleman refers are not relevant. Debate must be about the content of the Bill." —[*Official Report*, 10 July 1985; Vol. 82, c. 1231.]

We are extremely concerned that the proceedings of the House are being abused to prevent my Scottish colleagues from debating important matters which the Government are afraid to debate in prime time and thus want to keep back.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I think that the whole House knows that the Chair is in no way involved with tactics which perhaps are being used at the moment and which are used from time to time on both sides of the House. The Chair is concerned only with whether the debate taking place is in order. I am satisfied that this debate is in order. The hon. Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory) is now referring to points which I believe he will direct to a series of clauses in the Bill under the heading "Taxes Management Provisions".

Mr. Foulkes: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am astonished at your ruling on what you think the hon. Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory) is about to say. I have never heard that happen in the House before. I should have thought what was happening was clear. We have had a posse of parliamentary private secretaries put up deliberately to filibuster. I should have thought that the Chair should take account of that. The hon. Member for

[Mr. Foulkes]

Wells, who is speaking—when he is not interrupted—started this part of his speech by saying that he would now talk about the general matter of tax reform. I am sure that you heard him say that, Sir. It would be useful if you would rule whether the general matter of tax reform, as opposed to the specific reference in the Bill, is appropriate for Third Reading. It seems to some of us, especially those from beyond Hadrian's wall, that this is a deliberate abuse of the House. I hope that you will protect hon. Members whatever part of the country from which they come.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have already made it clear—I can add nothing further—that the hon. Member for Wells is perfectly in order in his remarks. It often happens that certain hon. Members wish to proceed to the next business. That has nothing to do with the Chair. The Chair's concern is to ensure that the debate is in order. I am satisfied that this debate is in order. I am beginning to deprecate a certain intention on the part of some hon. Members who appear to be leaning on the Chair. That is not tolerable, and I am not prepared to put up with it.

Mr. Foulkes: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Member has made his point of order.

Mr. Foulkes: I have another point of order, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Member has made his point of order, and I have answered it to the best of my ability. I hope that he will not prolong proceedings by persisting.

Mr. Robert Sheldon (Ashton-under-Lyne): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It has been held clearly in the past that the debate on Third Reading deals with what is in the Bill and its consequences and not with the alternatives to it, which one is perfectly able to debate either in Committee or on Second Reading. It has normally been held that the point of a Third Reading is to show the consequences of what is in the Bill and to consider whether it should be passed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The right hon. Member is a very experienced Member who has dealt with many Finance Bills. He will know that I have already ruled that some latitude is allowed on Third Reading of the Finance Bill as distinct from other Bills. That latitude is being exercised. In my judgment, it is within the normal rules that we apply in the House.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: This speech is becoming rather longer than I had expected, through no fault of my own. You are entirely right, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What is a Finance Bill if it is not a Bill to provide tax reform and to make changes to tax management? I was touching on that feature of the Bill. I was expressing my approval of the fact that the philosophy running through the Bill is fully in line with my right hon. Friends' earlier tax reform measures to make taxes simple, general in application, low and enforced. I have left "enforced" until last. It was mentioned in Committee—in fact, by the hon. Member for Sedgefield—that we had to be vigilant in not giving the Inland Revenue executive powers beyond what were absolutely necessary. One of the functions of the House is to put checks on the Executive if there were ever a danger of that. One reason why the Revenue's tax-gathering has created resentment is that the Revenue has been used to levy confiscatory taxes. If we can achieve comprehensible, comprehensive and low taxes, that danger ceases to be so great. Lower taxes are not only good in themselves but lead to greater compliance.

I hope that my right hon. Friends will carry forward the watchwords of tax reduction and reform which we have seen at work in this Finance Bill and which I am confident will be a feature of future Finance Bills.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am sorry to rise during this debate, but I do so for certain reasons. On contemplation I was a little alarmed by the suggestion that my right hon. and hon. Friends were trying in some way to lean on the Chair. I hope that you will take our assurance that that was not the intention. But we are alarmed to some extent, and rightly so, by the way in which the House has been manipulated. I understand that that is not a matter for you and that you have to consider only what is in order, but my right hon. and hon. Friends' points were serious points about the latitude allowed on Third Reading and they are of some interest to the House.

As I understand it, you were making the point that there was a distintion between Third Reading of a Finance Bill and Third Reading of any other Bill. But the hon. Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory) made it unashamedly clear in one passage that he was going to discuss general tax reform. If that is in order, it is difficult to see the distinction between Second Reading and Third Reading of a Finance Bill. Whatever latitude has been allowed in the past, and judging by the quotation of a previous Deputy Speaker's ruling two years ago on a Finance Bill, it seems to me that a sharp distinction has been made between the Second and Third Reading of the Finance Bill. I wonder whether you can help me by defining the difference so that in future we shall know exactly where we stand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am grateful for the first comments of the hon. Gentleman, which I gladly accept. I have said on a number of occasions already that debates on the Third Readings of Bills that are not Finance Bills must be strictly related to the contents of the Bills. It is also clear that the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) helped me by reading from "Erskine May" the passage to the effect that Finance Bills are treated in a somewhat different manner in that a wider debate is allowed, but there must be a direct relationship to the clauses in the Bill. There have been one or two occasions when hon. Members have assisted me in keeping other hon. Members in order, but nothing that has happened so far is out of order. It is nothing to do with the Chair whether we should go on to the other business that is on the Order Paper. All the Chair has to do is to give to any hon. Member who rises the opportunity to speak on the matter that is before us, which is the Third Reading of the Finance Bill. As long as an hon. Member is in order, the Chair does and should call him. That is the position.

I am sure that any hon. Member who rises from now on will sense the feeling of the House, will recognise that the House does have other business to come to in due course, and, therefore, I am sure that hon. Members will be particularly careful to relate their remarks to the Bill before us.

8.31 pm

Mr. Tim Boswell (Daventry): I am pleased to join in the debate on the Third Reading of what remains a very substantial Finance Bill. I would like, first, to mention the excellent contributions in the maiden speeches of my hon. Friends the Members for Wyre (Mr. Mans), Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Arbuthnot) and Gedling (Mr. Mitchell) and the hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) who are swelling the ranks of those new Members who, like myself, have now made their maiden speeches.

In the spirit of what you have just said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have only one remark to make by way of preamble, and that is that I have the great privilege of having a very old friend who is now almost 100 years old who has a remarkable brain and interest in financial matters, whose simple test —

Mr. Foulkes: He cannot be a Tory.

Mr. Boswell: He is indeed a Conservative. His simple view of financial matters is to ask whether things are getting better or worse and whether Budgets and Finance Bills will make things better or worse. Neither he nor I have any doubt about the legislation now before us.

I did not participate in Committee on the pensions legislation. I am sure that it is broadly within the right lines and that it is doing, as Government Members hope to do, two things at the same time. The first is that at the top level it is pruning one or two fiscal anomalies that Labour Members, when they had the chance to prune, took no action on. The first of those is the top limit on lump sums, which I do not recall having been in the legislation in the past. The second is the new arrangement on the reinsurance to close for Lloyd's where, after what was an unduly harsh first proposal, a sensible and workable compromise has been achieved.

I now turn to the remarkable contribution made by my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams), who has very much borne the heat and burden of the day on the issue and in particular has set out to establish one substantial point — that pensions are an important and central property right. That should be recognised as far as possible both in legislation and in practice. The closer we can approximate our legislation to that ideal, the better.

Although things are much improved in the Bill, there are matters to be attended to. I notice, for example, that my right hon. Friend the Financial Secretary referred to additional voluntary contributions. I must declare my own interest. Not only do I benefit from the pension scheme here, but some of us carry over financial retirement annuities from previous self-employment. We are in a better position than a person with his own pension scheme that is supplemented by additional voluntary contributions. The Government might pay attention to that point in the future.

Profit-related pay is the most important part of the Bill. It is an important social development. Benefits should not simply be internal; they should benefit the whole economy by stressing productivity and giving greater flexibility in the labour market. Those are the strengths in it. If it transpires that this experimental scheme is not taken up, as perhaps some people expect, although I do not, it is appropriate to treat it as an experiment and to look for something else. It is entirely wrong not to try the experiment to see how it works in practice.

As I want to speak only for a few minutes, I would like to pose the question that has gone through my mind in the time that I have spent looking at those issues in the past and during the passage of the Bill and draw an analogy with the work of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor in another area of taxation because there is an underlying dilemma. In this case the Government have made the right choice, but it is right to recognise the dilemma. The dilemma is whether one goes for a regime of lower tax rates generally or for differential reliefs for particular purposes. When one looks at the success of the Government's proposals on corporation tax where differential reliefs have been unpicked and a lower rate introduced, it must give one pause to look at any proposals, such as the ones in the Bill, for additional differential reliefs, particularly when they are not available to employees in the public sector because, by definition, they are not in profit-making activities.

The Government have been right to bring forward those proposals because they have value for the whole economy as well as for those within the profit-related schemes. It is a seed-corn exercise. It follows on from the earlier seed-corn exercises, such as the share savings scheme, which has been a remarkable success with over 1,300 entrants to date.

If hon. Members on either side of the House are concerned about an excess pattern of reliefs, the way to defuse those excess reliefs is to get general tax rates down. The lower the tax rate, the less the differential between being in a tax-sheltered environment and paying the full rate. The time to get tax rates down is not tonight, but it is and will be again in the next Budget. Meanwhile, I am delighted to join Conservative Members in commending this imaginative and substantial Finance Bill to the House.

8.38 pm

Mr. Conal Gregory (York): I welcome the opportunity this evening to discuss two or three pertinent points on Third Reading of the Finance Bill. It has been delayed somewhat because of the general election, and I am pleased therefore that the aspects of pensions and particularly profit-related pay should be considered in some depth. I am saddened that the Opposition, not for the first time, have chosen not to participate adequately in the debate. Nevertheless, Opposition Members will have the opportunity later to read in *Hansard* the golden words from Conservative Members.

The Green Paper forecast in the Bill confirmed that 20 per cent., or £3,000, of the pay packet could be related to the profit-related bonus to qualify. There are several advantages in that. First, it makes wages more flexible and, therefore, employment more stable. After all, in any recession it will provide a cushion for cost cutting rather than by redundancies. If the system is introduced for smaller companies in my constituency, especially on the trading estates, it will bind individuals together and they will feel an integrated part of their firm and the profit created. Secondly, the emphasis on giving employees a stake in their companies must lead to better industrial relations, encouraging employees to work harder and boost productivity. I will come to the related problem of overtime shortly. Thirdly, unemployment will be reduced. For that, above all other reasons, profit-related pay will be of merit.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor has doubled the tax relief since the Green Paper of July last year so that the

[Mr. Conal Gregory]

limit of 20 per cent., or £3,000, whichever is the lower, will apply. That means that a married person on average earnings would qualify for tax relief to the extent of up to £6 per week or 4p off the basic rate of tax. That is no mean achievement.

This is no idle, theoretical concept. A number of companies have already successfully introduced profit-related pay and it is appropriate on Third Reading of the Finance Bill to pay tribute to the clearing banks which have introduced such schemes and to companies such as Boots, British Airways, Marks and Spencer, Sainsburys British Oxygen and Burtons, to name a few.

In relation to the moral and economic problem of overtime, companies which have profit-related pay will be able to overcome some of the difficulties. For instance, July is not the high season for the Post Office as it is for the farmer with his crops. Yet a great deal of overtime is being worked in the Post Office. If nationalised industries could introduce profit-related pay, those postmen and the engineers in major companies, such as British Rail, could share in the fruits of their extra work rather than working for time and a half or double time. The chairman of British Rail, which is a major employer in my constituency, is currently looking at ways to deal with subsidiary companies, such as Travellers Fare. A profit-related pay scheme would bring bonuses not just for management but for the employees, because they would benefit from the profits of the company rather than simply working for hourly or weekly pay.

A further growth sector of the economy is tourism, which is achieving 50,000 to 55,000 new jobs per annum. In this sector, too, there are major advantages in profit-related pay, not merely for major companies, such as Trusthouse Forte, Embassy and Grand Metropolitan, but for smaller enterprises such as the independent hoteliers in the Consort Hotel consortium. To achieve these benefits in smaller schemes, the Government might consider the possibility of a managing agency to deal with smaller companies.

I well understand that there are objections to profit-related pay and these need to be addressed before we agree to this imaginative and far-reaching Bill. The first objection is that there would be greater uncertainty of pay levels, but wages are already uncertain due to overtime, short-time working and piecework, so no further instability would be created and there would be greater employee involvement.

Secondly, some economists might suggest that pay is more closely related to profits and employees might therefore want more involvement in corporate decisions. I do not see that as a disadvantage. Like many of the companies which have already introduced profit-related pay, I regard that as a bonus. I am sure that any imaginative management would agree.

A third possible objection is that employees already on the payroll may seek to defeat the logic of the scheme by preventing further recruitment because it might result in a diminution of profit per head. That is a theoretical concept, but I do not believe that employees actually participating and keen to improve profitability would behave in that way.

Mr. Foulkes: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Gregory: I shall be happy to hear some words of wisdom from the Opposition.

Mr. Foulkes: During the hon. Gentleman's discourse on profit-related pay, my hon. Friends and I were contemplating how it might apply to Members of Parliament. What formula does the hon. Gentleman suggest? I should be happy for it to be based on one's electoral majority, but I doubt whether the hon. Gentleman would find that desirable. If the hon. Gentleman has any other suggestion, we should be interested to hear it. I am sure that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would not rule it out of order, in view of the generosity with which you have allowed the debate to proceed.

Mr. Gregory: I shall not be taken in by the hon. Gentleman's mischievous suggestion. I am sure that he, like me, wishes to return to the mainstream of Third Reading rather than unnecessarily delaying proceedings, which Conservative Members certainly do not wish to do.

Before that rather unhelpful intervention, I was referring to the third theoretical objection to profit-related pay. It has been suggested that existing employees may not wish new staff to come on to the books and thus to share in the profits. I believe that that is a false analogy and that if employees have the best interests of the company at heart as they will share in its profits up to the maximum that I have cited, they will be looking out for suitable employees and schemes to boost their enterprise.

In the 1930s and 1940s, as some of us know from our history books and others from experience, firms had suggestions boxes. We have moved a long way from there and profit-related pay provides tangible benefits for every stratum of a company. I therefore see great advantages in the scheme set out in the Green Paper and in the Bill and I commend it fully.

8.48 pm

Mr. Quentin Davies (Stamford and Spalding): I begin by paying tribute to the masterly way in which my right hon. Friend the Minister has taken us through this excellent Finance Bill and to the parliamentary marathon that we had the privilege to witness from my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams)—a marathon not without results—to which I shall return in due course.

As a new boy, I find it slightly strange that on Third Reading of a Finance Bill it is possible to conduct a debate without referring at all to what is surely the most important consequence of any Finance Bill—the fiscal stance enshrined in the Bill and enforced by it. It must be in the mind of every hon. Member that the current fiscal stance in this country has been extraordinarily felicitous. That lies behind a remarkable fact which I believe is unprecedented in our history or in that of any other country with which I am familiar. We have had unprecedentedly high rates——

Mr. Norman Hogg (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is quite obvious that the hon. Member for Stamford and Spalding (Mr. Davies) has nothing to say. It is also quite obvious that Conservative Members have been dragged in to make speeches to delay the debate. From a previous role that I have played in the House, I know that you are an

extremely helpful Deputy Speaker who understands the procedure. In what way would it be in order for me to move the closure?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Stamford and Spalding (Mr. Davies) is on his preamble at the moment. If he continues a wide preamble for more than a few more sentences – I was already sitting on the edge of the Chair — I shall pull him up. As the hon. Member for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth (Mr. Hogg) knows well, every hon. Member is entitled to a few sentences of preamble before he comes to the detail of his speech. The hon. Member for Stamford and Spalding is about to do that.

Mr. Hogg: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It seemed to me to be more of an amble than a preamble. The hon. Gentleman was ambling all over the place and not directing himself in any way to the Bill. In what way and in what manner that would be consistent with the Standing Orders can I move the closure of the debate; in other words, That the Question be now put?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am not prepared to accept that motion.

Mr. Hogg: With respect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was not seeking to move the closure of the debate but asking in what way it would be in order for me to do that as a member of Her Majesty's Opposition as opposed to a member of Her Majesty's Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member is an experienced parliamentarian. He knows that the Chair will never give a ruling on a hypothetical question. If, in the fulness of time, he were to move the closure, the occupant of the Chair would have to make a decision. If I have misunderstood him, I am sorry. I am perfectly prepared to accept that he did not move the closure and therefore that I did not refuse it. He will understand the signifance of that.

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Will you accept a definite question from me rather than a hypothetical question from my hon. Friend? I should like to move the closure so that we may get on to more important business — the way in which this rotten Government are clobbering Scottish local authorities. All that the House is hearing are filibustering contributions from the Government who are the Opposition in Scotland. I therefore move the closure of the debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I regret to inform the hon. Gentleman that I am not prepared to accept that motion.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Would it not be right to say that in any Bill that is introduced on a Ways and Means resolution the Second Reading is an open-ended debate and there is no prospect of a closure? Am I right in saying that the same applies to the Third Reading and that a closure motion is not in order on a Finance Bill?

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the same point?

Mr. Maxton: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I inform the hon. Gentleman—I hope that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will do exactly the same – that it is not the case on the Second Reading of a Finance Bill when the closure is moved by the Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The Chair has the onerous duty of deciding whether to accept a closure motion. Then, of course, it is for the House to decide whether it wishes to end a debate. The hon. Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) moved the closure, and I have told him and the House that I am not prepared to accept it.

Mr. Davies: I shall complete my preamble in the course of one sentence. As I was saying, the fiscal stance in this country has permitted us to enjoy an unprecedentedly fast rate of growth and, at the same time, to maintain a remarkable degree of equilibrium in the balance of payments, between different sectors of the economy and, above all, between growth in consumption and in investment. That is a consequence of our fiscal stance.

It is no accident that a great deal of attention has been paid to two aspects of the Bill simply because they are the two aspects that are, first of all, conceptually and philosophically new and, secondly, because they are likely to have a significant effect on microeconomic behaviour. They are profit-related pay and pension provision. I am one of the many casualties of the present pension system, but since I do not expect to be able to profit from any improvement, I am not sure that, strictly speaking, I have any interest to declare this evening. However, by general consent, it is pernicious to discriminate against early leavers. It is not merely morally pernicious but exceedingly economically unsound, for the simple reason that one is discriminating against and penalising those who are mobile and those who take risks and subsidising those who play safe and stay put. That is completely contrary to the general philosophical thrust of the Government's economic policies that I am proud to support. Therefore, I was grateful for the assurance that my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington extracted from my right hon. Friend to the effect that the walls of Jericho might conceivably be inclined to move a little further.

Mr. Norman Hogg: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What have the walls of Jericho got to do with the Finance Bill? The House is being abused. We have heard one cliché after another. The hon. Member is pouring forth empty rhetoric, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and you are allowing it to happen. The time has come for this — *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I know that hon. Members, particularly from Scottish constituencies, wish to get on to the important matters that are on the Order Paper for later this evening. I distinctly heard the hon. Member who has the Floor say that he was addressing his remarks to profit-related pay and pension schemes. *[Interruption.]* Order. The hon. Gentleman is doing just that. I suggest that points of order are only prolonging the proceedings. I guarantee hon. Members who are keen on later business that I shall ensure that the remarks that are made by any hon. Member are directed to the business before us. I repeat the appeal that I have already made to those hon. Members who rise to remember that other business will come on later and that many hon. Members are anxious to speak on it.

Mr. Canavan: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Just a few minutes ago, I heard the hon.

[Mr. Canavan]

Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) whisper to his colleagues, "Keep it going, lads, keep it going." This is a deliberate filibuster to try to minimise the time for democratic debate of Scottish business. What are you going to do about it, Mr. Deputy Speaker? If you are not going to do anything about it, I will move a motion of no confidence in you as Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It is just as well that the Chair does not always hear everything that is said below the Gangway. All that I say to the House once more is that the sole job of the Chair is to ensure that speeches are in order. The speeches are in order, and if we had fewer points of order we might dispose of this business more quickly and get on to the Scottish business.

Mr. Davies: I do not know whether the walls of Jericho would have withstood the clamour from Opposition Members, but I am more than ready to do so to make what I believe to be a serious point about profit-related pay.

I was amazed to hear the remarks of the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) on profit-related pay. If I understood him correctly—I apologise in advance if I did not—he said that he was not against profit-related pay, but he was against using fiscal incentives to induce it. That was close to a declaration of intellectual funk, because the issue is not whether we have profit-related pay with fiscal incentives or whether we have it without. The issue is whether we have profit-related pay with fiscal incentives or whether we do not have it at all.

The reason for that is simple: we are asking workers to accept a cost in the form of a risk attaching to a portion of their present earnings, and there is no reason why we should expect anyone to accept such a cost unless we offer a corresponding reward at the same time. In the long term, that reward will be effectively an equity stake in the profits of the company for which they work, and that will bring with it all the economic, psychological and social benefits to which much attention has been paid in the debate. But for the immediate term, there is no way that the workers or staff in firms will accept that a portion of their present earnings should be subject to uncertainty to which they are not now subject unless there is a countervailing inducement for them to accept it. The only other way in which profit-related pay could be introduced would be to expect the employer, while guaranteeing existing wages or salaries, to go beyond that and guarantee an element of profit, too. It is neither realistic nor desirable to expect employers to do that. If they did, they would significantly increase the cost of labour and thus reduce employment.

This issue must be faced fairly and squarely. It is regrettable that it has not been so faced by the Opposition. It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I support this provision in an excellent Finance Bill.

9.3 pm

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: I hasten to reassure you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the House, that I have only very brief remarks to make which arise directly out of the Bill as we have it before us on Third Reading.

In the 1986 Budget there was what I thought an objectionable proposal in regard to interest in possession trusts; and I sought to argue with my right hon. and hon. Friends at the time that it should be changed. I did not succeed, but I would like to say how very gratified I am that the present Bill has been amended in precisely the way I had hoped.

When this year's Budget was announced, I did not agree with the proposed tax treatment of life assurance funds and, having had the good fortune to be selected to serve on the Standing Committee, I tabled an amendment to the Bill which would have had the effect of reversing what the Chancellor intended in his Budget speech. I am pleased to see that that provision has now been dropped in the Bill which is before the House—or at any rate significantly revised.

We were concerned about the reinsurance to close proposal affecting Lloyd's. There, too, I tabled an amendment in Committee just before the election, and it was already apparent that my right hon. and hon. Friends were ready to move on that subject. They are to be warmly congratulated on the way in which they have attended to the experts, and have now made significant changes. I believe that what is now in the Bill, so far as Lloyd's is concerned, is satisfactory all round. However, in accepting the amendments in Committee, my right hon. Friend the Financial Secretary agreed that further changes might be seen to be necessary and said that he would pay attention to the matter as time went by. That was extremely satisfactory and I should like to express my thanks for all those improvements.

On the question of personal pension schemes, which constitutes chapter II of the Bill, the Government are making a highly imaginative and important new move that should be welcomed in all parts of the House. I am sure that it is very welcome in the country. It is very much in line with my own recommendation over a long campaign. I wish the new movement towards personal pension schemes every possible success. However, I am sorry to say that in schedule 3 there are provisions which I do not think will help the Bill at all. I am sorry that the House did not agree that it would have been better if schedule 3 had been dropped.

In opening the debate on Third Reading, my right hon. Friend said that tax reform and the reduction of tax is a vital part of our overall strategy. I warmly endorse that and should like to add one more thing: we should make extreme simplification of the tax system for its own sake a particular party commitment. We should aim to make progress with that during the present Parliament. I certainly hope that we shall.

In the area of occupational pension schemes, there is a great deal of room for an extreme simplification of the rules. The occupational pension movement in the private sector is vitally important. It stimulates saving for retirement, which is probably the most important spring for a private capitalist system. Saving for retirement is the most natural thing for everybody. It should be encouraged by the Government so far as ever possible.

We also have a motive to see that occupational pension schemes provide a sufficient pension, so that people in retirement do not have to rely on the taxpayer through supplementary benefit. We are not yet doing enough in that direction. The result is that millions of pensioners have to rely on supplementary benefit, which is a sad state of affairs. Not enough is yet being done in this Bill to put that right.

We should run our occupational pension schemes so that they assist members of our property-owning democracy to make the best of their careers. They should

not find themselves anchored in funds from which they cannot move without making serious losses. They should be able to make their own choices of career in their own best interests—and that would be the best interests of the economy as well. Sadly, the provision in the Bill as it now stands will reduce the mobility of labour in precisely the area where it matters most, which is for senior executives in the closing years of their careers. Those people will now add it up and discover that it is far better to remain in the schemes that they are in, than to try to jump into new schemes and to negotiate themselves a satisfactory retirement benefit. That is a most unfortunate aspect of the Bill and it is something that the House must undertake to come back to very soon.

The provisions for the AVCs are highly complex. Many experts think that they are unworkable and I am bound to say that I think so too. The movement towards the AVCs, which we all applaud, is unfortunately being stymied by the very provisions that the Government have included in the Bill. I do not like to be critical, because I know that my right hon. Friend has his heart in the right place. That is why I am optimistic when making these remarks, because I am sure that he will listen to what I say —and also to what the professional people in the pension movement are saying extremely clearly.

I also do not like the provisions in regard to accelerated accrual. The Inland Revenue has got that wrong. It will hold employees in schemes instead of encouraging mobility; it is an unnecessary restriction on freedom, and a sign that the Inland Revenue has not done enough thinking about the tax-free lump sum.

On tax-free lump sums, the £150,000 limit is inexplicable. It cannot be justified. It is a form of discrimination against the better-off which is not based on any kind of logic. I hope that it will be removed very soon because it is the wrong approach to take.

Having voiced those critical thoughts, I do not want to say more except that, in general, this is an excellent Bill. Its major features are vitally important and progressive. The points that I have criticised can be put right and must be put right very soon.

9.9 pm

Mr. John Greenway (Ryedale): I am grateful for the opportunity to speak once again on the Finance Bill. Some of us have spent long hours on these Benches dealing with these matters and it is slightly offensive for Opposition Members to talk about us being brought in to filibuster into the night when we had every intention of speaking in this debate this evening.

We have discussed many provisions in detail, and before I refer to the points that I wish to raise, I wish to join in the commendations made earlier of my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams), my right hon. Friend the Financial Secretary and the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair). Sadly, for the first time during these proceedings, the hon. Gentleman has gone to take some refreshment. We have had interesting and detailed discussions during which there has not always been unanimity.

I wish to address primarily the pension provisions, particularly those affecting personal pensions and AVCs. Choice is certainly a central plank of Government strategy and the Bill introduces the third main area of choice available to individuals. We have had home ownership and share ownership and now the Government seek to widen the choice in pensions. As someone who for the past 15 years has been involved in marketing pensions, I must say not only that I have an interest to declare, but that that is to be welcomed.

The question of tax relief on pension arrangements has figured greatly in our debates. One of the areas where I am most at loggerheads with my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington is in relation to the purpose of that relief. I hope that I am not doing him an injustice when I say that I do not agree that tax relief should be considered as a form of loan from taxpayers which is subsequently repaid when the pension benefits are eventually taxed. There is every justification for continuing with sensible tax advantages in pension provision.

From the employer's point of view, in this day and age we should regard the provision of pensions as every bit as important as the payment of salaries. No one would suggest that the payment of salaries should not be a tax-deductible item on company and business balance sheets. Equally, from the individual's point of view, it is sensible for us to encourage people to make provision for the future. My hon. Friend the Member for Kensington referred to the possible problem of the burden of retired people on future generations of taxpayers. The thrust of the Bill to a large extent prevents that. People are given every encouragement to provide for their retirement, so that, next century, millions of pensioners will not depend on the state.

We welcome and support the retention of tax advantages and the Government have a right to ensure that there is no major abuse of those tax facilities. They have introduced changes in the lump sum arrangements. We have had considerable and enjoyable discussions about why the figure should be £150,000, and by any measure that figure is substantial and generous. The Financial Secretary has assured us that that figure will not be eroded, and we take that assurance on board. Let us retain our tax advantages for pensions and ensure that we do not see abuses to the extent that it would put them in jeopardy.

Questions have also been raised about AVCs, accelerated accrual and certain aspects of the financial arrangements for retirement annuities, now changing into personal pensions. My right hon. Friend assured us that the door was not closed and that further representations on the practicality of putting these matters into practice can be made. I welcome that.

An interesting feature of this debate is that much of the comment has come from the Conservative Benches and some people

Dr. Lewis Moonie (Kirkcaldy): Especially in the past few hours.

Mr. Greenway: It has been apparent throughout the entire debate. Labour Members remind me of a football team that is three goals down, but keeps kicking the ball to their own goalkeeper.

When we debate pensions and future pension provision, people may ask about the significance of those measures in relation to people who are out of work or who are already retired. The Social Security Act 1986 and the personal pension proposals will bring flexibility to people who may be in work for periods of time or where one member of a family is a wage earner. Such flexibility is welcome.

[Mr. Greenway]

Comment was made on the fact that clause 29 does not allow the aggregation of relevant earnings between husbands and wives. Surely that is right. We must encourage wives to make their own pension arrangements. People who are already retired must wonder about the effect of this debate on pensions. I was grateful for the earlier ruling of Mr. Deputy Speaker, who said that we may refer to the first Finance Bill, which was passed before some of us were fortunate enough to be Members of this House. I greatly welcome the imaginative approach that was contained in the first Finance Bill in relation to increased age allowance, especially for those over 80.

Mr. Blair: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) has just said that he thought that Mr. Deputy Speaker ruled that the earlier Finance Bill, which this House passed before the election, could be referred to and its provisions discussed in relation to this Bill. I cannot believe that to be the case. I never heard Mr. Deputy Speaker say that and it seems wholly out of order.

Mr. Speaker: I was not in the Chair at the time, but the hon. Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) must stick to this Finance Bill.

Mr. Greenway: I do not want to go against your ruling, Mr. Speaker, but in future Finance Bills I should like movement towards an increased age allowance.

One measure that was introduced in this Bill, but not in the same form in the previous Bill, is the capital gains tax treatment of life assurance companies. I share the welcome that my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington gave to the Government's change of mind in this matter. It may interest some of the Scottish Labour Members—I sympathise with them for having to wait to discuss their own business a little later—that that change of heart has been greatly welcomed by the Scottish life assurance industry, which has much to gain from the benefits of the measures in the Bill in relation to personal pensions.

The tax changes introduced during the past eight years have been radical and far-reaching, so much so that one is reluctant to over-egg the pudding by commenting on the measures contained in the Finance Bill. Nevertheless, it is absolutely clear that this Bill introduces fundamental changes in relation to the provision of pension benefits for future generations. I greatly support the Bill.

9.19 pm

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): The provisions in this Bill are, without doubt, some of the most important provisions that are likely to come before this Parliament. The notion of profit-related pay, which comprises clauses 1 to 17 of the Bill, is of exceptional importance for the following reasons. For many years it has been commonly accepted that the question of pay should be linked directly to the trade union negotiating machinery. Now at last, in the new environment created by the Government, pay will be related to the individual effort of the people in industry or services. That mirrors the mid-19th century, in the days when there was no income tax to speak of, and all that was gained by people in their respective industries and services was pay, wages and the profits of those who ran the businesses. The intrusion—welcome in many respects—of the volumes of public expenditure that have been generated since the mid-19th century, particularly in the welfare state, has cast a great burden upon the state.

A consequence has been an increase of taxation. The consequence of clauses 1 to 17——

Mr. Foulkes: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Before you came in, some challenges were made about the irrelevance of speeches and the fact that they were out of order. The hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) is taking us back to the 19th century. That was well before the Bill was introduced, and it is out of order. Perhaps you did not hear everything that the hon. Gentleman said, Mr. Speaker, but I can assure you that everything that I heard in the past 30 seconds was out of order, and I hope that you will bring the hon. Gentleman to order.

Mr. Speaker: My record shows that the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) has been speaking for about one and half minutes, but I imagine that if he referred to the previous century, it must have been a preamble and that he was drawing lessons from past experiences.

Mr. Cash: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Bill proposes that the maximum amount of profit-related pay eligible for tax relief will be £3,000 or 20 per cent. of the total PAYE, whichever is the lower. I challenge the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) to dispute whether that is germane to the debate that is now in progress.

Mr. Foulkes: It is germane, but it is boring.

Mr. Cash: It is on the spot and it is in the Bill.

The limits that have been determined for the purposes of the Bill are rather on the low side. In a future Finance Bill, I should prefer it if we increased those limits because ever greater incentives will be required to develop enterprise and efficiency and to develop the economy to the level to which we aspire. Let me risk raising a matter that goes outside this country. We have much to learn from the incentive-based economy in Japan because the relationship between profit-related pay and incentives lies at the heart of enterprise in the modern world.

The proposals in the Bill are the very antithesis of the drab Socialism represented on Opposition Benches. The notions of profit-related pay and incentives, the drive for enterprise and the determination to improve the quality of our services and industries are represented by clauses 1 to 17.

The more we can increase the relationship between profit-related pay and industry and services, the more we shall be able to reduce the perks and other informal accruals of income that are not directly related to the performance of the person who is working on the shop floor or in the boardroom. Therefore, the provisions to ensure that there is a direct relationship between the work that is done by those on the shop floor or in management and the amount of money that they take away with them is greatly to be applauded. That is also related to the reductions in taxation.

The combination of the various factors ensures that there is a direct contact between work, pay and income. People have a direct incentive to enterprise, which is what we require as we move towards the end of the century. To some extent, I accept the strictures of the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) on my reference to the 19th century; but we must learn from the

experience of other countries. We must learn how to recreate enterprise in this country. These provisions are adequate and proper testament to the endeavours of this Government over the next five to ten years. There is no doubt that they are necessary and helpful and will play a large part in ensuring that the country stays on the rails and becomes more prosperous during the next 15 years.

9.25 pm

Mr. John Redwood (Wokingham): I shall endeavour to speak without hesitation, repetition or deviation because I know that Opposition Members are worried about our motives for coming here tonight. I can assure them that I was not lassoed by a Whip or waylaid by a Minister. I came tonight because I sat through the Committee stage of the Bill and I want to make some points about what emerged. Opposition Members would be well advised to take a greater interest in how the Government put their hands in the nation's pockets; they might then find the electors more sympathetic to their cause.

On personal pensions, a number of good new clauses were moved and then withdrawn, particularly by my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams). A serious point that the Government must recognise arises out of that debate. Money purchase schemes do not easily go together with final salary schemes. They offer many advantages that final salary schemes cannot offer the taxpayer, the fund manager or — most important of all — the beneficiary. For example, in a final salary scheme one cannot be sure how much tax relief will have to be given, and one has to be careful about the amount of tax relief and how the limits to be placed on it are defined. With final salary schemes, if the rate of inflation rose too high, the beneficiaries would be largely unprotected, in the way in which they were throughout the terrible inflation of the 1970s, when the widows and members of schemes in receipt of pensions were often wiped out by high rates of inflation and inadequate rates of increase or compensation from the scheme managers.

Similarly, those who seek to change jobs — we need job mobility in this country — often find it difficult to obtain a good deal from the pension fund that they are leaving or from the fund to which they are going. The Government have enacted many measures to improve these matters by inflation-linking the pensions up to a limit and improving the right of transferees. There is no doubt that the best guarantee of all for anyone is to have his own assets visible, under his own control and professionally managed — and that is exactly what personal pensions offer everyone. That is exactly what the money purchase type of scheme offers pensioners, within and without the large schemes run by employers. We are offering opportunities — [*Interruption.*] Opposition Members may knock or deride them, but the people are in favour of them; they want choice and better pensions, and these proposals go some small way to achieving that aim.

There are disappointments in some of the other provisions of the Bill. Why, for example, for capital gains tax, are we still left with this ridiculously complicated scheme of indexation? Why have the Government not taken the opportunity to remove the indexation provisions and increase the amount that is tax-free for those making gains? Alternatively, the Government could have scrapped the capital gains tax machinery and replaced it with a speculators' tax — at income tax rates — on those making short-term gains. The Government have missed an opportunity, but I hope that they will seize it on another occasion.

I am disappointed that nothing has been done to tackle the problem faced by those on lowest incomes, particularly as they move from unemployment into employment, which is happening frequently and quickly now. They face benefit withdrawals and a higher proportionate rate of tax than is paid by those on the highest incomes. That anomaly should be redressed rapidly.

I welcome the profit-related pay proposals and hope that they will catch on and become a large expense. It is not before time that such measures have come before the House. We need more flexibility in pay. Profits are booming, industry's order books are full and industry and commerce are flourishing across most of the country, so many people will benefit from the Government's proposal. It will be an addition to their income and will introduce the flexibility that we need to take on prosperity and to generate new jobs. It is not a scheme for cutting wages; it is a scheme for improving our economic prospects. If large sums are given in tax relief, much of that money will buy new jobs and new activities, and the flexibility will strengthen the prosperity of the whole nation. That prosperity will spread — yes, even to Scotland, though Labour Members always seem to deny that Scotland could ever prosper. Prosper it will, and the Government's proposals will help.

This is a radical Government and there are modest and good radical measures in the Bill. I hope that this will not be the end of it. Cutting taxes is a good thing. Reduced tax rates bring in more tax revenue and can further speed the process by which the wheels of industry turn more rapidly and people get back into jobs, which is what we all sincerely wish to see.

9.32 pm

The Paymaster General (Mr. Peter Brooke): We have had a good-humoured debate, with a powerful strand of continuity. My first pleasure in responding is to congratulate four admirable maiden speakers.

My hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Mr. Mitchell) traded not at all upon his father who is also an hon. Member. At the risk of going back into the 19th century, some of us recalled that Mr. Gladstone described Austen Chamberlain's maiden speech as a speech to warm a father's heart.

My hon. Friend told us that his constituency was named after a rural deanery. The only rural dean whom I know to appear as a symbol in British literature appears in the poem by my namesake Rupert Brooke about the vicarage at Grantchester. The fact that a constituency is named after a rural deanery adds greatly to the knowledge of the House. My hon. Friend was both lyrical and practical and I know that the House will look forward to hearing from him again.

The hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) declared that he had recently lost his identity. His speech clearly demonstrated that he had refound it. The hon. Gentleman made a most workmanlike speech and it was impressive that, when speaking of the motor industry, hospitals in his constituency and the Oxford polytechnic, he demonstrated great familiarity with how those institutions work.

[Mr. Peter Brooke]

My hon. Friend the Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans) earned the affection of the House by the manner in which he spoke of his predecessor, Sir Walter Clegg. I had to do business with Sir Walter on further education and on VAT on take-away foods. It is clear that my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre will represent his constituency with the same closeness and effectiveness as was shown by Sir Walter, of whom we were all so fond. In a moment I shall come to what my hon. Friend said about profit-related pay.

My hon. Friend the Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Arbuthnot) set the House an outstanding example because of the manner in which he spoke without notes. I dare say that this is the first time that the House has heard a maiden speech by an hon. Member whose father was present and another maiden speech on which my hon. Friend the Member for Wanstead and Woodford was congratulated by the grandson of one of his predecessors. It was a well-informed speech and we were grateful for my hon. Friend's discretion in leaving until next year those matters that require our further attention, and giving us a year in which to consider the points.

In a similar way my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) referred to draft clauses. My hon. Friend the Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory) raised a query on clause 61.

Mr. Blair: I join the Minister in his praise of the four maiden speakers. Their speeches were all of excellent quality and brought great lustre to the debate.

Mr. Brooke: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for those remarks.

My hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (Mr. Redwood) gave a trailer and pointers for subsequent legislation.

There were continuing references to a power of mitigation in the speech by the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair), and I reassert that this matter will be reviewed in advance of next year's Finance Bill. Those who can sing "Abide with Me" in French will know that this is our dernier rendez-vous with the hon. Member for Sedgefield because he is moving to other pastures. I join my right hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury in praising the hon. Gentleman for the way that he managed the Committee stage.

It is now 99 years since the first occasion on which someone played through a test match and carried his bat. He made only 26 runs in 47. The hon Member for Sedgefield made 104—if we do not count the schedules, which in any case are extras. The support that the hon. Member for Sedgefield received was thin.

Opposition Members voted against the Second Reading and were then conspicuously absent from the Chamber, though in the course of the last hour they have shown a late interest. In Committee, twice the number of Back Benchers spoke on the Conservative side as spoke on the Opposition side. Only four of the seven Opposition Back-Bench speakers were from the Labour party and three of those came in on the final day of the Committee stage. The opposition was constructively provided by my hon. Friends the Members for Beaconsfield, for Croydon, South (Sir. W. Clark) and for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams).

I am told that the hon. Member for Sedgefield is to shadow my constituents in the City. It is a compliment to my constituents that he has been selected for that role. He raised a specific point on retrospection, about which he was quite right. My hon. Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) also addressed clause 80. The hon. Member for Sedgefield was quite right in his reading of the Finance Bill provisions. Both clauses 62 and 80 effectively ensure that the benefit of a favourable decision for the taxpayer from the commissioners or the courts is not removed by the substantive provisions of the relevant clause. This aspect of those clauses follows well-established precedents. Successive Labour and Conservative Administrations have clearly thought it right as a matter of constitutional principle not to deprive a successful litigant of the fruits of his legal victory.

A substantial part of the debate was devoted to profit-related pay. The hon. Member for Sedgefield said that the employment effects apply only in a recession. I repeat that it is knowledge that one can cope with the recession that causes management to operate more effectively and competently during an upturn.

The hon. Member for Oxford, East raised the absence of rights of access to knowledge. The intention of the legislation is that solutions must be found within the business. There is intended to be no detailed blueprint. Instead, there will be the maximum freedom to tailor schemes to individual circumstances. It will be a truly voluntary arrangement, and we do not want "conscripted" volunteers.

A host of my hon. Friends supported that part of the Bill. My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) made a characteristically robust speech. My hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) addressed himself to the issue, as did my hon. Friend the Member for Daventry (Mr. Boswell), who spoke about differential reliefs. That issue demonstrates the importance that the Government attach to the Bill. My hon. Friend the Member for Dover asked for simple concepts and said that technical requirements should be uncomplicated. It is a paradox that we must have complicated legislation to produce a simple result.

My hon. Friend the Member for Stamford and Spalding (Mr. Davies) produced a powerful argument for tax relief. My hon. Friends the Members for Stafford (Mr. Cash), for Wells, for Winchester (Mr. Browne), for Wokingham and for Wyre participated in the debate. My hon. Friend the Member for Wyre was especially eloquent in speaking from his experience with the John Lewis trust on both participation and employment effects. I must correct my hon. Friend the Member for York (Mr. Gregory): the Bill adds 50 per cent. to relief and does not double it. I was grateful to him, however, for his analysis of the objections and his overcoming of them.

The hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) asked about the forecast cost, a subject that was taken up in Committee. There is a chronological factor because so much of the relief is granted after the year in question. The material that accompanies the Bill refers to £50 million, but on a running relief basis it is a higher figure. The scheme is called profit-related pay because that is what it is. I understand the preference of the alliance to have flexibility of language, but we have described it as profit-related pay because, as I have said, that is what it is. It would be churlish not to welcome the support of the alliance on this occasion, and I was particularly gratified

to hear that it would be supporting the Government on Third Reading, as it did on Second Reading. When I was the Government's pairing Whip it was never always certain that that would happen.

The hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) made a good speech in which he charged the Government with having certain motives in introducing various measures in the Bill, and he challenged what he described as our rhetoric. The motivation behind the Bill is exactly what we have always stated it to be. We wish to confer greater flexibility within the labour market and to make further improvements to the supply side of the economy.

I owe the hon. Member for Sedgefield one point on clause 13, on which we spent much time in Committee. The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland was much milder in its language in drawing our attention to the issue of information powers than the hon. Gentleman or the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell). The hon. Member for Great Grimsby implicitly described what I was doing, and certainly what the Revenue was doing, as "extending the circles of tyranny". I have returned to the Finance Act 1978, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Croydon, South referred in Committee, when he quoted an eloquent speech that I made during what was then the Bill's passage through Committee. I am sorry that he did not raise it when dealing with clause 71 because I would have replied to that debate.

In 1978, the Conservative Opposition's grouping in Committee included my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, my right hon. Friend the Lord Privy Seal, my hon. Friend the Minister for Health, my hon. Friend the Minister for Employment, my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Home Department, my hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin), who was a Defence Minister, and the Minister of State for the Armed Forces. The then Conservative Opposition mounted those 10 right hon. and hon. Members while the hon. Member for Sedgefield was left to mount the opposition to this Bill himself.

The House will recall the observation of President Kennedy when Nobel prize winners dined at the White House. He said that it was the most distinguished array of human talent since President Jefferson had dined there alone. I pay that final compliment to the hon. Member for Sedgefield. Despite the array of talent that scrutinised the 1978 Finance Act, the legislation proposed then was exactly the same as that which we are introducing now. The Conservative Opposition mounted no objection to it in 1978. As the hon. Member for Great Grimsby tried to curdle the blood of the House by speculating on what we might have said had we been in opposition, I stress that we allowed exactly similar measures to find their way on to the statute book in 1978. We raised no objection on that occasion.

My hon. Friend the Member for Kensington is a one-man think tank outside the House and a one-man Panzer division inside it. He has been conferring new logic on the term "think tank". We had prolonged debates on the subjects that my hon. Friend raised and we shall continue our dialogue with him. Clearly one of his purposes was to identify allies in the House. He could have identified my hon. Friends the Members for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier), for Stamford and Spalding and for Wokingham as allies, although my hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) was against him.

In much the same way as my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington, I was brought up at the knee of a Welsh mother. I make an allusion which some of those who came into the Chamber late will not have heard. I was brought up on a rhyme which went:

"Joshua the son of Nun
And Caleb the son of Jephunneh
Were the only two who ever
Got through to the land of milk and honey."

Only two members of the shadow Cabinet served in Cabinet when the last Labour Government were in power. It is a compliment to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor that both of them in turn have been placed opposite him. I suspect that my right hon. Friend made many runs off the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley). I await with interest to see the performance of the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith). As my right hon. Friend the Financial Secretary said, we are now confronted by a shadow team of six instead of five — a fact that the Opposition disguised by separating the shadow Chief Secretary from the rest of the list, thus divorcing public expenditure formally from tax as they divorced it informally in the election campaign.

I shall pass from my references to what the French call the cabinet fantôme. Last week the Leader of the Opposition asked for an economic debate this week. The opportunity for that has not been taken during this debate, although the strength of the economy has been recognised by a number of my hon. Friends. Even the hon. Member for Oxford, East introduced the subject of the car industry, and I pay tribute to the strength that the car industry is demonstrating.

Mr. Foulkes: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Surely the Minister has finished his speech, yet he is still going on. Is that in order?

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is a very elegant speech, and I do not think that he has yet finished it.

Mr. Brooke: It is an index of and a testimony to the muscle of what there was in the Budget that this Finance Bill should have occupied us for as long as it did, enabling the hon Member for Sedgefield to produce the score that he has. As he differs from me in not having Scottish blood, he generously gave up the opportunity of making a final speech so that we could get on with the final business.

Twelve-and-a-half hon. Members—the hon. Member for The Wrekin (Mr. Grocott) has come back to the House —have made maiden speeches, and three of those were Scottish maiden speeches. There cannot have been a Finance Bill to which more Government supporters have paid a tribute on Third Reading than this one, and I commend it to the House.

Question put, That the Bill be now read the Third time:—

The House divided: Ayes 267, Noes 205.

Division No. 19] **[9.50 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Ashdown, Paddy
Aspinwall, Jack

Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beith, A. J.
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
McCrindle, Robert
Maclean, David
Mans, Keith
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Onslow, Cranley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Richard Ryder and
Mr. Alan Howarth.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*

Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Douglas
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Lambie, David
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Mrs Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, John
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Walley, Ms Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Allen McKay.

Question accordingly agreed to.
Bill read the Third time, and passed.

Rate Support Grant (Scotland)

10.2 pm

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): I beg to move,

That the Rate Support Grant (Scotland) (No. 2) Order 1987, dated 5th May 1987, a copy of which was laid before this House on 11th May, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

The order has two purposes. The first is to reduce the amount of grant payable in respect of 1987-88 by £202·3 million and to determine revised grant payments accordingly. The grant reduction is the result of local authorities' planned overspending this year in comparison with the guidelines that they were given. The grant reductions are applied by a formula, which is explained in the order to those individual authorities which plan to exceed guidelines.

The second purpose of the order is to adjust the rate support grant payable to Scottish local authorities in respect of the previous financial year, 1986-87. The overall effect in relation to that year is a grant increase of £28·2 million.

The history of grant penalties in one form or another stretches back to the last Labour Administration. I mention that not as a political point—*[Interruption.]* It is a political point, but it is not just a political point. I mention it simply to show that no Government can ignore the planned level of spending by local authorities. The detail of grant penalty arrangements has changed over the years. Under the present system, penalties are targeted precisely on those authorities which overspend in relation to guidelines.

Before I go any further, I should emphasise that I recognise the commitment and dedication of many local councillors, representing all parties and none, who give up their time to perform this essential local service. They are well served by committed and professional staff. The services that local authorities provide are important to the smooth running and welfare of our society.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): This is sickening.

Mr. Rifkind: Even so, some uncomfortable facts remain and have to be faced. When my hon. Friend the Minister of State responsible for local government finance met COSLA recently they considered, among other things, trends in local authority spending in the past seven or eight years. There were several striking features.

First, while expenditure in 1986-87 was at the same level in volume terms as in 1978-79, for the current year it had leapt by an astonishing 2·3 per cent. in volume. Secondly, since 1978-79 expenditure in cost terms has increased by 18 per cent., indicating that inflation in local authority costs has been quite significantly higher than in the economy as a whole. There are alarming signs that the gap is again increasing.

Thirdly, reverting to volume, education expenditure, which forms such a high proportion of the total has declined, that is only to be expected as a result of demographic changes, but if we take out education spending, expenditure and other services have increased over the past nine years by over 10 per cent. in volume. Hon. Members on both sides will find these figures interesting and will understand why the Government consider that there is room for economy in local

[Mr. Rifkind]

government and room for accommodating expenditure and new priorities, if only existing expenditure programmes are rigorously examined. I fear that many councils are still to become fully aware that many ratepayers can ill afford the burdens that are being put upon them and that many business ratepayers find their local taxes a significant burden and penalty on their efficiency and capacity to create jobs.

The system of grant penalties remains a powerful, if regrettable, instrument to encourage local authorities to budget and to spend prudently. This is no time to reduce our efforts to keep local authority spending under control. Circumstances will, of course, change in April 1989 with the introduction of the new arrangements provided for in the Abolition of Domestic Rates (Scotland) Act 1987. Statutory control of the annual increase in non-domestic rates and replacement of domestic rates by the community charge give us an assurance of increased pressure for accountability that will allow us to abandon the grant penalty system.

I refer now to the circumstances leading to local authorities' 1987-88 budgets. This time last year it seemed that the message was at least sinking in. Budgets for 1986-87 showed, as I have already mentioned, that volume spending was down to 1978-79 levels. I responded at that time by fixing provision for the current year at a realistic level of 1986-87 budgets, plus an addition for inflation, which was 3·75 per cent. There were subsequent additions to provision and to grant in respect of the teachers' pay settlement and one or two minor transfers of responsibility between central and local government. The level of provision and grant for the current year was such that, in general, Scottish local authorities should have been able to maintain their expenditure within guideline levels, avoiding grant penalties this year and with only modest requirements for rate increases. When budgets were reached for this year, the picture was sadly and disappointingly different.

Mr. Tony Worthington (Clydebank and Milngavie): Mr. Secretary of State, after a quick consultation on this side, we do not know what you mean by "volume spending".

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. The hon. Gentleman will speak through the Chair, please.

Mr. Rifkind: I am happy to respond to the hon. Gentleman. I have said to the House that local authority expenditure increased in volume terms, by which I mean that the increase was not simply in cash but in terms of the total services that were provided to local communities, all of which had to be funded, if not by central Government, by ratepayers, either domestic or non-domestic.

The number of authorities which have budgeted within guidelines has decreased from 40 last year to 28 this year, though several more are only just over guideline. In total, Scottish local authorities have planned to overspend by £122·1 million or 3·7 per cent. Within these figures, there remains a hard core of authorities that spend well in excess of guidelines. Six authorities account for £112 million or 91 per cent. of this overspending, and only two authorities —Strathclyde and Lothian regions—for £83 million or 68 per cent.

I should now like to turn to the details of the order itself. The order falls into two parts. First, it reduces rate support grant for 1987-88 for those authorities that have planned to overspend. The needs element of rate support grant has been reduced by £202·3 million. This reduction is concentrated entirely on the 37 overspenders.

These penalties are more severe than for 1986-87, as a straightforward reflection of the fact that public expenditure provision for this year was so much more generous. However, I should make it clear that penalties are revised on provisional outturn and authorities which have by then reduced or eliminated their overspends stand to recoup some or all of the grant that they are now losing. It is still very early in the local authority financial year, and there is still plenty of time for all authorities that have exceeded guidelines to take the necessary steps to reduce their expenditure. If they do, they will be acting clearly in the interests of their ratepayers, and I hope they will take heed. If Opposition Members have ratepayers' interests at heart, I hope that they will join me in advising those local authorities to revise their expenditure plans now. They have had full notice of our intentions since 11 May, and if they are prudent they will have been planning revised budgets since then.

On the second part of the order, the effectiveness of grant penalties is demonstrated by the returns of provisional outturn for 1986-87. At the budget stage, 40 authorities kept within guidelines and the total overspend was £117·6 million. Provisional outturns show that the number of authorities within guidelines has dropped to 38, but the total overspend has come down to £90·5 million. The effect of this is to bring penalties down from £125·3 million to £97 million—a saving of £28·3 million, which is being returned to local authorities.

Under the present system of local government finance, grant penalties play an important role. We inherited them from the Labour Government and have made them fairer and more effective. In the present system of local government finance, the disparity between those who pay rates and those who vote requires this form of constraint on local authority spending. The new system that we shall introduce from April 1989 will be designed to improve local accountability and to remove the need for such penalties. Meanwhile, we must work within the present system. I hope that authorities which have budgeted above guidelines will try to reduce their excesses and so reduce the burden on their ratepayers.

I commend the order to the House.

10.11 pm

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): I congratulate the Patronage Secretary on the precision of his efforts. We are starting the debate at a rather more advanced hour than I had expected. I do not object to that. I merely remark in passing to the Secretary of State that the precedent will be remembered and will be very much in our minds as we consider the further management of Scottish business in the House.

In July last year, the Secretary of State appeared in the House to announce the total relevant expenditure for the following year and the rate support grant percentage. When he replies to the debate, will he say whether he expects to make a similar statement for the next financial year before the House rises for the summer recess? That would be convenient, and I wish to know whether that custom will be followed.

This order has been introduced on the know-nothing, learn-nothing, do-nothing principle. It is another

instalment in the war of attrition that has marked relationships between central and local government in Scotland under the Conservative Government. The policy is especially inappropriate in the aftermath of the general election. These have been tough times for the Secretary of State, and it would be churlish not to say that I welcome his presence in the House. He is a rare sighting in Westminster these days. The fact that it has been a tough time for him was brought home to me by the interesting article that appeared in the *Glasgow Herald* on 14 July. It was written by the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker), who was reduced in the cold aftermath of the general election results to lamenting the passing of the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) and wishing that he was still in control of affairs in Scotland. Apparently, when the hon. Member for Southend, East was in charge of Conservative fortunes, it was all bright dawn. I can understand that, because they were the happy days when there were enough Scottish Tories even to find a Scottish Whip, which I suppose was some consolation. In view of that vote of no confidence from the last of the loyal, if I may so describe the hon. Member for Tayside, North, it might be appropriate to have a minute's silence for what used to be called, optimistically, the "Rifkind factor" in Scottish politics.

May I now deal with the outline of the arguments used by the Secretary of State and the order that is before us. There is not a shred of justification for the Government's determined pursuit of what is almost a private vendetta against local authorities. Tonight the Secretary of State is ripping another £200 million from council budgets. This is not an academic dispute. As hon. Members know, it is an attack on jobs and services. It is plain hypocrisy for Ministers to play the role of the ratepayers' champion when it is their policies that have done so much of the damage. Tory cuts in rate support grant cumulatively add up to more than £2,500 million over the past six years. Everyone in the House will be conscious of the difference that that would have made to the provision of services and to the average domestic rate bill in Scotland.

The policy that has given rise to the order is riddled with inconsistencies and is basically unjust. This year, the excess over guidelines in Scotland as a whole is 3·7 per cent., which is less than last year. However, the penalty ceiling has been raised from £1·10 for every pound over guidelines to £1·75. As hon. Members know, the end product is a penalty of £202 million against £118 million last year. What is the possible justification for a situation in which, when the excess over guidelines is reduced, the penalty increases in such a dramatic fashion? It is indefensible in principle and vindictive in impact.

I draw the attention of the House to one or two anomalies. Perhaps the Secretary of State will deal with them when he closes the debate. The first is that Lothian and Edinburgh districts are losing £51 million and £12·5 million respectively under the clawback. However, at the same time they are subject to individual action under section 5 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1966. Those orders will be debated in only a few hours' time. It seems a case of double jeopardy. I ask the Secretary of State why it was not possible to calculate their penalty under the clawback orders that we are considering on the certain basis that he knows that their rates and their expenditure will be reduced in any event. The effect of doing so would be a combined loss of about £64 million. When one allows for the £1·75 penalty for every pound over excess, that would probably reduce to about £24 million. The right hon. and learned Gentleman has been pressed on this point before and said that he would consider it. Perhaps, typically, his consideration has come to naught and I press him again to say why it would not be sensible and logical to take into account the reality of what is happening and to adjust the general clawback for Edinburgh and Lothian in the way in which I have suggested.

Everyone in the House, in local government and everyone who follows these arguments, knows that the guidelines on which this entire rickety ramshackle edifice is built are wholly arbitrary and bear no relationship to reality. Why should an authority such as Lothian lose £51 million when its expenditure in real terms is at exactly the level that it was in 1979? If we look at the situation, consider the orders and cast our minds back to consider the specific action to which a later order relates, the poverty of the Government's position becomes apparent. The Government's guidelines have risen by 152 per cent. since 1978-79. However, that is significantly less than the comparable authorities, the comparators, under the scheme which have been named by the Secretary of State to justify his action. We are entitled to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman, "Why is Lothian, which is 7·4 per cent. over guidelines this year, an outrage that justifies summary execution, when a Tory administration in Lothian was in excess of 6·6 per cent. last year but was apparently a shinning example of good housekeeping?"

To go back to the general clawback, I advise the right hon. and learned Gentleman that it involves not only Lothian. Strathclyde's increase in guidelines over the 1986-87 budget has risen by 2 per cent., but it is to be penalised to the tune of about £94·5 million. However, it is not only a case of the big fish, although we could go through the larger authorities and roll up a chapter of disaster, embarrassment and difficulty that will inevitably strike the ratepayers. It is a question also of the clawback affecting the local authorities. I give as an example—I think it is fair, because of course it is not controlled by my political friends—Nithsdale district council, which is to be penalised under the order and docked about £395,000. That seems an extraordinary case.

The Nithsdale council budget for 1986-87 is £182,000 below the Scottish Office's assessment of its needs. It is one of five councils whose assessed need is above both its budget and the guidelines for the coming year. How does the Secretary of State justify that extraordinary position? We know that the assessed need is carefully calculated. It is supposed to be a finely tuned instrument. It depends on the client group approach. On that basis Nithsdale has an assessed need of £3·644 million and its expenditure was £3·462 million. Therefore, we have what the Ministers might see as a model. However, the guidelines have been mysteriously reduced to £226,000 below budget and the result is that the hapless councillors are faced with having to lose £396,000 of grant.

Mr. Rifkind: Before the hon. Gentleman produces more tear-jerking comments, will he reflect on the penalty scheme applied by the Labour Government? Every local authority in Scotland was penalised, even if it was spending below its guidelines. Surely, compared with that, the present position is significantly improved?

Mr. Dewar: We welcomed the change in the system and, indeed, we pressed for it, as the Minister will remember,

[Mr. Dewar]

so I make no apology. We can all improve. We do not like the system and we are entitled to draw attention to its unfortunate repercussions for this particular council and for the whole of Scottish local government. It is a bizarre nonsense and I do not believe that it stands rational examination.

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): Will the hon. Gentleman tell the House why it is that no fewer than 28 local authorities are on guideline for 1987-88? Will he commend authorities, such as Eastwood, which are on guideline and showing reasonable prudence?

Mr. Dewar: The hon. Gentleman has become more parochial every month and I am delighted to know that his boundaries are now entirely within the Eastwood district. Perhaps he will become so inward looking that he will disappear from view. I cannot help thinking that that would be a blessing.

The answer to the question is simple. Each local authority does what it thinks is right in its circumstances. That is what it is elected to do. If some meet a particular guideline, that is their business and they calculate the advantages and disadvantages. If others see an advantage to their ratepayers and electorate in taking a different stance, that is their business. They should not be answerable to big brother at the Scottish Office, but should be answerable to the electorate at the ballot box when the time comes.

Nithsdale district council covers the constituencies of the Minister of State and the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro). I appreciate that the Minister is probably in a difficult position because of the clash between his constituency interest and his personal position as a Minister. However, I shall be interested to hear the hon. Member for Dumfries this evening say what he thinks about the remarkable raid mounted by his Front Bench colleagues on the ratepayers of his constituency. I hope that the tradition of independence, which should be alive in his breast, will be seen in the Division Lobby later.

This is not an abstract, academic matter or some private disputation between the Treasury and the town house. There is a considerable fallout from this £262 million clawback with jobs, services and ratepayers among the casualties. We cannot shrug it off. It is never painless when in the second half of the financial year one must finance substantial reductions in educational investment, cleansing services, home help services and in other areas. Never mind how one compromises, in the rate poundage or in the cuts in services, at the end of the day it is the electors of the district and the ratepayers who lose. Ministers know that, and it is the consequence of a deliberate policy on their part.

I have already referred to the fact that if we had held the rate support grant percentage at the 1981-82 level, it would have produced a further £2·5 billion for local authorities in Scotland. Over recent years we have seen a relentless thrust of Treasury policy with no logic and no recognition of the difficulties of everday life in Scotland. Ratepayers have been constantly victimised and the life of local authorities made unreasonably difficult.

I have read the minutes of some of the recent exchanges between the local authorities and Ministers. My eye was caught by a passage recording the meeting between the Minister of State, Scottish Office and the Lothian regional council on 24 June. I presume it is an accurate minute as it was taken by the Minister's civil servants. Apparently, towards the end of the meeting, the Minister said:

"Selective action was not taken on a political basis. The Government's proposals had to be approved by Parliament."

I do not know whether that was supposed to be a connected or an unconnected set of sentences. However, the idea that there is no political motivation in these orders will be greeted by widespread scepticism in Scotland.

I read those minutes on the very day that I read reports in the press that rates will be artificially forced up to make the poll tax more acceptable south of the border. We are considering orders that were laid on 11 May, just before the start of the election campaign. Those orders were laid two months earlier than was normal in previous years. I can only think, I think it is a reasonable deduction and I would be happy to go to any jury of my peers on the matter, that the orders were laid at that point because they were calculated to attract votes in seats such as Edinburgh, Central and Edinburgh, South. The results are now history.

We are also told that the orders must be approved by Parliament. I do not know what approval means, but I know that we will have one and a half hours in which to debate these weighty matters, largely because of the efforts of the Patronage Secretary. Under the rules of this House we will have no chance to amend the orders.

I believe that the Secretary of State has learnt nothing from the election result. His sustained attack upon local democracy has contributed to the present disastrous state of Tory morale and fortunes in Scotland. Ministers must learn that present policies are the political equivalent of banging their heads off a brick wall. A strategic retreat would be good for them and good for Scotland.

We all recognise that it is early days for this Parliament. However, I hope that some of the lessons will be learnt. I am glad to have the Minister's assurance that we shall not be faced with a re-run of these dreary orders next year. However, I deplore the reason the Minister advances for that assurance, the approach of the poll tax, which was both unwanted and unworkable.

With regard to tonight's charade, I note the Minister's point about parliamentary approval. We shall certainly divide against this order and the later orders during the course of the early hours of the morning. I have no doubt that the Minister will have the votes when the time comes, but precious few of those votes will come from Scotland. That fact offers some food for extremely hard thinking over the months ahead.

10.27 pm

Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): May I begin, Madam Deputy Speaker, by rejoicing in your appointment, congratulating you and wishing you well. I am sure that we are all delighted to see you in the Chair.

May I say to my friend, the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar)—[HON. MEMBERS: "Friend?"] He is a friend, although he does not sit on the Conservative Benches. The argument that the hon. Gentleman has advanced is so intelligent as to be unintelligible. The simple fact is that there are certain authorities that are determined to seduce their electorate by extravagance and that is what the motion is about tonight. Indeed, it was a Labour Secretary of State who was so appalled by the concept and habits of such seduction that he had to introduce penalties in the first place. Now there is a complaint that those who indulge in extravagance

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): The Solicitor-General in exile!

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order.

Mr. Fairbairn: It is argued that those who indulge in extravagance should, in some way, be forgiven. But let us ask a simple question. Why? In Scotland we have many regional and district authorities which happen to obey the rules of financial prudence, and as a result they do not suffer penalty.

The hon. Member for Garscadden claims that there is some message or excellence in extravagance by either Strathclyde or Lothian region, and that that is to be approved. Let us ask ourselves this question: assuming that it is a matter to be approved, upon what possible basis should any other authority not also be extravagant?

The hon. Member for Garscadden merely says that all those things will fall on the ratepayer. Of course they do, because under the present system, the greater the expenditure by any authority, the more the ratepayer pays and the more the person who does not pay rates spends it. That is how the rating system works, and the basis of the community charge—*[Interruption.]* I say on behalf of my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart), who has just left the Chamber, that if he cannot stomach the rubbish on Opposition Benches as long as I can, I can understand it. Opposition Members should not knock him. They should just look at themselves and comprehend how disgraceful they are.

Mr. Henry McLeish (Fife, Central): Does not the hon. and learned Gentleman realise that the entire ranks of the Conservative party north of the border now represent the county of Perthshire? Will he give us an assurance that the Perthshire Conservative party is united?

Mr. Fairbairn: I was not aware of the fact that my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) came from Perthshire, or represented it, or that my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton), the Under-Secretary of State, or that my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Pentlands (Mr. Rifkind), the Secretary of State, represented Perthshire. If there is some reorganisation in which that is to be achieved in the hon. Gentleman's views, let him put them to the House.

My understanding is that in Scotland more Conservative Members of Parliament represent us than in half of England, so do not let anybody for a moment imagine that we do not have a mandate. We are a United Kingdom Parliament with United Kingdom Members. We are discussing a political matter, in which two authorities and a few others have decided to try to buy votes by extravagance. That is what we are discussing tonight. The debate is about the fact that there are authorities which believe that by extravagance they can buy votes. That is what the community charge will put an end to. I believe that it is important that we should comprehend that in Scotland there are authorities that are willing to defy the Conservative Government and be extravagant because they believe that they can buy votes. It is right that we should use the law to prevent that, and right that we are changing the law, the whole system of payment so that that should never again be necessary.

Let this be understood by all about the community charge: it will never again be necessary to make an order like the one we are debating tonight, because every citizen will have an interest in ensuring that, say, Dundee district council does not pay for investigations into strip searches at Heathrow. We shall not erect memorials to Nelson Mandela. None of that nonsense, which has nothing to do with local authorities, will again be available, because the people of Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland will have to judge whether they want to pay more for political nonsense or for the services that they receive. That is what the order is about, and let no one forget it.

If anyone ever says that Scotland is the guinea pig, he should know that we are not the guinea pig—thank goodness, we are once again, as we have been in so much law reform, the leaders and the persons of true principles —*[Interruption.]* Opposition Members may regard Scotland as some sort of colony. Let us remember that we allegedly lost the American colonies on the slogan, "No taxation without representation". The community charge will abolish an even more effete system—there will be no representation without taxation.

10.37 pm

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): Having participated in Scottish rate support grant debates for more than two decades, it is my view that one is entitled to some sort of special recognition. I associate myself with the remarks made about you, Madam Deputy Speaker, by the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn), who has thankfully sat down, and I am sure that I can rely upon your benevolent intervention. Perhaps a small plaque in St. Andrew's house, discreetly floodlit, would be appropriate.

Rate support grant debates are different now. I am saying that for the benefit of new hon. Members. However, the fog that enshrouds such debates is still quite impenetrable. Only the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) was ever able to penetrate the fog effectively. The fog has a different smell to it now: it has a more viscous feel than it had before. Now we have debates not only about what the Government will give, but about what they will take back. Debates about how much more the Government should bestow are certainly different from debates about how much less the Government should take away. Both types of debate are enveloped in exactly the same sort of hocus-pocus. They resound with trumpet calls about the splendour of local democracy. There was a wee touch of that from the Secretary of State tonight. He said that we are grateful,

[Sir Russell Johnston]

blah, blah, blah. The tonal quality of the congratulations vary according to which party is in government and the local government situation. Likewise, plaintive wails about the need for greater efficiency, improved services and the importance of special cases resound around the Chamber.

We also have statistics. Already, the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) has given us a fair blast of statistics, and more will undoubtedly follow. They will fall like confetti and disappear almost as quickly—in spite of the fact that they have been chiselled and honed with enormous care by all kinds of local authority finance departments.

At the end of it, one has a feeling of utter futility. It is not that these debates are intrinsically unreportable—they come at a time of day when they will not be reported anyway—rather, it is that this is the end of the line. No Government I have observed have, at this stage, any intention of paying a blind bit of notice to what is said. The sums have been done, decisions have been finalised, and the line has been drawn.

Time is pressing, so I should like to make four succinct points which are intended for posterity, which recognises the wisdom that the present denies.

First, I do not accept that it should have been necessary for the Government to move from indicative to mandatory expenditure guidelines. The move arose essentially from the Conservative Administration's reaction to the spending programmes of what I might describe moderately, as forceful ideologically Left-inspired councils. The Government did not face the basic reality, that such authorities were unrepresentative and that that logically meant electoral reforms and a sensible form of local taxation based on the ability to pay. That was the way in which to achieve accountability and an open, representative system. We do not have fairly representative local government or a just system of local taxation. The Government did not face that fact, but instead devised this clumsy, catch-all system which scooped up all kinds of unlikely authority.

The hon. Member for Garscadden quoted the example of Nithsdale, and the Secretary of State did not even blench. Skye and Lochalsh is not noted for its militant Marxism, but it is on the list. The Secretary of State does not need to look it up. It has overspent. The catch-all system has seriously reduced the local discretion of local authorities everywhere.

Secondly, the guidelines, which are described in this emollient "Emergency Ward 10" fashion as the "client group" approach, have never been clearly understood or debated—perhaps that was intended—and are uniformly seen as unfair. This year's guidelines allow for an increase in spending of 3·75 per cent., whch is well behind the inflationary costs that local authorities have had to bear. Those costs are about 6 per cent., so, even if we accept the principle on which the guidelines are proferred, they are clearly unfair.

We have just had an election and Tory candidates did not say, "We are standing to persuade you of the need to reduce the number of home helps," or, "We are determined to reduce social work cover," or, "Too much is being spent on the handicapped." No, they said that local authorities must make ther own decisions on expenditure. That was nonsense and the debate shows it to have been nonsense.

Seventeen years ago I was a member of the Wheatley commission on local government reform. We were excited about what we recommended. There were bits and pieces that each member would like to have done in different ways, but the three politicians on the commission, the late Betty Harvie Anderson, Tom Fraser and I, were convinced that the report was a charter for greater local independence and the improvement of the right and ability of people to make decisions in their own communities. The order is not about that. In the particular and in its general intent, it sets back such moves, and the House should reject it.

10.47 pm

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): It was a great honour to be elected to represent Edinburgh, South. I know that my constituents look to me to articulate their desire to reverse cuts in local spending, to defend our colleges and universities and to make provision for the sick, the disabled and the homeless in our fine city.

The 4,000 council house tenants in my constituency who are on the waiting list for transfers because they live in unsuitable houses and the 2,500 home owners who are waiting for repair grants want more Government and council spending, not less.

I address the House with some humility and deep sadness that a number of my dear friends are no longer with us to share in our success and to give me the wise counsel that I hope I have already profited from. My predecessor, the Earl of Ancram, was the hapless victim of his Government's policies. He was renowned for his efforts on behalf of his Ministry to ensure deregulation of the buses, increases in council rents and cuts in local services and their budget funding. He was also renowned for his powers of explanation, but when it fell to him to introduce and explain the community charge, the community charged into the polling booths and voted out him and 10 other Tory Members.

In the 1380s, the poll tax ruined the reputations of the Earls of Salisbury and of Hereford. In the 1980s it did for the Earl of Ancram. Yet still the Government seek to force the order through the House and to force chaos on local authorities and suffering on all those who depend on their services.

We are not dealing here with one or two maverick councils but with two thirds of Scotland's local authorities which have all found it impossible to supply statutory services within the budget laid down by the Secretary of State. Now this order seeks to cut spending by a further 3 per cent. Is it not enough that in my constituency schools are forced into composite classes, that disabled people are forced to join council house waiting lists for adaptations, and that the streets remain unswept because of lack of funds?

This latest order comes at the end of seven years during which the Treasury has slashed its contribution towards local services from 68 per cent. to 50 per cent. and has forced up rates accordingly. This withdrawal of funds has caused ratepayers to have to foot a bill of a staggering £2·5 billion. As the House will know from studying this order, five councils have been set budgets by the Secretary of State that are even lower than his own Department's estimate of their spending needs. This is not only an abuse

of power, it is an abuse of all logic. In this order, the Secretary of State stands condemned by his own Department.

The Department advised councils such as Annandale and Eskdale that they would need to spend more than £2 million to meet the needs of their populations. However, the Secretary of State has laid before the House an order requiring those councils to cut their spending below £2 million. Today the Government seek to penalise two thirds of Scotland's councils, but Ministers know that the game is up. That is why they have been ferreting around to try to find some sort of alternative. What have they come up with in this age of the computer? They have come up with the poll tax. They say that they want to make councils accountable, but this Government have left few services for which councils can be accountable. The next step will be the abolition of local councils and we know that the Government have plenty of experience in that.

If we look at the practicalities of the Government's scheme, we find that even though the legislation is now on the statute book, the Government still cannot agree on a figure for their poll tax. In May it was £250, in June it was £255 and just last week the figure was £289. Even this figure assumes 100 per cent. collection success. It assumes that the uniform business rate will not be held at a low level, and that the Government will increase their share of local authority spending to match inflation. No wonder nobody believes the Secretary of State, not even, I suspect, his Back Benchers.

It seems from the order that the Government are determined to continue with their attack on local councils. I warn the Government that no measure will be more unpopular than the poll tax—not the closure of local schools, the deregulation of buses, or the threat to the student grants. Some hon. Members, such as the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) listened to the eloquent advice given in Dowell's "History of Taxation". It said of the poll tax:

"Unfair and unpopular, it was eventually dropped as unsuitable to England".

Apparently it is not unsuitable to the colonies of Nyasaland and Scotland. Is there any independent body that can validate the Secretary of State's figures? The answer is that there is none. His figures have been repudiated by the Strathclyde business school, the planning exchange, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the local government information unit and the directors of finance of local councils in Scotland. *The Economist* and the *Financial Times* think the poll tax is unworkable. It has been rejected by the National Federation of Self-Employed and Small Businesses Ltd., the Institute of Directors and the Church. It is hardly surprising that that is the Church's view as it supported a poll tax 600 years ago and the mob looted Lambeth palace and lynched the Archbishop of Canterbury.

I think that we are entitled to ask just who is supporting this medieval measure.

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): We are.

Mr. Griffiths: There is no one except the medieval madam and her malevolent men. Those who are not familiar with the medieval period of history would do well to read the excellent notes prepared by Mr. Timothy Edmonds that are available in the Library and learn the lessons of history, including the civil disobedience, the riots and the hanging of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Conservative Members must ask themselves why, in the constituency of Edinburgh, South, where three out of four people own their own houses, where more people send their children to private schools than anywhere else in Scotland and where there are no large factories, did the electorate, for the first time in history, return a Labour Member. The people of Edinburgh, South rejected this divisive Conservative Government. They deplore the attack on local services and condemn the poll tax, and rightly so. Why should the widow pay as much as the wealthy, the council tenant as much as the count, the pensioner as much as the playboy? No, the pensioner and the disabled in my constituency, along with the tenant and the homeowner, all support local spending by local councils and reject decisively Government interference. The people of this country support their local councils and their local services. Sadly, the Government do not.

10.57 pm

Mr. Henry McLeish (Fife, Central): I am grateful for the opportunity to make my first speech in this Chamber, and pleased for a number of reasons. First, it is an honour to take part in the activities of a House that has such important traditions in history. Secondly, it is important for me to represent the views of my constituency on an important rate support grant order that has grave implications for jobs and services and for the democracy that is being exercised in Scotland. Thirdly, and most important, I wish to expose the Government's breathtaking hypocricy. At every turn they espouse the causes of freedom, independence and choice, but their every action in local government is designed to achieve the very opposite.

I hope that I bring to the House some pride and some passion. I bring the pride of my constituents, who want to see a good job done in the House. I bring also the passion that they are showing—the result of their anger and bitterness—in opposition to the Government's policy. More importantly, they feel that they have been treated contemptuously by Scottish Office Ministers.

I am sure that my predecessor, Willie Hamilton, would have shared the feelings that I have expressed about pride and passion. Willie Hamilton represented the seat that I have the privilege to represent for nearly 37 years. Some would say that he was a man of independent mind. He respected and represented the enduring traditions of the House. He was truly a parliamentarian, and I am sure that my right hon. and hon. Friends will accept that proposition.

My predecessor worked tirelessly for the people of my contituency. Outwith the House, in the Chamber and on Committees he worked for the Health Service and was a passionate advocate of the needs of nurses in particular. The causes that he espoused in relation to the Health Service and the needs of nurses are still germane to our environment today.

My predecessor also pursued passionately the lives and activities of a palace only a few yards from this Palace. I assure the House that I shall not be indulging in that pastime. But I take this opportunity to wish Willie Hamilton and his wife a long, purposeful and healthy retirement.

For those who do not know Fife, Central, I should explain that my constituency is situated in the east of Scotland, between the River Forth and the River Tay. By way of a benchmark for the future, I should say that I shall

[Mr. Henry McLeish]

return to the question of bridge tolls. Mine is one of the few areas in the United Kingdom which one pays to enter in the south and pays to leave in the north. I should like to have said much more about my constituency, but unfortunately we have had to suffer Conservative Members' filibustering on the Finance Bill, so the industry and qualities of my constituency will have to wait for another time.

I live in a constituency which has 19·6 per cent. male unemployment, but in the Government's terms it is now a reasonable figure. There are "only" 5,452 people who cannot find work, but those 5,452 people are chasing 192 vacancies. I say that in the hope that the Government will accept that the people of Scotland and of my area have yet to enjoy the benefits of the new economic horizons that are supposed to be opening up.

If ever there was a glaring example of the indifference and contempt in which the Government hold the people of Scotland, it is youth unemployment. I shall stress that point, especially in relation to my comments about local government. In 1979, when we had the misfortune to see the present Government elected, 857 16 and 17-year-olds in my constituency were unemployed or on special schemes. By 1983 that figure had jumped to 1,438 and it has now jumped again to 1,974. In case those figures do not speak eloquently enough about the dilemma facing young people in my constituency, I add that they are chasing seven vacancies. It is morally outrageous. When do the Secretary of State for Scotland and his team propose to address themselves to that problem?

In my constituency I have the good fortune to enjoy some of the best local government services in the United Kingdom—in spite of all the Government's efforts to undermine and attack them. I have had the privilege to lead Fife regional council for the past five years. Just to illustrate its excellence—a word that seems to be missing from the Government's vocabulary—I shall outline some of the services that are provided. With the help of Fife regional council we have spent over £2 million in the past year, with help from the private sector and the public sector banking agencies, not only on protecting but on creating jobs in my constituency.

We are in the fortunate position that 11,000 elderly and disabled people can travel free on public transport every day of the week, every week of the year. We are in the fortunate position that every four-year-old can go to a nursery school without having to pay fees or transport costs. Other areas seek to emulate that. There is also a free home help service for the many elderly and disabled who seek to improve the quality of their lives. Since the Disabled Persons Rights Bill on services for the chronically ill and disabled was thrown out last Session, the council has provided free colour television licences for those people. The local authority's jewel in the crown is the education system under which 98·5 per cent. of all children in Fife go to state schools, for the simple reasons that they are better than anything else provided and that people have a choice within the state sector and have exercised it in that important way.

Underlying all those individual achievements is not the fact that they are made by Fife regional council; they reflect the best that has happened in Scottish local government. It is incredible that I can make these comments at a time when the Secretary of State for Scotland tells the House that those local authorities have been spendthrifts, careless and malicious and have sought to undermine the Government's public expenditure programme. The Government are so incensed about local government in Scotland because it provides services credibly and competently. It has mainstream policies. There are no frills or fringes in Scotland. More important, those policies are popular. Whether the Government like it or not, they should look at some of the opinion poll work done for the Widdicombe report and the Audit Commission which says that local government services nationally are much more popular than any services provided throughout Whitehall.

Equally important, local government is democratic and accountable. It is nonsense to describe the poll tax, for example, as a measure that will enhance local government accountability. We have accountability, which is reflected every year in, for instance, the central belt in Scotland where the people who support our policies return us in large numbers to carry on the good work that we have done for many years.

There is another feature which underlines what we are doing in Scotland which the Government Front Bench seems at worst to ignore and at best to absorb quietly. The use of collectively provided services, publicly funded, can enhance freedom, independence and choice. The Prime Minister is always talking about personal responsibility and self-sufficiency—the two qualities which lie behind the efforts of the Labour party in Scotland and many others to provide valuable local services. That is crucial to an understanding of where we are.

John Banham, the controller of the Audit Commission, who has now aspired to being the CBI's director general—not a resting place for aspiring Socialists—said:

"The best of Local Government is better than the private sector and much better than . . . Whitehall at delivering services."

When reporting on the block grant distribution system, the Audit Commission said:

"such a performance"—

in coping with targets—

"is impressive testimony to local authorities' ability to manage under conditions of uncertainty."

One would expect that, after reeling off a catalogue of successes which reflect local government in Scotland, the Government would warmly welcome what we are doing and support us at every turn. Of course, that is laughable in relation to the order.

I should like to tell the House what has been happening over the past eight years under this Government. First, if they had maintained the level of grant at 68·5p as in 1979, we would have benefited from another £2 billion of rate support grant. Secondly, expenditure guidelines have become unrealistic and Government guidelines, instead of being indicative, have become straitjackets. To add salt to the wound, the Government have introduced a penalty system for overspending which is monstrous and which represents a tax on people, on progress and on quality in local government. If all of that were not enough, as my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) said, we also now have the misfortune to face the poll tax. People in Scotland regard the measure as a joke—and I say that in the best intellectual fashion. It is a joke of an Act and it is about to become a joke of a Bill.

The Secretary of State for the Environment now wishes to impose a five-year transition period in England. Obviously he has not spoken to the Secretary of State for

Scotland because, after considering a transition period, he threw it out as being unworkable. The Secretary of State for the Environment will embark upon a community charge, a water charge, a sewerage charge, a unified business tax and also have the residue of a rating system over five years. I do not know who he is taking advice from, but clearly he must take better advice than from the Secretary of State for Scotland.

The Government's most recent local government Bill debated last week is also sinister because it not only poses a threat to 53,000 manual workers' jobs in Scotland as a result of contracting out, but also desires to gag local councils that seek to criticise or speak out against what is happening to them. Local government is at a crossroads in Scotland. We have given up the hope that hon. Members on the Government Benches will listen to what we are saying. I would like to think that they will take note not only of the election result in Scotland but of what people are saying about the continued contempt with which they hold the Scottish electorate. The Scots are very discerning, as I am sure other people throughout the United Kingdom are. We believe in dignity, decency and democracy, but those three qualities now have no place in the policies of the Government in Scotland.

It is also worth while reminding hon. Members on the Government Benches that they talk a lot about economy, efficiency and effectiveness, but I am sure that my right hon. and hon. Friends will want to talk about equality, excellence and democracy, which underpin any notion of liberty. Economic efficiency and social justice are the twin qualities that we are trying to pursue in local government and I would like to think that, with a proper and constructive environment, they can flourish.

It has been a privilege to speak for the first time, warts and all, in this Chamber. I should like to think that over the next two or three years I shall be able to discuss issues which affect my constituents.

Possibly the bad news for the Governent is that I am only the third member to be elected in my constituency in 50 years. We seem to last a long time. I sincerely hope that that quality will follow me for a few years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. William Walker.

11.13 pm

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Just so that we get the record straight, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am Bill Walker. I was elected to the Chamber as Bill Walker in three successive elections and I hope that the *Hansard* and other writers will note that. All the mistakes that were made by others were not made by me. *[Interruption.]* I am delighted that I have given the Opposition something to find interesting and amusing, because this is an evening that is important to Scotland and to all of us.

We have listened to two interesting maiden speeches. The hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) made what I would describe as a speech with conviction. I found it interesting, if at times I thought that it wandered some way from the debate. His introductory remarks about medieval history and the fact that he thought that Scotland was a colony will be well remembered. I have a little advice for him. He should be careful about what he says in the Chamber; it will be quoted at some later date. However, he will make interesting and important speeches on behalf of his party. No one can deny that he spoke with conviction. He seemed clearly to understand the function of Labour local authorities in buying votes. He also seemed clearly to understand that he must watch the number of owner occupiers and those who pursue private education in south Edinburgh.

The hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish) made an excellent maiden speech, and I congratulate him on it. I congratulate him also on the fact that he wisely decided not to pursue a certain aspect for which his predecessor was known. There is no doubt that many hon. Members remember Willie Hamilton with affection. That fact may surprise some Opposition Members. Willie Hamilton was a good House of Commons man. It was sad that he damaged his opportunities and potential by becoming attached to one narrow area. I am pleased that the hon. Member for Fife, Central will not pursue that matter. We look forward with interest to his future helpful contributions. He understands that this is a Chamber for debate. It is a place in which different views are aired, and they should be listened to.

The comments by the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) were interesting. He looks forward to a plaque being erected. He was really saying that, after all these years representing his party, he is impotent. The fact is that he is. [AN HON. MEMBER: "Withdraw."] The hon. Gentleman and his party are impotent, whatever colours they may masquerade under today. I do not know whether the alliance is alive or whether alliance Members are against or for each other on different days. One thing is absolutely clear; in the final analysis—in the Division Lobbies—they cannot change anything. That fact was made clear in the hon. Gentleman's comments.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) referred to my article in the *Glasgow Herald*. He made his own observations about what lay behind the article. Let me make it quite clear that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland is probably the most able, clever and talented Secretary of State that we have ever had.

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): Give him a job, Malcolm.

Mr. Walker: But my right hon. and learned Friend knows that that does not mean that I will always agree with him 100 per cent.

Mr. Canavan: Take the job back, Malcolm.

Mr. Walker: I also advise the hon. Member for Garscadden that I believe that my right hon. and learned Friend will grace this Front Bench for many years ahead in many Parliaments. If the hon. Gentleman read my article—I imagine he did—he will know that I said this:

> "The Labour Party and the Scottish media can huff and puff about mandates and some Labour MPs may attempt to disrupt parliamentary business. What they cannot change is the mathematics within the House of Commons. Nor can they deny that all candidates in the General Election were standing for seats in the Parliament of the United Kingdom."

That is what this Parliament is. We all stood for election to it, and it is no good the hon. Member for Garscadden complaining in the Lobby about the results. I remind him that there are large areas of southern England where there are more than 16 million electors and only three Labour Members of Parliament. It is nonsense for them to come here and talk about mandates.

Mr. David Marshall (Glasgow, Shettleston): When will the hon. Gentleman say anything about the subject which the House is discussing—the cuts in rate support grant?

Mr. Walker: I always understood that it was in order to reply to what previous speakers had said. If Opposition Members do not understand what debate is, they should not be here. All that I have said thus far has related to what hon. Members before me said. I have referred to their speeches.

Now I will discuss the orders. I remind Opposition Members that when they stood for this Parliament, they understood that we would be passing rate support grant orders and other orders relative to local government. They also understood that, for many years, central Government have used a formula that was introduced by a Labour Government. They do not like the fact that the Conservative Government are attempting to redress the way in which Labour local authorities have bought votes, using ratepayers' and taxpayers' money, and they do not like the fact that, in their third term of office, the Conservative Government have introduced a system that will be fairer to and better for the people in their constituencies. It is important for them to recognise——

Mr. Canavan: The hon. Gentleman keeps using the term "bought votes". At the recent general election, the Tory party deliberately tried to buy the votes of the people of Scotland by means of a poll tax. They were decisively rejected by well over 70 per cent. of the Scottish electorate, to such an extent that the Tories are reduced to 10 Members in Scotland. How can the hon. Gentleman claim that he speaks on behalf of the people of Scotland? When it comes to the vote tonight, the majority of the elected representatives of the people of Scotland will be voting against the order, yet the sheep will come into the Lobby from Tory constituencies down south. They have not even listened to the debate, but they will come in and vote down the democratic wishes of the people of Scotland. What sort of democracy is that?

Mr. Walker: It is always a pleasure to give way to the hon. Gentleman because of the extravagant claims that he makes. Does the hon. Gentleman really believe that his voice is the only voice that speaks on behalf of Scotland? [AN HON. MEMBER: "Do you think you do?"] I did not say anywhere in my speech that I spoke on behalf of Scotland. I never made that claim. However, I certainly claim to speak on behalf of Tayside, North. That is the constituency that I represent and which returned me to this unitary Parliament. That is the constituency that recognises that I an hon. Member of this unitary Parliament and that in debates in this Chamber we are debating United Kingdom legislation — [*Interruption*] Scotland is not separate and is not independent. It is part of this unitary Parliament.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray) *rose*——

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central) *rose*——

Mr. Walker: Opposition Members should understand —I repeat it for their benefit—that the Labour party, at local government level, have been buying votes with other people's money. That is why——

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Walker: That is why this legislation has been necessary. I never once had any difficulty about what the hon. Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) calls a poll tax. I was unaware that we had such a tax. I understood that I was standing for election on the basis of the community charge, and it is the community charge that I am happy to talk about.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Walker: Let me make it quite clear to Opposition Members that the rate support provisions for 1987-88 are generous, however one views them, because they mean a 9·2 per cent. increase on previous years. With inflation running at its present level of about 4 per cent. it is obviously a generous apportionment. It is because the local authorities, in their wisdom, decided to increase their expenditure so substantially over that figure that the Conservative Government have had to do something about it, as Labour Governments had to do.

All I say to Opposition Members is that no one should be in any doubt that, when the community charge comes into place, we shall no longer be faced with the nonsense that now goes on at local government level — such as nuclear-free zones, on which vast sums of public money are spent. Nor will we be faced with the 40 per cent. over-provision in Tayside schools, which affects all rural schools in the region. Until Tayside region decides to do something about that, there will always be such over-provision and over-capacity. That is why I have no hesitation in supporting my right hon. and learned Friend this evening.

11.28 pm

Mr. Rifkind: I begin by offering my congratulations to the hon. Members for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) and for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish) on their maiden speeches. It would be difficult to describe them as having followed the convention of the non-controversial speech, but I happily recognise the force of their contributions and the sincerity with which they both spoke.

The hon. Member for Edinburgh, South referred to our former colleague, Michael Ancram; I hope that I speak for hon. Members of all parties in saying that he was a diligent Member of Parliament who made a major contribution to our debates. I have no hesitation in saying that I hope that it will not be long before he is again a Member of this House and able to make a contribution to its proceedings.

I listened with interest also to the speech of the hon. Member for Fife, Central. His predecessor, Willie Hamilton, was a man of strong convictions who, over many years, powerfully represented the interests of his constituency. I hope that the hon. Member for Fife, Central will forgive me for saying that I listened with amazement as he went through the many virtues of the local authority which he previously led and told us of the many marvellous provisions it could make for the people of Fife. The House will find it difficult to understand how a local authority which has allegedly been persecuted by this "uncaring" Government for the past eight years has with scarce and scant resources nevertheless been able to provide the marvellous services to which he referred, while not imposing intolerable burdens on the ratepayers. Clearly, the only explanation must be the generosity of the Government over the period in question. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will continue to draw attention to that.

Mr. McLeish: Does the Secretary of State agree that it was through the extreme skill of the local authority in

resisting the Government's embraces for selective action over so many years and through the ineptitude of the Scottish Office that we have accomplished so much?

Mr. Rifkind: If Fife has shown that it is skill rather than resources that has enabled the local authority to meet the interests of its local people, the Government can take that into account when determining future rate support grant settlements.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) spent some time criticising the way in which the guidelines operate and the fact that authorities such as Nithsdale are subject to penalty. He will be well aware that the system that operates now is significantly better than that which operated under his party's Government. In those days when some local authorities overspent, all local authorities had to share the penalty that was imposed by the Labour Government, irrespective of their level of expenditure and of the circumstances that existed. The hon. Gentleman should have volunteered that observation rather than wait until it was extracted from him, if he wished to attach importance to it.

The hon. Gentleman asked whether it was reasonable that Lothian and Edinburgh should be subject to the general penalty. We are required to apply penalties on the basis of the budgets submitted by local authorities. Naturally, if local authorities, either because of selective action or for any other reason, reduce their expenditure during the course of the year, rate support grant is, indeed, repaid to them. That has happened in the past and will happen again.

It being one and a half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted Business):—*

The House divided: Ayes 252, Noes 217.

Division No. 20] **[11.30 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Major, Rt Hon John
Mans, Keith
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Temple-Morris, Peter

Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle and
Mr. David Maclean.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Douglas
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Mrs Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, John
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Walley, Ms Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Llin Golding and
Mr. Robert N. Wareing.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Rate Support Grant (Scotland) (No. 2) Order 1987, dated 5th May 1987, a copy of which was laid before this House on 11th May, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

Rate Reduction (Lothian Region)

11.45 pm

The Minister of State, Scottish Office (Mr. Ian Lang): I beg to move,

That the Rate Reduction (Lothian Region) 1987-88 Report, a copy of which was laid before this House on 10th July, be approved.

The report was laid before the House in accordance with the provisions of section 5 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1966, as variously amended, which affords my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State power to propose a reduction in any authority's rate, if he is satisfied that the authority's total estimated expenses are excessive and unreasonable. The power for the Secretary of State to act where he detects "excessive and unreasonable" expenditure dates back over 50 years, and the use of the power in its present form is familiar to hon. Members. The report now before the House states the amount of the reduction proposed and the reasons for that amount, and sets out representations from Lothian regional council, together with the record of the meeting that I had with representatives of the authority.

For the sake of completeness, let me mention here that my right hon. and learned Friend also initiated action under section 5 against Edinburgh district council and Clackmannan district council. We shall debate the report concerning Edinburgh later. In the case of Clackmannan, my right hon. and learned Friend proposed a reduction in the council's rate on the grounds of its excessive and unreasonable planned expenditure. After considering representations from that authority, he agreed to its proposal to make a voluntary reduction in its rate of an amount less than was originally proposed. That represents a satisfactory outcome in Clackmannan's case, and for that reason there is no report before the House tonight concerning that authority.

I start with the broader context of our policies on local authority expenditure as a whole, which formed the background to the reports. What Scottish local authorities spend accounts for 43 per cent. of the programme of public expenditure in Scotland for which my right hon. and learned Friend is responsible. In the United Kingdom as a whole, local authority expenditure accounts for a quarter of public expenditure. There is nothing particularly untoward about those figures, but they are highly significant in the context of the Government's economic policy as a whole. That was well understood by the Labour party when it was in Government.

Quite apart from macro-economic considerations, we have to bear in mind the interests of individual ratepayers. They do not understand why, when they see inflation increasing by 3 per cent. or 4 per cent. and their own annual incomes increasing by 5 per cent. or 6 per cent. local authorities should find it necessary to produce budgets requiring rate increases several or many times higher than that. They can find no explanation in the quality of services that local authorities offer them. In many cases, ratepayers simply cannot afford those increases. That is equally true of domestic ratepayers, many on low or fixed incomes, and of business and commercial ratepayers on whose profitability we depend for the maintenance and creation of employment.

Last year, for a brief moment, it appeared that local authority current spending was coming under control. The volumne of current spending by Scottish local authorities in 1986-87 was back to the level of 1978-79. Miraculously, services were not collapsing. In fact, taking account of reductions in demand for education — which itself accounts for around 50 per cent. of local authority expenditure— the volume of expenditure on many other services had increased. But I do not wish to make too much of that point. In overall terms, expenditure volume was back to its 1978-79 level. My right hon. and learned Friend responded positively and constructively with a rate support grant settlement for this year, based realistically on local authorities' own budgets for 1986-87, with an increase of 3·75 per cent. in provision in line with inflation. There were further additions in respect of the teachers' pay settlement and some minor transfers of functions. Yet when local authority budgets for 1987-88 became available, it was clear that planned spending was again leaping ahead. Budgets for this year are 3·8 per cent. above even the generous level of provision that was made; and they imply an overall growth in the volume of expenditure of 3·2 per cent. As has also been pointed out earlier this evening, there are worrying signs that inflationary pressures are increasing in the local authority sector at a time when they are still under reasonable control in the economy as a whole. No responsible Government could ignore developments of that kind, and we have already discussed the grant penalties that will apply to all overspending authorities. The Secretary of State's responsibilities in relation to his powers under section 5 of the 1966 Act relate, however, not only to the need for public expenditure control, but to the need to protect local ratepayers from the consequences of excessive and unreasonable decisions by individual authorities.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): The Minister is talking blandly about statistics, in the bland manner that he has perfected over the years, but does he not realise that we are talking about services to individual people? For example, recently 150 parents turned up in Ayr, including people from Kincaidston in my constituency, asking for the provision of nursery services for young children aged three and four. Those services cannot be provided in Ayr because of the Government's cutbacks. What does the Minister say to people who are anxious to have services provided in Ayr as they are in other parts of the country?

Mr. Lang: No one would ever describe the hon. Gentleman as bland. We are also talking about services that have to be paid for, by individual and commercial ratepayers.

I turn now to the particular circumstances arising in Lothian. I very much regret that the Government are once again in conflict with Lothian. Its assessed need for the present financial year is £362 million. But its budget for last year was £371 million. The council was therefore given a guideline of £395 million for the present year. This was 8·9 per cent. above its assessed need and no less than 11·3 per cent. above its previous guideline. One might reasonably have expected some criticism for that guideline from those who felt that Lothian's expenditure was already too high. It was undoubtedly a generous figure, but it did not seem realistic to expect the council to make substantial reductions in the present year. In the light of that good guideline it was therefore most surprising and deeply disappointing that the region budgeted to spend no

[Mr. Lang]

less than £424·4 million, 7·4 per cent. or £29 million over its guideline, and 16·9 per cent. or £61 million over the assessment of its relative expenditure need. The next highest excesses among regional councils are 4·2 per cent. over guideline and 8·4 per cent. over needs assessment. If we look at a different measure, expenditure per head, Lothian's planned figure for 1987-88 of £533·99, is 4·9 per cent. above the average for closely comparable authorities, and the growth in planned expenditure per head over the previous year is 6·3 per cent., which is above the average corresponding figure for all regional councils.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): When the Minister speaks of closely comparable authorities, which authorities does he have in mind?

Mr. Lang: Comparable authorities among the regions are those that have similar responsibilities to those of Lothian. They include Central, Fife, Grampian and Tayside.

Looking at the figures in real, or volume terms, the rate of growth from 1986-87 to 1987-88 is 6·2 per cent., almost double the average for all regional councils and for all Scottish local authorities.

Mr. Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East): Will the Minister accept that expenditure per head in the Lothian region is less than average expenditure per head in the regions of Scotland as a whole?

Mr. Lang: It is always possible to find something to suit the hon. Gentleman's case, but expenditure per head in Lothian has been rising rapidly. Indeed, if one looks back to the 1978-79 comparison, to which the council itself looks back in support of its arguments, it overlooked the fact that expenditure then was 10 per cent. more than that of closely comparable authorities, and 3 per cent. above the regional average.

The figures are clear, and the extent to which Lothian stands out among regional councils is also clear. Take any number; double it; treble it — that seems to be the approach of Lothian regional council. It will not do. Lothian's rate has gone up 29·8 per cent., and there is a clear expectation among Lothian's ratepayers that something will be done about it. Parliament clearly intended the Secretary of State to use his powers under section 5 in circumstances such as this, and my right hon. and learned Friend has done so.

Mr. Dalyell: This is a deeply serious matter. The Minister is talking of doubling and trebling, but what figures are being doubled and trebled? He must be careful about his language.

Mr. Lang: I shall repeat some of the figures that I have already given. The council's budget this year is 16·9 per cent. above assessed need as compared with 6·1 per cent. for other councils. Its budget is £29 million, or 7·4 per cent., above guideline. That also is a dramatic increase. The figures stand out sharply when compared with those for other councils.

It is of course reasonable to ask what excuses or explanations Lothian has to offer. It has had a full opportunity to explain itself, and its case is recorded in the report. Those who read it dispassionately, together with the note of the meeting that it subsequently had with me, will not be surprised that we were not led to change our view. Those aspects of Lothian's representations which will be of most general interest concern what it says about local needs and the need for expansion in services. But if we compare the detail of its budget for this year with its provisional outturn for last, what do we discover? Planned increases in volume terms of 8·4 per cent. in social work, 14·5 per cent. in roads and road lighting, 25·7 per cent. in concessionary fares payments, 32·4 per cent. in bus subsidies, which in most of the rest of the country are coming down dramatically, 46 per cent. in planning, 9·4 per cent. in consumer protection and 6·1 per cent. in central administration. There is no sign in all this, of services being pared to the bone, or of pressing needs going unmet. Indeed, no services show a planned volume reduction.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): Before coming here, I worked with the mentally handicapped in Lothian region. Is the Minister aware that people like me are aware of services being cut to the bone by the previous Conservative alliance administration on the council and now by the Government?

Mr. Lang: I have just shown through the figures that I gave that, far from there being cuts, planned increases in real terms are being contemplated.

The impression that I am left with is rather of expenditure programmes running out of control, and of plenty of scope for real priority needs to be met by sensible budgeting and pruning back in areas of lesser priority.

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): The Minister mentioned increased expenditure on subsidies for bus services in Lothian region. Is he aware that, because of the Transport Act 1985, the council has had to spend £2 million more on subsidising private companies to operate what is effectively a worse bus service than we have ever had? If the Minister does not accept my word, will he accept that of the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton), who wrote to me in his capacity as a constituency Member more than any other hon. Member about the appalling service in his constituency?

Mr. Lang: I shall not accept that from the hon. Gentleman, or that bus services in Lothian are any more of a problem than they are in other parts of the country. Lothian is planning a 32·4 per cent. increase in bus subsidies when they are coming down elsewhere.

The position is clear. Lothian regional council has ignored the very realistic guideline my right hon. and learned Friend gave it last autumn. It is unconcerned about the effects of its policies on the ratepayers. The Labour party has continued where it left off when it lost control of the council in 1984. My right hon. Friend used his powers to control its spending then and we are again doing so now. I seek the House's approval of the report.

11.59 pm

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): The hon. Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Mr. Lang) —I hesitate to describe him as a Minister, because I do not know how anyone with the kind of mandate that this lot have got could possibly describe himself as a Minister — said that he was disappointed to find himself in conflict with Lothian regional council again.

I suspect that conflict with the regional council was left on the agenda by Michael Ancram and that, unless

someone takes it off the agenda, the Minister will find himself doing all this time and again, simply because Lothian region is there. It is about time that someone in the Scottish Office started dealing with these matters objectively.

This is the third time in the past six years that the House has taken it upon itself to fix the budget of the regional authority that serves my constituency and the rest of the Lothian region. East Lothian is the biggest constituency in the region, in terms of population and area, and I can tell the Minister, having had recent contact with the electorate, that the people of my constituency and those of most other constituencies in Lothian would like the Government to get off the backs of the regional councillors and let them get on with the job that they were elected to do.

Tonight's circumstances would be absurd if they were not such an affront to the people of Lothian region. The Westminster House of Commons, in all its glory, is taking it upon itself to assume authority over the road repairs, the drains, the home helps, the school dinner service and the lollipop men of Lothian region, The House, which effectively means the Government, is assuming power over Lothian's budgets while leaving responsibility in the hands of local councillors. Power without responsibility seems to be the prerogative of the Conservative party in Scotland nowadays. I sense that some English Conservative Back Benchers may be getting rather restive at the prospect of spending the next three hours or so providing the votes to sustain their men in the Scottish Office. If the right hon. and learned Member for Edinburgh, Pentlands (Mr. Rifkind) keeps pursuing his spite against the people whom he is supposed to be serving, there will be stormy times ahead and it might help English Members to recognise the attractions of constitutional reform in Scotland.

The House is about to determine the budget for Lothian region. I expect that eight of the 10 Lothian Members will vote against the report presented by the Scottish Office. They are likely to be outvoted by Members from far-away places who know little and care less about Lothian region. I wonder whether all those who will vote on Lothian's budget know what they will be doing to my constituents and to those of the right hon. and learned Member for Pentlands. Indeed, I wonder how many of those Members know where Lothian region is and what its responsibilities are. It is an affront to Parliament that it should be used in such a way.

The House has just voted to claw back £51·25 million from Lothian region's rate support grant. Now the hon. Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale has invited us to lop £18·5 million off Lothian's budget, on the ground that the Scottish Office thinks that the region's spending plans are excessive and unreasonable—highly subjective terms used by the Government for the purpose of pursuing their punitive policies towards local authorities.

I know that the rates in Lothian have gone up at an alarming rate. Since the Government came to power in 1979 the proportion of local costs covered by rate support grant in Lothian has collapsed from 58·4 to 37·5 per cent. Meanwhile, ratepayers have found that their share of the burden of local costs has been forced up from 41·6 to 62·5 per cent. It is no wonder that rates have been forced up. However, that is not the regional council's fault. It is a consequence of decisions taken by the Government.

Of the net rate increase of 14·1p in the pound this year, only 2·3p is attributable to growth or new policy initiatives taken by the new Labour administration in Lothian. The remaining 11·8p is attributable to a range of factors determined either by the Government or by the outgoing Tory administration in Lothian. All this fuss is about a growth element in the regional council's budget of 2·3p in the pound. The hon. Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale talked about doubling and trebling and about macro-economic considerations—2·3p in the pound.

While we are thinking about that outgoing Tory administration in Lothian, let us reflect for a minute or two on its last budget. As my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) said in the previous debate, it was 6·6 per cent. above the Scottish Office guideline figures, but it was acclaimed by Government spokesmen only a year ago as being the budget of a prudent and responsible authority. Now, just a year later, a Labour budget that is just 0·8 per cent. higher than the guidelines is pilloried as being excessive and unreasonable. Evidently the Government have some subjective view of the threshold of excess and reason. It is either somewhere between 6·6 per cent. and 7·4 per cent., in which case we should be told so that we can avoid these pitfalls in future, or, much more likely, these things have more to do with the political complexion of the council and old-fashioned political spite by the Government and the Scottish Office.

Let us consider some facts about the finances in Lothian region. First, the spending per head in the region is 0·2 per cent. below the average for the rest of the Scottish regional councils. The Minister tried to dismiss that fact, but it is one that he cannot deny, and he knows it.

Secondly, the needs assessment procedure of the Scottish Office discriminates quite capriciously against Lothian region. Despite the growing numbers of under-five-year-old children in the region and the growing numbers of elderly people, there is no increase in the needs element of rate support grant. Nothing is being done to cater for their growing needs.

Thirdly, the Government guideline figures for the region are artifically low and have increased by only 152 per cent. since 1978 compared with the 161 per cent. average increase for the other Scottish regions.

Fourthly, if this cut is imposed Lothian will be the only one of the five supposedly comparable councils with spending levels below that of 1978-79 in real terms. Another fact that ought to carry some weight in our deliberations is that most of us who represent the Lothian region recognise that public expenditure in the region is too low. The people there want better services. That is what they tell me practically every day of the week.

I was interested to hear my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) explain that the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton) had recently written to him in his capacity as chairman of the transport committee of Lothian regional council calling for more expenditure and better services on public transport. People are asking for better services. In my experience, the people who are pressing most loudly for more expenditure tend to be people in Conservative areas of Lothian. There is something rather schizophrenic about that.

There have been cuts in service in the region, and that is borne out by the facts. Since 1978, when spending in real terms by all Scottish regional councils has grown by 3 per cent., Lothian region's expenditure grew by only 0·2 per cent. Since 1982, council spending has fallen by over £33 million in real terms. We now find ourselves, after the

[Mr. John Home Robertson]

previous Tory administration in Lothian, with significant cuts in the home-help service for elderly people, despite the growing need for such services. There are also cuts in education and in things such as road maintenance. There is a crying need for better services in Lothian, especially for our children and elderly people. That is what the present council was elected to provide and it had a very clear mandate only 15 months ago.

The council's budget provides for modest growth to improve services in six specific areas. First, it wants to extend nursery education. Secondly, it wants to expand children's centres. Thirdly, the council wants to improve both primary and secondary education services and facilities. Fourthly, it wants to extend home care and day care for elderly people. Fifthly, it wants to improve concessionary travel for elderly and handicapped people in the region. Sixthly, it wants to extend day centres and residential care facilities for handicapped people.

From my own experience in my constituency, I can confirm that there is an urgent need for improved services in all those areas. That is not a programme of mindless extravagance, as the Government are suggesting. It is a cautious, responsible and constructive programme to provide reasonable local services in accordance with the wishes of the electorate. Yet the Secretary of State is calling for a cut of £18·3 million in services for the area that he is supposed to represent. I wish that he would tell us precisely what he would like to see cut out of the services that are provided by Lothian region in his constituency instead of trying to hide behind the formula that he has arrived at and is trying to force through the House.

I gently remind the Government that in the regional council elections in 1986 the Conservative party, which stood for cuts, was routed. It received only 23 per cent. of the votes in the Lothian region, and it managed to scrape only 27 per cent. at the parliamentary elections last month.

The Government's case is pathetic and threadbare. Tonight's action by the Secretary of State shows that he is content to be no more than a quisling figure in representing the Cabinet in Scotland rather than the interests of Scotland in the Cabinet. The right hon. and learned Gentleman knows that he has no mandate to govern in this manner. He would be better advised to seek to govern by consent instead of going outright to seek confrontation with the people of Scotland. The majority of Members representing constituencies in the Lothian region and from Scotland generally will vote against this oppressive and unjustifiable measure at the end of the debate. Government Back Benchers should reflect on the recent fate of so many of their Scottish colleagues, including the two Conservative Members who represented constituencies in the Lothian region, on the implications of this sort of measure in the future conduct of Scottish business in the House. The report should be rejected out of hand.

12.12 am

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): The Labour party has recently suffered the third of three consecutive catastrophic defeats in the United Kingdom, yet it will not learn lessons from the electorate, which wants to see lower expenditure by local authorities throughout the United Kingdom. If we talk to ratepayers in Scotland, England, Wales or Northern Ireland, we find that they all want to see local authorities being careful with public expenditure.

If we do not have care with public expenditure, the Government's important economic policies will fail. It is vital that public expenditure, which includes local government expenditure as much as that of central Government — it all comes from the taxpayer or ratepayer — is kept down. We must be prudent and exercise good housekeeping, yet Labour Members want local authorities to spend carte blanche wherever they like and for whatever they want to budget. Their view is that local government must spend and that ratepayers including taxpayers must cough up.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): Will the hon. Gentleman address himself to the effective argument that was advanced by my hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home-Robertson)? The expenditure of Lothian region that came from rate support grant has fallen from about 58 per cent. to 37 per cent. — I am sorry, the percentage of total expenditure met by RSG payments has fallen substantially. Does the hon. Gentleman accept that a large contributory element to the increase in rate poundage has been the Government's policy?

Sir Hector Monro: It is public expenditure that matters; and the area of expenditure is not crucial. Public expenditure overall has an effect on inflation, and keeping down inflation has been a key factor in getting the economy right. We have been successful in reducing inflation and keeping it low because we have kept down public expenditure. Do Labour Members want roaring inflation of the sort that we experienced in the late 1970s under the previous Labour Government, with rapidly rising unemployment? I know that unemployment has doubled under this Government, but at long last it is declining, because the Government's economic policies are working successfully. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will acknowledge that unemployment has fallen steadily in Scotland this year. The fall will continue in the months ahead, because we have kept down public expenditure. *[Interruption.]* Labour Members are nattering away and not listening to any of the debate because they are interested only in boosting their local authorities through COSLA and encouraging them to spend what the hell they like. That is not the way to conduct an economic policy.

We have heard an awful lot about the success of the Labour party in Scotland in the election. In the previous Parliament, there were 40 Scottish Labour Members, and they were no good. Now we have 50, and they seem to be worse. I do not think that we have anything to fear from them. They talk of grinding us into the earth all night, every night, although incidentally only about 25 of them are here [HON. MEMBERS: "Where are Conservative Members?"] They do not need to be here because they know the arguments. Scottish Opposition Members are supposed to be launching devastating attacks on the Government, but I have not heard a speech tonight that will cause any worry at all to the people of Scotland or to the Government Front Bench.

Mr. William McKelvey (Kilmarnock and Loudoun): What about Nithsdale?

Sir Hector Monro: I shall be delighted to come to Nithsdale. Does the hon. Gentleman know that Nithsdale

received the biggest rate support grant increase in Scotland this year? It received a 44 per cent. increase on housing revenue account and a 114 per cent. increase on non-HRA. No local authority has been better treated than Nithsdale by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State in the current economic year — *[Interruption.]* That is what I ask: why are they complaining? The authority has been very well treated by the Government. It budgeted knowing exactly what the repercussions would be. It knew that a heavy penalty would be imposed on it if it budgeted £200,000 over what was reckoned to be admissible. The important point is that the authority will be penalised only if it spends the money. It should think carefully about whether it can reduce its expenditure and avoid those penalties.

Several Hon. Members *rose*—

Sir Hector Monro: Of course I shall give way; hon. Members should not be so impatient.

Mr. McKelvey: Am I right in thinking that the council is made up of 28 members — seven Conservatives, seven Labour, seven independent and seven Scottish National party — all of whom are totally opposed to any cuts introduced by the Secretary of State for Scotland? The four sevens which go to make up the 28 councillors are together on that. [HON. MEMBERS: "Well done."] It is the result of a comprehensive education.

Sir Hector Monro: There has often been an alliance between the Scottish National party and the Labour party, and somehow or another they manage to influence one or two independents. [HON. MEMBERS: "What about the Tories?"] They are not in the least bit in favour of increased expenditure; heavens, no. We shall go back to our economic policies of keeping public expenditure down.

Like some Opposition Members and some of my hon. Friends I have some experience as a local authority councillor — 15 years in fact. Every local councillor enters a council full of ideas about how he will spend money to improve education, health and every other service. However, one soon realises that there has to be a prudent balance of expenditure on all services. One cannot have carte blanche to spend any amount that one wishes.

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): Will the hon. Gentleman tell the House whether all this was part of his original speech or whether he decided to insert this part of it when the Under-Secretary of State deliberately left the Treasury Bench and joined him on the Back Benches to bully, nobble and hector him into changing his speech and putting party before constituency?

Sir Hector Monro: As ever, the hon. Gentleman is completely wrong. My hon. Friend was discoursing with me on a completely different subject of far greater importance, and the hon. Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) would have loved to have heard our conversation. But we shall leave that to another day.

The hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) will know that we have seen much miserable weather in East Lothian over the past three days, but a wonderfully conducted golf championship at a golf club that is very well run.

Lothian council has increased expenditure by 29 per cent. We must support the Government in preventing Lothian council from spending so much money. If it continues to do so, there will be a green light to other councils to do the same. On and on we shall go, with escalating public expenditure, inflation, increasing unemployment and all the failures of economic policy that we saw under the Labour Government.

Mr. Home Robertson: The hon. Gentleman talks about a green light for endless expenditure. He suggests that councillors should know that they will catch it in the neck if they spend above a certain figure. How on earth do councils know that? The present Lothian administration is almost exactly as far above the guidelines as the previous Lothian administration. It happened to be Tory and was not penalised. This one is being penalised. What has changed? What is the threshold?

Sir Hector Monro: As I said, there will be a green light if Lothian council and Edinburgh district council continue to spend as they have. Other councils will follow suit immediately. There will then be a substantial increase in public expenditure, inflation and unemployment and we will again have the economic circle which we have managed to prevent during the past eight years. That is why I am determined to support the Government. I hope that they maintain the pressure on councils to keep down public expenditure and then everyone can have a little more of the available cake.

12.22 am

Mr. Adam Ingram (East Kilbride): I am grateful for the opportunity to speak in this debate, albeit in the form of my maiden speech. I pay a sincere tribute to my predecessor Dr. Maurice Miller, who was the Member for East Kilbride since it was formed as a new constituency in 1974. Before that, he was the Member for Glasgow, Kelvingrove from 1964, having spent the previous 14 years as a distinguished councillor on the Glasgow corporation.

Glasgow and East Kilbride may have changed over the years, but Maurice Miller remains the same. He is a quiet, pleasant man who went effectively about his business as a parliamentary representative. He was a Member of Parliament for 23 years, and he made many friends in this place. He was well respected and well liked and his main aim was to serve the interests of his constituents diligently and thoroughly. That he achieved. He was a good and faithful servant of the Labour party and the House. I therefore count it an honour and privilege to follow him as the Member for East Kilbride.

I mentioned that East Kilbride new town has changed over the years. The neighbouring communities which make up the rest of the constituency — the villages of Strathaven, Glassford, Chapelton, Sandford, Auldhouse and Busby — have all retained their distinctive welcoming features, both contributing to and benefiting from the success of their much larger neighbour, East Kilbride new town. Although those communities may not have changed over the years, the new town has grown from a small, rural, residential community of 2,500 people to the most successful of Scotland's — perhaps Britain's — new towns. It is now Scotland's sixth largest town and it is still growing.

It is not for nothing that East Kilbride is known as Scotland's No. 1 new town — *[Interruption.]* It has a proud engineering tradition. It has a significant printing industry and textile industry and is also in the forefront of the emerging new technologies. I conducted some research on the maiden speech of my hon. Friend the Member for

[Mr. Adam Ingram]

Cumbernauld and Kilsyth (Mr. Hogg), who claimed some years ago that the honour of representing Scotland's No. 1 new town should rest with him, but I rightly lay claim to East Kilbride as being No. 1. The second largest employer in the town, employing 1,800 people, is a major manufacturer of silicon chips and related equipment.

I could go on extolling the virtues of East Kilbride. I have lived there for 17 years, it is a fine place in which to live and it is an honour to represent it. Unfortunately, the town's capacity to thrive and prosper has been put at risk because of the policies of the Government. The privatisation of Rolls-Royce has caused questions to be asked, not least among the work force, about the long-term future of the East Kilbride plant. Similarly, Anderson Strathclyde plc, the first major industrial employer within the town — then known as Mavor and Coulson — has been reduced to a mere fraction of its original size and is now threatened with the possibility of closure because of the lack of proper investment in the British coal industry.

A simple, straightforward commitment to a regenerated industrial manufacturing base by the Government could transform East Kilbride's and Scotland's fortunes overnight. The will is there among the people of East Kilbride to succeed, as is the capacity and energy. They just need the right industrial climate — something that they have been denied.

I recognise that the subject of the debate is local government. We have just disposed of an order that will penalise Scottish local authorities trying to provide services in their communities and we are now considering an order that will further penalise the Lothian region and the Edinburgh District Council. I have had the honour of serving as a district councillor in East Kilbride since 1980 and as leader of the administration since 1984. Therefore, I know the problems that those cuts cause to a community.

Although East Kilbride is an expanding community, it has not been provided with the means by the Scottish Office to keep pace with demand. Genuine difficulties exist in housing. A moratorium was imposed by the Scottish Office on the building of new public sector houses from 1983 until just a few months ago. To get a home of their own, young couples born and bred in the town either have to leave the town or live in overcrowded accommodation for unacceptable periods. Schools are badly run down and in need of modernisation. As a new town, East Kilbride has a young population, yet it does not have a maternity facility of its own. The general hospital at Hairmyres is old and inadequate—a sad reflection of the rundown nature of much of Scotland's health services.

This is the 40th anniversary of East Kilbride as a new town. In a foreword in a book to commemorate the event, the Secretary of State for Scotland said:

> "It marks a striking achievement: the creation of a substantial town, an internationally recognised industrial centre, and a community proud of its parks and sports centres no less than of its high-tech factories."

All of those achievements have been provided by public investment, and such congratulations ring hollow when one looks at what the Government are doing tonight. A community cannot provide for itself unless it is given the encouragement and resources from central Government to do so.

For the past five years I have served as a full-time union official with responsibility for Edinburgh district council and the Lothian region. I know that the speeches made by Labour Members are supported by the facts. From 1982 to 1986 Lothian region was under Conservative control. During that time 5,500 council jobs were lost, services were cut and the community suffered. The people of Lothian reacted by voting in a Labour administration committed to providing services and much needed local government help for those in need. Likewise, in Edinburgh city council, the electorate expressed itself in 1984 by voting for a spending administration after many years of Tory control.

There has been much talk tonight about who has got the mandate to govern Scotland. The Secretary of State for Scotland asserted elsewhere that the Conservative Government won the general election and therefore have a mandate to govern Britain.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): We did.

Mr. Ingram: I ask the hon. Gentleman and the Secretary of State to recognise that the people of Lothian and Edinburgh spoke loud and clear on 11 June. They rejected the philosophy of cuts in local government finance and the Secretary of State's punitive actions against his own city and region. His depleted Scottish support in the House of Commons speaks volumes on that point.

Lothian and Edinburgh councillors also have a clear mandate. The Secretary of State's actions tonight ignore what the people of those areas want. They want more local government services, not fewer; better services, not worse; and caring services, not cuts. Like East Kilbride, Edinburgh and Lothian can prosper, but they can do so only when given the means by central Government. Public service used to be valued by the Conservative party, but the Government and the Scottish Secretary of State now simply view it with contempt. Only by rejecting the punitive and unwanted cuts that have been imposed by the Government can we put public service back on its pedestal again, as a provider of essential services, caring for those in need, and making for a better quality of life for all the community.

12.30 am

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): I congratulate the hon. Member for East Kilbride (Mr. Ingram) on his maiden speech. I am sure that he will be an admirable successor to Maurice Miller, who, as he rightly said, was respected and liked by hon. Members on both sides of the House. His speech was clear, direct and well ordered. I am sure that our debates will benefit greatly from his incisive contributions. That is more than I can say for the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Munro). Really, what a cheek the hon. Gentleman had! Perhaps it is because at his age that he has a brass neck. The hon. Member knows that Scotland rejected Conservative party policies. Indeed, for a long time, we cannot have seen an aging emperor preening himself upon his apparel when he stands stark naked.

I have three short points to make. First, I do not accept the basic contention that Lothian council has a genuine democratic mandate and is therefore entitled to proceed with its election programme, irrespective of other views, and, at the same time, to complain of Government interference with it. On that point, I dissent from the remarks made by the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson). In Lothian, at the last regional election, 41·7 per cent. of people voted for the Labour

administration. For that, Labour obtained 65 per cent. of the seats — 32 out of 49. Only 21 per cent. of the electorate positively voted for Labour. That does not justify Labour's claim to speak exclusively for Lothian. We shall repeat the case for electoral reform.

Secondly, although I deny the claim to be exclusively representative, I accept the three basic points that have been made; first, that in the past decade expenditure has been 2·8 per cent. less than the average for Scottish regional councils, and that fact should be recognised; secondly, that expenditure per head — this point was made by the hon. Member for East Lothian — is lower than the average for all regional councils; and thirdly, it is nonsense—I say this as a member of a party who was involved—for the Secretary of State not so long ago to extol the frugality of the Conservative-alliance administration in Lothian, which was 6 per cent. over guidelines, and now ferociously to penalise spending 7·4 per cent. over.

Thirdly, the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) clearly put the consequences of the report. I am glad of the rare opportunity to agree wholeheartedly with him. The penalty in Lothian will have the inevitable effect of reducing the established services to the young, the elderly — especially in respect of the transport concession — the handicapped, as the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) said, and probably the police. If the Government believe that the quality of service is too high and should be reduced, they should say so, because that is the effect of their action and that is why we oppose the report.

12.35 am

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): Although neither I nor my colleagues come from Lothian region——

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What are the guidelines for this debate? I claim no precedence, but other hon. Members represent the Lothian area. Is this a Lothian debate or is it a general debate?

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know that the Chair has recently changed, but I have attempted twice to catch the Chair's eye and no one from the Conservative side of the House has been called twice in succession. We are curious to know — here I support the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) — what the basis of the debate is.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. I suggest to the House that it is far better to leave this to the Chair. We are only using valuable time.

Mrs. Ewing: If hon. Members will give me an opportunity to speak, they will be realise that I shall very brief and that they will have an opportunity to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Secretary of State suggested that the Lothian region budget is excessive and unreasonable. The Minister who opened the debate on this report followed that up with some extremely colourful language which, when challenged, he was unable to substantiate.

The Scottish National party will oppose this report on basic principles which apply to the whole of Scotland. The Government have brought forward yet again the dead hand of centralisation and have removed from local government its ability to manoeuvre, to set its policies and to decide what is best for the local community. There has been much talk from the Conservative party about accountability in local government. With this succession of orders and reports, which remove money from the local authorities, the Government are denying to local government genuine accountability by local councillors to the communities. There can no accountability if there is no democratic process in local government authorities. Our councillors should have the right to decide priorities within a budget that is acceptable to their communities.

I remind the House that Scotland is a wealthy nation. Tonight we have witnessed the Government taking £202 million from local government in general through yet another cut in the rate support grant, and Lothian region will have £33 million taken away from it as a punishment by the Government. What are the implications for services in Lothian region of this report, coming on top of the cut in the rate support grant? In the briefing given to all Scottish Members, the regional council suggests how the following services will be affected: home care provision for the elderly will be reduced; hypothermia prevention will be withdrawn; concessionary travel will be reduced; and day care provision will be reduced. For services to people with a handicap, special education classes will be cancelled; living aids and adaptations will be reduced; and day care for the mentally handicapped will be cancelled.

Those are some of the stark possibilities facing Lothian region as a result of the Government's policy. If the Minister disagrees with that assessment, will he tell the House where the cuts will be made?

The Government are adopting a policy which reminds the people of Scotland that they are living in a colony. Conservative Members have made much play of the fact that Scotland complains about being treated like a colony. This Government are doing that. Scotland is the only nation in the world to have discovered oil and to have ended up poorer as a result. We see poverty and deprivation in our country but we are not allowed access to those resources.

Finally, on the mandate issue, it was said earlier— *[Interruption.]* — I assure hon. Members that this is the final final — it was said earlier that the people of Scotland rejected the Conservative Government and that 76 per cent. voted for parties that were not the Conservative party in Scotland. That occurred not least in Lothian region and in the city of Edinburgh.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) said that it would appear that the Secretary of State for Scotland has not learnt any lesson from the election because we have not seen any concessions from the Conservative Government. However, the hon. Member for Garscadden should ask himself whether he has learnt from the election result and say what the Labour party will do to deliver us from the type of policies that are being enacted by the Conservative Government.

12.40 am

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): We should get back to the facts. I ask whether the Government agree or disagree with the following facts from the brief that Lothian region has given us. On the reduction in services and expenditure between 1981 and 1986, do the Government agree that the planned expenditure of the council declined by £87·2 million at November 1985 prices? Allowing for falling schoolrolls and other factors, that represents a reduction in real terms in council spending of £66 million. Do the Government agree?

[Mr. Tam Dalyell]

The effect of such a significant reduction in expenditure has been to lower the standard of service that is available to many client groups that are served by the council, as the following examples show. There are officials in the Box. I do not know what they are doing there unless they have answers to these questions. Therefore, I put the figures to the Minister. On social work and home helps, between 1982-83 and 1986-87 the quality of home care for the elderly has declined as the number of home helps has reduced by 14 per cent., despite a 9 per cent. increase in the frail elderly. Do the Government agree? As a consequence of increasing demand, the number of home helps able to be provided fell, on average, from 6·7 to 5·4 per client per week over four years. Do the Government agree?

On teaching standards, from a position of 1·1 per cent. above the Scottish regional average in 1982-83, educational expenditure per head of population fell to a level of 12·8 per cent. below in 1986-87. Is that an acceptable figure or is it not? Over that period, expenditure constraints moved Lothian significantly closer to Government staffing guidelines in primary and secondary education. In nursery education, Lothian's increasing number of under-fives, which increased 1·8 per cent. over four years, has placed further strains on a service which has reduced staffing levels by 1·9 per cent. since 1982-83.

Finally, on road maintenance, a four-year reduction of 15·5 per cent. in the highways department staffing budget is largely the result of reduced maintenance expenditure and direct Labour organisations' legislative requirements. Expenditure restrictions have led to a marked deterioration in the quality of the road network. From a former position of 15 per cent. above the Scottish average, Lothian's percentage per head of population dropped to 10 per cent., below in 1986-87.

I close with the thought that, if the Government are to take such action against a particular region, they had better get their figures accurate. Quite frankly, what we heard from the Minister was a lot of sloppy, ill-briefed nonsense. He talked about doubling and trebling but had to be forced for figures. Some of us are interested tonight in the hard statistics. I expect answers to my questions, because it is an absolute disgrace, when senior officials from the Scottish Office are in the Box at this time of night and the Minister is unable to answer those questions.

12.44 am

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): I agree substantially with much of what Opposition Members have said this evening because I find it difficult to understand how any Government, subjectively or even by using figures, can seek to impose on any local authority what it should spend. The Government's document provides a clue on page 2 under the heading

"Assessments of Relative Expenditure Needs."

It states:

"The assessments of relative expenditure needs of local authorities are prepared using the client group approach. This is a systematic means of allocating a pre-determined level of expenditure provision among local authorities which has been formulated in consultation with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. The client group approach does not determine the level of provision in absolute terms nor its distribution between services."

I do not understand much of that and, from what Opposition Members have been saying, they do not understand much of it either. No wonder. As soon as any Government set out to assess or attempt to assess the needs of any local authority compared with others, they inevitably get into difficulties.

It has been pointed out several times during this debate that comparisons have been made between Lothian expenditure and that of other Scottish local authorities, and arguments have been made one way and another about whether such comparisons are favourable. It is significant that no comparison has been made between Lothian's expenditure and that of any English local authority. I begin to suspect, as I think many of my Conservative colleagues do, that that is because, as ever in a case like this, there is a cosy Scottish conspiracy to ensure that comparisons are made only between those high spenders north of the border and not between them and any local authority south of the border. *[Interruption.]* My ratepayers and taxpayers in Hereford and Worcester would be horrified if they knew what was being spent in Lothian region. My ratepayers and taxpayers, who elected a Conservative-controlled county council on the slogan "value for money", would be aghast if they knew the rampant expenditure of Lothian region and all the other regions of Scotland. *[Interruption.]*

If my right hon. and hon. Friends are to be in the comparison business, I invite them to draw the real comparison, which is between the levels of expenditure that the people north of the border have come to expect as of right and the levels of expenditure that decent people in England have come to expect.

Mr. David Blunkett (Sheffield, Brightside): Will the hon. Gentleman tell me what he thinks the electorate of Lothian think of services such as education, particularly the deplorable standards, the lack of books, the reduced number of teachers and the lack of provision for the mentally handicapped and the disabled, in Hereford and Worcester county?

Mr. Forth: I am coming to that—*[Interruption.]*—and I invite the hon. Gentleman to intervene again if I do not answer his point.

My next point refers——

Mr. Canavan: Answer the question.

Mr. Forth: Be patient. *[Interruption.]* I invite the noisy Member opposite to be patient. I shall deal with his hon. Friend's point when I am ready.

We have heard many comments from Opposition Members about the paucity of the rate support grant in the Lothian region and others. I wish we had no rate support grant, certainly not for Lothian region, or for any of the other Scottish regions, or for any of the English counties. The rate support grant is one of the most invidious measures that we have had to put up with for many decades. It involves arbitrary decisions from the centre—I am sure that Opposition Members will agree with this—mainly from London although to a certain extent from Edinburgh, about the redistribution of assets and resources from one area to another on no apparent bases other than those devised by the bureaucracy to try to make some sort of assessment of need. That can vary from time to time and from administration to administration.

The reason for all this mess and why successive Governments have had to put up with arbitrary judgments of levels of expenditure and rate support grant is because

of the kernel of the matter before us tonight, as so often before: there is absolutely no way in which elected councillors can go to their electorate and find a proper judgment by that electorate of the level of expenditure it is making.

In answer to the question raised by the hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett), I shall stand four square behind the principle that the electors in Hereford and Worcester county should always be able to judge the expenditure and the services given by the county council against the amount of rates and local taxation levied on those electors.

I invite my hon. Friends and the Opposition to contemplate moving forward together towards a system whereby the electorate in each area may make a proper judgment as to the level of expenditure of the elected councillors and the level of local taxation necessary to provide the services. I am sure that few people would disagree with that—I am sure that the hon. Member for Brightside would not disagree with that.

All of tonight's debate will be rendered quite superfluous once we get the community charge— [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"] On yes —because that charge will sweep away at one stroke all the arbitrary, artificial and unnecessary arguments about judgments on whether levels of expenditure are necessary, what levels of services are necessary and about the relationship between what elected members in each area want to give their electorate and what that electorate are prepared to pay towards the provision of those services.

When we get the community charge in Lothian, Scotland and, as quickly as possible, in England, we will finally do away with debates such as this. We will be able to return control where the Opposition want it to be—in the regions and districts. In that way, elected councillors can go to the electorate with the proposed level of expenditure and levy upon everyone who will vote the appropriate level of taxation. When we reach that state, these artificial debates will become completely unnecessary and we will all be as one.

12.51 am

Mr. Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East): I should like to point out to Conservative Members that the purpose——

Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I did not interrupt at the time, but a number of Labour Members used the word "quisling" during the course of the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) I do not think that that is parliamentary language——

Mr. Home Robertson: It is highly appropriate.

Mr. Fairbairn: The hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) says it is "highly appropriate" and that makes its use even more infamous. May I suggest that those who used that word be asked to withdraw it, including the hon. Member for East Lothian sitting on the Opposition Front Bench?

Mr. George Galloway (Glasgow, Hillhead): I said it and I refuse to withdraw it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I did not hear the word. If it was used by any hon. Member, it should be withdrawn.

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The House appreciates that you did not hear the first use of the term "quisling" during the excellent speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth). However, a few seconds ago the hon. Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Galloway) said, "I said it and I refuse to withdraw it". We seek your guidance on this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair does not always hear everything that goes on, particularly below the Gangway. If an hon. Member did use that phrase, which I did not hear, I ask him, whoever he is, to withdraw it. [HON. MEMBERS: "Withdraw."] Order, I have made an appeal. I did not hear the phrase and I cannot identify the hon. Member concerned, so we had better get on with the debate.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Fairbairn: Further to that point of order Mr. Deputy Speaker. I must insist on my point of order because the hon. Member for Hillhead not only said, "Quisling", but he said that he said it and that he refused to withdraw it while you were on your feet, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I believe this to be an offence to the House and something that must be corrected.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Galloway: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was the hon. Member who used the word "Quisling". If your ruling is that that word in unparliamentary I replace it by saying that the hon. Member is a disgrace to the Scottish nation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am obliged to the hon. Gentleman. He is a new Member of the House and of course, the words that he substitutes are acceptable. I must ask him to withdraw the word "quisling".

Mr. Galloway: I withdraw the word.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman.

12.55 am

Mr. Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East): The debate is not about the taxation of our constituents but about a forced reduction in grants. We are talking about expenditure funded by the Lothian people. A number of hon. Members have said that Lothian region's expenditure excess over guidelines is only marginally greater than that which prevailed under previous administrations. That observation alone is an indication that the Government have been influenced, not by public expenditure, but by political and electoral considerations.

I agree with complaints about the inadequacy and unacceptability of the methods of assessing expenditure in Lothian. This is the third debate of this kind. On the statistics, the Government's criteria are so subjective and inconsistent that one is appalled. One has to look only at the relationship between the expenditure needs figure and the guideline figure over the last nine years to see how arbitrary the whole thing is.

It is clear that Lothian and Edinburgh have been penalised by the Government's approach. We receive no additional expenditure allowance from the Government because of that approach.

That assessment does not do justice to our needs in Lothian. We are consistently and unfairly penalised by the

[Mr. Gavin Strang]

Government because of their assessment of our expenditure needs and because of the guidelines set by the Government. That is the fundamental point of the debate.

Will the Minister admit that expenditure per head in Lothian is lower than the regional average in Scotland? That is a clear, objective statistic. We are accused of excessive and unreasonable expenditure. The onus is on the Government to make their case. The expenditure per head of our regional authority is lower than the Scottish average. That shows how ridiculous the debate is and how artificial the criteria are.

As a consequence of this report, services in my constituency will be cut severely. We shall see an attack on the provision of education and provision by our social work department, which is bound to hit some of the people in greatest need. Almost certainly, there will be some reductions in provision for concessionary travel and a range of other areas, such as law and order, which has been mentioned.

In Lothian and Edinburgh, under Conservative rule, that expenditure and provision has been reduced to a level that is unacceptable not only to those who vote Labour but to the overwhelming majority of the community—even more than the high proportion of people who vote Labour. We have see that demonstrated repeatedly at the ballot box. That is what is so outrageous about the debate. We are discussing cuts that will destroy hundreds of jobs and lead to a real reduction in the provision of services in our area.

There is no justification for that. When the Labour council was elected and took control in Edinburgh for the first time, and adopted what most people will accept was a high profile approach in its policy of improving services and creating jobs, the vast majority of Conservatives in Edinburgh were convinced that it was a tremendously unpopular policy, and that it was doing the Conservative party in Edinburgh a world of good. When the first major opinion poll was carried out by the local evening paper, they were amazed to find that that policy was popular and that people wanted a higher provision. In the elections, the Labour party had said that the price of improving those services would involve increasing rates, among other things.

To a large extent, the regional elections were fought against a backdrop of the argument of a Labour administration that wanted to improve services and a Conservative Administration that had been cutting back. We had outstanding results for the Labour party. It decisively took control of Lothian regional council. Only last month, we had the parliamentary elections, in which again these issues were a factor—I do not say that they were the only factor—in the political debate. Again we had outstanding results for the Labour party, so much so that we replaced two of the sitting Conservative Members of Parliament with Labour Members and almost replaced the Secretary of State for Scotland with a Labour Member.

Therefore, there is no basis for the report in view of what is wanted by the people of Lothian. We are paying for it through the increase in our rates. That is why the report is such an affront to people in Lothian. It is an outrage that a Government who took such a hammering at the polls in Scotland can bring forward this draconian measure, impose cuts and lay down to the absolute detail the expenditure that our councillors will be allowed to implement in Lothian. I hope that this is the last time that we shall go down that road.

1.3 am

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): I congratulate the Secretary of State on still being with us, although he is not leading for the Government in the debate. I noticed that he left for a short while, no doubt to order the taxis that will be required to take him and his Conservative colleagues back home tonight.

We are dealing with a straightforward issue — the amount of money that we spend on services in Scotland, Lothian and Edinburgh. We are not dealing with technicalities or with the Government's figures on guidelines. They are a bogus argument designed to dress up a desire to cut public expenditure in Scotland and to inflict cuts in services. It is a bogus argument that the Government are conducting.

On the one hand, the Minister of State comes forward in the debate with a nice discussion about guidelines and figures, about alleged resources and alleged need. But the fact is that Scottish local authorities stand accused of something that the Government call overspending, as well, I suspect, as being Labour for the most part. Edinburgh and Lothian are accused in the same way of being unreasonable and excessive. It is much to the chagrin of Conservatives in Scotland that they are both Labour-controlled authorities.

The argument tonight should be about the amount of money that we are spending—or not spending, as the case may be — on schools, housing, roads and old people. In Lothian and Edinburgh the need is growing, and the local authorities cannot keep up with that need, merely because we do not have enough money from central Government. If the Secretary of State is committed to reducing rate levels—I accept that there is a case for saying that they are far too high in Scotland and other places—the answer lies in his own hands. If he started to restore some of the £1·5 billion that the Government have cut from rate support grant given to local authorities, we could reduce the level of rates and at the same time ensure that the level of services that we need — for schools, houses, and so on—was properly met.

The Minister has said that it is part of the Government's economic policy to reduce public expenditure. If that is so, it surely behoves the Minister to tell us which services he wants to cut. That is something that the Government have never done. I therefore urge the Minister to say, at the conclusion of the debate, which services he wants cut in Lothian and Edinburgh. We should be interested to argue with him on that basis.

The problem that the Secretary of State and the Government face is that not only do they want to cut public expenditure in Edinburgh and Lothian, but they want to reduce the amount of money the councils spend, in a desperate attempt to make the poll tax more acceptable. They know that independent figures of the officials of Lothian region and Edinburgh district council calculate the poll tax payable by every adult in the area to be more than £400 a head. Before the election, the Government said that the figure would be £200 a head. Last week, the figure had crept up to £289 a head. The Secretary of State must realise that the poll tax, born out of panic following an unnecessary revaluation in Scotland, forced the Government to bring out an ill-conceived and

ill-considered measure, which they are now trying desperately to sell and which I suspect Conservative hon. Members know almost cost them the election in Scotland. It was certainly the cause of a number of their colleagues not returning to this House with them.

If the cuts go through, services will suffer, because every one of the Secretary of State's statistics means hardship for members of the community living in Lothian and Edinburgh. The hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro)—I note that he is no longer with us—asked whether we had anything to learn about what the people had to say. I suggest to him that, in 1984, despite the high-profile Government policy on reducing expenditure, for the first time in centuries Labour took control of Edinburgh. In 1986, when the same pattern of early clawback and rate reduction was tabled before the regional elections, Labour was returned with a record majority. Again, in 1987, the message was clear: neither Scotland, nor Lothian, nor Edinburgh is in favour of Conservative policies. The Government should face up to that.

This is not an argument about statistics or about councils being guilty of overspending; it is all about a desire to reduce expenditure. The Government must surely have the decency to accept that their policies find no favour in Scotland, Edinburgh and Lothian. Tonight's debate is about a Government who are determined to pursue policies that they know to be unpopular. The worst of it is that the Secretary of State cannot deliver in his own country and has to bring in the votes of hon. Members from outside Scotland, who know little about the problems that we are facing. Even the Government admit that the so-called economic recovery that they say is taking place has not come far north.

We are facing severe problems. Public expenditure cuts that were forced through by the Conservative and alliance administration in Lothian regional council cost 5,000 jobs. Cuts in public expenditure bring large-scale unemployment. They mean hardship for business, and across the board, because public expenditure is invested in the Scottish economy. The Government's policy is ill thought out and their figures do not add up. As has been asked many times before, how can 7·4 per cent. over Government guidelines be excessive and unreasonable in 1987 when 6·6 per cent. above guidelines in 1986 was said to be the mark of a moderate and reasonable council? Spot the difference—0·8 per cent. The other difference is that Lothian region is now Labour controlled. That is what it is all about. Unfortunately, the Government seem to be attacking Edinburgh and Lothian for electoral advantage. Fortunately, the majority of the electorate saw through them. That is why the Conservatives' stock in Scotland is so low and will continue to slump.

The time has come for us to be honest and start discussing whether it is worth investing in schools, hospitals and social services, because if the Government want to cut such services, they must convince those who they say they represent that they are right.

I want to be fair to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton). He did not spend all of his time writing to me because bus services in his constituency were reduced after deregulation; he also wrote to a colleague asking whether they could have a nursery school in one of the schools in his constituency. All of us support him in that, but we will never get nursery schools or decent schools and housing until we get the Government support that we need. The contribution made by local ratepayers would be affordable, and we could then start to rebuild the country, which is what we desperately need.

1.10 am

Mr. Lang: With permission, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I should like to reply to the debate.

We have had an interesting, if fairly predictable, debate and I shall try in the limited time available to respond to some of the points that have been made.

I should like to pay tribute to the hon. Member for East Kilbride (Mr. Ingram) on his maiden speech, which he delivered with great fluency and self-confidence. He clearly conveyed the sincerity of his views. He follows a man, Maurice Miller, who was much respectedd on both sides of the House and who will be missed.

The hon. Gentleman has the great good fortune to represent one of the exciting economic growth points of the Scottish economy where something like one new company decided to locate each week last year. It is indeed a flagship for free enterprise. I am glad that the hon. Gentleman welcomed the lifting of the moratorium on general needs housebuilding, which we were able to achieve quite recently, and we look forward to hearing more from him.

I should like to remind the House of the details of Lothian's budget. Against expenditure of £365 million last year, and a guideline this year of £395 million, the region has budgeted to spend £424 million. That is 7·4 per cent., or £29 million, over the guideline and 16·9 per cent., or £61 million, over its assessed need. It has planned volume growth of 6·2 per cent. Among all the figures that have been bandied about tonight, these are the figures that count, and they tell a clear story—a story of extravagance.

Even after the selective action, which is designed only to bring Lothian down to the average excess of guidelines, it will still be able to spend 2·8 per cent., or £11 million, over guideline and 11·9 per cent., or £43 million, over its assessed need.

Mr. Ron Brown (Edinburgh, Leith): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Lang: No. The hon. Gentleman will have an opportunity to speak in the next debate.

Lothian will still be able to achieve a volume growth on last year of 1·6 per cent. Much has been said about the effect of these cuts in services, but the very word "cuts" is misleading, as I am sure it is intended to be. There are no cuts by comparison with Lothian's expenditure last year. Even if the House approves the report, there will still be real growth in Lothian's expenditure.

We have heard many scare stories about how the savings will be found. Lothian will not be forgiven if it chooses to make its ratepayers suffer by making savings in the most conspicuous or heart-rending way. It knows that savings can be made. It is its duty to make them in the best possible way, having proper regard to real areas of priority, which I know exist in Lothian.

The hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Roberson) accused us of exercising power without responsibility, but it is precisely responsibility that we wish to inject into Lothian's attitude to its ratepayers. The hon. Gentleman listed six areas in which it is trying to make improvements. I could list 19 where it is planning real increases in expenditure.

Mr. Home Robertson: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Lang: I am afraid not. I must reply to the debate.

The hon. Members for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) and for East Lothian said that Lothian was not subjected to a report last year and asked why it has been this year. The answer is that there is no precise basis on which excessive and unreasonable expenditure is automatically triggered. It is a matter for assessment each year in the light of a large number of factors. Lothian's budget is 16·9 per cent. above its assessed needs and the next highest region is only 8·4 per cent. above; Lothian is 7·4 per cent. above its guideline and the national average is 2·8 per cent. above; Lothian is requesting a rate increase of 29·8 per cent. from its ratepayers; the figures speak for themselves.

The hon. Member for East Lothian complained that there was no increase in the needs element and that there were demographic changes that justified an increase. I should point out that the number of children under 16 in Lothian—

It being one and a half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted Business):—*

The House divided: Ayes 181, Noes 100.

Division No. 21] **[1.15 am**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Hon Peter
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Lang, Ian
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Mans, Keith
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd and
Mr. David Maclean.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Alton, David
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Eadie, Alexander
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Grocott, Bruce
Haynes, Frank
Henderson, Douglas
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Ingram, Adam
Johnston, Sir Russell
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McKelvey, William

McLeish, Henry
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Mowlam, Mrs Marjorie
Nellist, Dave
O'Neill, Martin
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Reid, John
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Strang, Gavin
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wilson, Brian
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Allen Adams.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Rate Reduction (Lothian Region) 1987-88 Report, a copy of which was laid before this House on 10th July, be approved.

Rate Reduction (Edinburgh District)

1.25 am

The Minister of State, Scottish Office (Mr. Ian Lang): I beg to move,

That the Rate Reduction (City of Edinburgh District) 1987-88 Report, a copy of which was laid before this House on 10th July, be approved.

The House will not expect me to go over all the general background to the powers under which my right hon. and learned Friend has laid this report before the House, nor the economic circumstances against which Edinburgh district council's spending policy needs to be judged. It may be helpful, however, if I briefly set out the main points again.

The Secretary of State has power to propose a reduction in an authority's rate if he is satisfied that the authority's total estimated expenses are "excessive and unreasonable". The power has been used several times in the past and in particular against Edinburgh district council in each of the last two years. Local authority current expenditure forms an important part of any Government's economic policies as was discussed in the previous debate, and it is therefore necessary to control that expenditure. There are two reasons for this—first, the effect of the spending on the total of public expenditure in the country as a whole and, secondly, the effect upon the local economy of the high rates that go with high spending. Opposition Members have made much recently of the allegedly high levels of community charge in certain areas once the new system of local government finance is in operation. If they showed even half that concern for the level of rate increases imposed by authorities such as Edinburgh perhaps reports such as the one that we are now debating would never need to be put to the House in the first place.

Turning to the details of the report on Edinburgh, the figures tell their own story every bit as eloquently as they did in the case of Lothian, which we have just been discussing. The council's budget for 1987-88 is £52·26 million, against a provisional outturn for last year of £41·77 million—a planned increase in expenditure of over 25 per cent. Its budget is £10·354 million or 24·7 per cent. over guideline, and £11·83 million or 29·3 per cent. over assessed need. The volume growth in planned expenditure over 1986-87 is 15·5 per cent. The rate increase is 29·3 per cent. The excess over guideline of 24·7 per cent. compares with an average for districts other than Edinburgh and Clackmannan of 3·3 per cent. The House will recall that my right hon. and learned Friend also initiated action against Clackmannan, as I explained in the previous debate.

Comparison with other authorities of increases in planned expenditure per head shows a similar picture: since 1978-79, the average increase for all district authorities is 11·6 per cent., but for Edinburgh 47·7 per cent. Between last year and this, the comparable figures are 3·5 per cent. for all district authorities and 14·5 per cent. for Edinburgh. Edinburgh's rate of growth in planned expenditure from 1986-87 to 1987-88, at 14·5 per cent. is three times the average for all district councils and more than four times the average for all Scottish local authorities. Once again, the figures speak for themselves. Edinburgh was given a full opportunity to make representations. Its written representations, and the record

[Mr. Ian Lang]

of a meeting that I held with them are included in the report. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State and I have considered the representations carefully but have not been persuaded by them to change our view. The comparator authorities which were used in assessing Edinburgh's budget included all the other Scottish cities and were chosen on the basis of relevant factors. This was an objective statistical exercise. The method of assessing relative expenditure need is developed and operated in full consultation with COSLA, and takes due account of the special factors to which the district refers in its representations, such as the city's role as a tourist centre. One point to emerge from Edinburgh's representations is that the expenditure reductions implied by my right hon. and learned Friend's proposed rate cut will bite particularly hard because there are no financial reserves to cushion the blow, as in previous years. I find this reminiscent of the condemned prisoner asking for other offences to be taken into account. The clear conclusion is that Edinburgh has been living beyond its means for years, hoping, like Mr. Micawber, that something would turn up.

Edinburgh district has to bear in mind that the creation of wealth, jobs and opportunities in its area is being frustrated by expenditure policies that cause personal difficulties for large numbers of people and threaten or destroy business and commercial enterprises. This problem becomes especially worrying when both authorities in an area are pursuing the same high-spending policies. We have already discussed and approved a report which will bring relief to ratepayers in Lothian generally. I now urge the House to finish the job and bring further help to the especially hard-pressed ratepayers of Edinburgh. I seek the House's approval for the report.

1.31 am

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): I pay tribute to my hon. Friends the Members for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths), for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish) and for East Kilbride (Mr. Ingram) for their excellent maiden speeches. All of them showed a great knowledge of their subject and delivered their speeches fluently. It was a good thing that those three speeches, at least, displayed a knowledge of local government, and a recent knowledge at that.

The Conservative Benches boast no such recent knowledge of local government — in fact, they boast practically no knowledge of local government. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) has never served in local government. It is one of the few things that he does not claim to have done; there are not many. I assume that the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) is the statutory Scottish Conservative Back Bencher in this debate on Edinburgh. They have obviously been allocated one order each. I know that the hon. Gentleman was a member of the London borough of Bromley, which of course gives him an extensive working knowledge of local government in Scotland. I accept that the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) was a long-serving member of a council, although his experience ceased 20 years ago, which may impair his knowledge slightly.

Of course, the two Conservative Members who have some knowledge of Edinburgh district council, and Edinburgh corporation, as it used to be, have sat silent on the Front Benches. One might have thought that one of the two Conservative members who at one time served as local councillors in Edinburgh would have introduced the report. It would have made some sense. I accept that the Edinburgh report is perhaps rather lowly for the Secretary of State; it may be beneath him to take on such a minor task. Furthermore, it is right that he should not have introduced the debate. He would have had to declare an interest because his rates will be cut as a result of the order and he will be better off financially. Perhaps it would have been better, therefore, had the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton) made his debut as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State on this report.

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Rifkind): He is a ratepayer, too.

Mr. Maxton: I am interested to hear that, because it means that the hon. Gentleman has two homes. My hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) always boasts about the fact that the hon. Gentleman is one of his constituents.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): One of his flock.

Mr. Maxton: Yes, one of his flock.

Instead, we had the hon. Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Mr. Lang) reading from a brief. If he is going to read from badly written brief, he would do better to leave out the rhetorical flourishes, or ask his advisers to do so, and to stick to facts. It would be better to deliver the brief in some style, but the hon. Gentleman failed dismally to do that.

We come to the third of the motions. I want to make the point which has been made on the others. We have come from considering Scotland as a whole, to the region and now to the district, but the argument is true of all three. The Government have no mandate and no democratic right to impose these measures on Scotland, Lothian region and Edinburgh district.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Nonsense.

Mr. Maxton: The hon. Gentleman has made his speech. Perhaps he will make another explaining why — [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] My hon. Friends are right, we do not want another. I am sure that the Secretary of State in particular does not want yet another attack on him for the way in which he has handled Scottish business. [AN HON. MEMBER: "Where is Teddy?"] — That is right. Bring back my predecessor, whom the hon. Member for Tayside, North praised so much in his recent article in the *Glasgow Herald*. The only seat he lost was his own. That was the great success story. I remember him saying to me that the Scottish Tories would get the result they wanted — they would win seats in 1979 and lose Cathcart.

The Government have no mandate in Edinburgh to carry out these provisions. Let us look at the facts on the elections in Edinburgh. The citizens voted for a majority Labour-controlled authority in 1984, for the first time in Edinburgh's history. In 1986, in the regional elections, they again voted overwhelmingly for the Labour party. Despite the fact that all these measures were laid earlier than if we had been continuing without the general election and the fact that the previous Minister with responsibility for local government in Scotland, Michael Ancram, made it clear that, if the rates were cut in Edinburgh and Lothian, the people of those areas would

vote for the Tory party in the 1987 general election, the Edinburgh people voted overwhelmingly yet again for the Labour party. Michael Ancram, who is again calling himself Michael Kerr, Earl of Ancram, laid his political career on the line of his local government ministry and, of course, on the poll tax. Despite the Scottish measures, he lost his seat to my hon. Friend the new Member for Edinburgh, South. That is the way in which the people of Edinburgh, Lothian and Scotland have talked to the Government.

I say to the hon. Member for Tayside, North, yes, in terms of what is a Scottish Office, there is a Scottish mandate. We are dealing with Scottish legislation. If the hon. Gentleman seriously believes that there is no Scottish mandate and no separate Scottish identity within the House of Commons, why is he here tonight talking about Scottish affairs and why does he not argue convincingly, as I am sure he would like to do, that the Scottish Office should be abolished, that all separate Scottish legislation should be abolished and that we should have single United Kingdom Departments? The hon. Gentleman does not argue that because he knows that every Scottish Conservative Member would be wiped out in the next general election. That may well happen anyway, but it would certainly happen in those circumstances.

Edinburgh has got a good case. It is different, and that should be taken into account when we look at the report. It is the capital city. Despite the Borrell collection, it has more tourist attractions within its boundaries than any other part of Scotland. People flock to it. It is right that we expect the district council of a capital city that is a major tourist attraction to ensure that the streets are clean, that it is properly looked after and that if tourists go into restaurants, cafes and shops they can expect environment and health departments to do their jobs properly and to have inspected such premises. Tourists expect that — all of us expect that.

Conservative Members made great play of the fact that Edinburgh is a major financial sector, yet they will make cuts and ensure that Edinburgh becomes a less attractive place for people to visit, whether they be business men or tourists. That is what they are doing. Yet the Minister, in that badly-read brief, failed to answer the question that my hon. Friends the Members for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) and for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) made in earlier speeches; if Conservative Members genuinely believe that there is a need to cut the level of money in Edinburgh, what is it that they want Edinburgh district council to cut? Which services or areas have to go? Will it be in the constituency of Pentlands that there will be cuts? If the Minister is to force through measures such as this, he has to take responsibility for the services that will go as a result. I know that the Secretary of State for Scotland and the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West know that once services are cut and are declining, they will be the first to go whingeing to their constituents saying that it is all the fault of the Edinburgh district council and of Lothian region and that it has nothing to do with them. They are totally and utterly irresponsible in the way in which they handle local government in Scotland.

The time has come when we should no longer have a Conservative Government handling local government in Scotland. The time has come when that responsibility, as with everything else relating to Scotland, should be transferred to a Scottish assembly. Tonight shows yet again the need for that Scottish assembly. I ask my hon. Friends to vote against this report, as they have against the order and the other report tonight.

1.42 am

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): I agree with the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) about one thing, and one thing only, and that is about congratulating the three Labour Members who made their maiden speeches.

Tonight's debate was widely advertised as a massive labour onslaught on the Government. But what happened in the last Division? The Government's majority went up from 35 to 81. The Labour Members were persuasive in the last debate — they persuaded about 40 of their friends to go home to bed. That is the level of this great assault on the Government.

Mr. Home Robertson: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Stewart: No, not yet. The hon. Member for Cathcart has just made an interesting speech about the mandate. It will be a speech that will live to haunt the Labour party because he has now committed the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Cabinet to every word that he said. There is only one mandate, and that is the mandate of the Government of the United Kingdom to win a vote of confidence in the House of Commons. If the hon. Members for Cathcart and for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) do not believe that, they should be honest about their convictions and join the Scottish National party.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): Where does this mandate come from?

Mr. Stewart: The mandate comes from the House of Commons of the United Kingdom. I am glad to see that the hon. Member is wearing his St. Andrew's university tie. I am not criticising his position on the mandate, and never have. The Labour party's position in regard to the mandate is at issue.

I represent a constituency that has two district councils: the district council of Eastwood and that of Renfrew. When I mentioned earlier that I represented Eastwood, the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) accused me of being parochial. It is not parochial to represent one's constituency. It is the first right and duty of hon. Members. Of course, I live in the Glasgow district council area. Many questions may be raised about aspects of the policies that are pursued by the Glasgow district council. I live close to my constituency.

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): Suffering along with the people.

Mr. Stewart: That is interesting. I suggest that the hon. Gentleman persuades his spokesman of that theory. The hon. Member for Cathcart does not live in Glasgow.

There is a clear difference between the policies of Glasgow district council, which is a Labour council, and Edinburgh district council. There is no doubt that Edinburgh has pursued a deliberate policy of confrontation. That is clearly shown by the planned expenditure of 29·3 per cent. above relative expenditure, and, indeed, by the fact that the council is planning for a real growth in expenditure of 14·5 per cent. The Conservative opposition group in our district has proposed a budget that is within the guidelines. It is a budget that would not mean

[Mr. Stewart]

widespread job losses, although in a mood of profound common sense, it has recommended that what is called the women's committee be disbanded. There is no doubt also, if ones looks from the west of Scotland to the policies that are pursued by Edinburgh district, that not only in terms of overall figures, but from individual example after example, one can see justification for the report. It contains some large items of expenditure and some small ones.

My hon. Friends will be interested to know that, among the other jobs for the boys that have been put forward by Edinburgh district and some residents, is a job for a writer in residence. There are also proposals to employ a bannermaker in residence in Edinburgh. We all know what the banners will say.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): The hon. Gentleman referred to jobs for the boys. Will he be specific about the matter to which he is referring?

Mr. Stewart: I have specifically referred to the creation of individual appointments, and I shall go on. [AN HON. MEMBER: "List them."] I shall give some other examples. The Labour administration has allocated ratepayers' money in support of what is called the local authority period of action against apartheid. What does that have to do with local government in Scotland? The council's financial commitment has included the production of posters, a photographic exhibition, the costs associated with having an African National Congress speaker at a council meeting, showing a free film for three days, and a guarantee against loss for a concert in the Usher hall. There are proposals for a museum of trade union and Labour history, and the shambles about the canopy in Princes street gardens. It cost £5,000 to take it down, and another £5,000 to put it up again.

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber) *rose*——

Mr. Stewart: The hon. Gentleman has already spoken twice tonight. I am anxious to hear arguments from some other Opposition Members. Edinburgh has the ultimate symbol of the Socialist world of nonsense—a women's committee which wastes ratepayers' money sending out a glossy brochure explaining its work and its so-called achievements. Since the Labour administration took control, the direct labour organisation in Edinburgh has had a rise which can be described as meteoric.

Those are individual examples, but the Labour administration has pressed on with its budget proposals in Edinburgh, having been warned by the council officers that they were likely to be regarded as excessive and unreasonable and could lead to the council being unable to meet contractual commitments following action by the Secretary of State. The council officers further warned that the act of deliberately entering into further obligations in the knowledge of the fact might amount to an act of fraud on the part of councillors and council officers. The source of that information is the *Glasgow Herald* of 6 March.

That is the background to Edinburgh district council. I am proud to represent a sensible and prudent district council in Eastwood. It is in the interests of local government in Scotland that the House should support this report.

1.51 am

Mr. Ron Brown (Leith): This is a very important night for all of us, and when we see the Secretary of State and his minions here we know that we are speaking about the colonial service when we discuss Scotland. We talk about two nations, about the haves and have-nots and obviously about politics. It is a question of them and us. That is certainly true of Edinburgh.

Apart from the silly nonsense that it talked by Conservative Members, if we consider the real issues we realise that Edinburgh is not a high spender. It is a very important and bourgeois city, not just in Scottish terms but worldwide. Edinburgh's councillors have issued a statement which even Conservative Members will have read. They will have met the councillors.

The statement reads:

"As the Capital City of Scotland and an international centre, the Council's services have to be provided in a wider context. Much has been made recently of the City's failure to grasp the opportunities which are now being so actively pursued elsewhere. It is essential that the Council should provide and maintain the highest standards of environment and facilities for the City in its role as the capital of Scotland; as a domestic and business community; as an international cultural venue; as a financial centre and tourist attraction and as the urban centre of East Central Scotland."

The council believes that the Secretary of State has not paid sufficient attention to those factors. Similarly, not enough account has been taken of the policy of the previous Administration of applying insufficient resources to service provision despite a prosperous exterior in Edinburgh. The councillors state their case, but it is clear that the ratepayers and taxpayers have a case to make. They feel strongly about what is happening in Scotland and in Edinburgh. If anyone was wondering about it, Leith is part of Edinburgh. The people of Edinburgh deserve better services and a better deal. They deserve value for money.

Conservative Members should visit Edinburgh, and not regard it simply as somewhere beyond Watford. They should visit it and speak to the people there. We have heard a lot tonight about value for money and about Joe Public. It is clear that tonight the Government are arguing the case for taking back the gains of the past. Labour Governments have at least made the case for creating a social wage and accept that workers cannot simply be labelled as workers. Labour Governments have sought to improve the standard of living and to move forward. It is right to impress on our people the fact that their values are important.

Of course, Conservative Members will say differently. They will say that that is entirely alien to their ideas. Conservative Members will resuscitate the ideas of the past and say, as they have repeatedly said, that we should have guns before butter and missiles before health. Indeed, the Government are themselves a reactionary regime. They want to spend much more on arms. There will be Trident, but there will not be democracy because the Government are clearly not interested in democracy or in providing services. They are interested only in themselves and in their own class interests.

Democracy is elastic, not to be run on a shoestring. It is there to be exploited and to be taken advantage of. I know that the commandants, or Gauletiers, will smile, laugh and joke and say that they have a mandate in Lothian, Edinburgh and Scotland. They will say that they have strength. Indeed, they have tremendous strength

because they can fix the Select Committees and the Grand Committees. They can do many things, including the ritual dance. Perhaps we shall perform it and dance down the stairs and vote with them. The Government can do many things but we shall lose the vote although we have 50 Scottish Members to reflect Scottish opinion.

The system here is unfair, corrupt, inefficient and dangerous. It is unfair because wealth is concentrated in decreasingly few hands. It is corrupt and I think of the Guinness family, all sorts of insider trading and the inefficiency of so-called British enterprise which produces fewer and fewer goods. An almighty deficit is looming towards the Government. Obviously, that is dangerous. The Government's only investment is not in local or national government, but in the arms race. That is certainly true. Bit by bit it is true. The Government can go to war to win all sorts of elections and they may have won the Falklands war, but they have not won an election in Scotland. They have not conned the people of Scotland. They may decide to regenerate the class war and, naturally, it will continue. Clearly, it is important to recognise that. When we discuss these matters in this bourgeois place we must not just listen to one point or another, but ask ourselves, "What is to be done?" My comrades and I will say, "Yes, the Government are wrong", but then we must say to ourselves "Dinna greet in yer beer." Many hon. Members will leave the Chamber, go downstairs and greet in their beer. We must say, "This Government must be challenged, but not by a Social Democratic party, mark 2", although that may unfortunately happen. All the trendies will come in to prove their point. But that will not change matters or convince people. Indeed, it will make matters worse. If we are to win the next election we must get back to basics. The Labour party must base its organisation on class politics. We can banter, but it is a question of getting back to basics. It is a question of taking politics back to street corners, factory gates, shipyards, shops, offices and hospitals. That is what we must do.

Clearly, if this is the den of thieves, as Lenin said—the Scottish TUC made this point—the triple alliance of the unions, COSLA and the Labour party can challenge the system and the Government. We are a tremendous force, but we must be organised. It is a question of bringing people together. *[Laughter.]* Such talk in this place is a laugh, a big joke, but if there is a will, we can organise people in the various towns, villages and hamlets in Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland.

Is that possible in the Labour party? I always contend that the Labour party thinks about resolutions, phraseology and words. I always believe in backing words with action. Repeatedly we have the opportunity to organise and fight back. That is the important thing. The Opposition may laugh, but that is their worry.

Hon. Members: The hon. Gentleman is part of the Opposition.

Mr. Brown: Is the Conservative party the opposition? Some people would say different.

In Scotland we will argue for an assembly. However that means nothing without Socialist policies. At the end of the day we need Socialist policies to take over the commanding heights of the economy. What is local government without organisation and without Socialist policies? We may have a banana republic, but that will not solve the problems. We need Socialist policies in Scotland, England or where ever. That is why we need Scottish, Irish, Welsh and English workers to join together. We need to organise.

We can laugh and joke and it is a great night for that. It is the end of term at the English public school. However, back home, in the real world, people will not accept the phrase "Class dismissed". We must organise and fight back. That will happen. People should not be fooled.

Consider the history of the Scottish working class and especially the role of John Maclean. Maclean made it clear that Parliament is, in many respects irrelevant. Whatever our jokes and fun, it is a question of organisation and fighting back. The working class must challenge this and other Governments. The unemployed and employed will fight together. Democracy will prevail, but good democracy cannot prevail unless the people outside fight back. We shall encourage that fight.

2.7 am

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): The speech by the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown) was thought-provoking. On the Conservative Benches it certainly provoked the thought that the only chap who understood what was being said was the hon. Member for Leith. Looking at the hon. Gentleman's colleagues it is clear that even they, try as hard as they might, could not find it in themselves to support much of his speech. That lack of support might possibly be due to the fact that, in common with my hon. Friends, the Opposition could not follow the hon. Gentleman's rambles.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): Some of us listened to the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown). That speech may not have been remarkable for its clarity, but it was remarkable for its care and concern about the real issues.

Mr. Walker: If the hon. Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) believes that the only people who care about Scotland are those who ramble, he does a great disservice to his Front Bench.

Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross) *rose*——

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): Here he is—the president of the Ramblers Association.

Mr. Fairbairn: Does my hon. Friend appreciate that one reason why the actor who just intervened was capable of appreciating the speech of the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown) was that he walked in four fifths of the way through?

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Walker: I can give way to only one hon. Member at a time.

Mr. Faulds: We do not expect the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn) always to be terribly clear about what is going on. He has moments of temporary—sometimes near permanent—amnesia. He is wrong. I was here at the beginning of the speech. I went out for reasons that I shall not explain. We all have the call of nature—even the hon. Gentleman. He perhaps, more often than most. I came back and listened to the rest of the speech. I heard most of it. I wish the hon. and learned Gentleman would occasionally get things right.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. Hon. Members have enjoyed the pleasant interlude, but let us return to the debate.

Mr. Walker: I am at a loss to understand the intervention by the hon. Member for Warley, East. Anyone who had listened to all of the speech by the hon. Member for Leith would realise that it is not unreasonable for me to say that he rambled a bit. I never suggested that Opposition Members do not care. However, sometimes they care about the wrong things in the wrong way and sometimes they do not understand that to Government Members, caring means doing that which is right for all of the people. The hon. Member for Leith has had his opportunity to ramble —

Mr. Ron Brown: What I object to is the class interest of Conservative Members which destroys living standards, makes people unemployed and has many other unfortunate features. In a humorous way, the hon. Member suggests that what I say should be challenged. If he would understand reality and try to do something about it, I would listen. But he is such a Thatcherite that there is no question of his accepting humanity. Humanity is for our side, not his.

Mr. Walker: The hon. Gentleman made a lengthy interjection. When he reads what he said in *Hansard* he will realise how wrong he is. Does he not realise that we have representatives from all walks of life? We represent every sector in the community. We represent every walk of life; we represent every socio-economic group. We find it offensive that the hon. Member for Leith thinks that he is the only one who understands the aspirations of ordinary working people. That is bunkum and nonsense. To suggest that because we want to do things differently, we do not care or do not understand, is to bring debate in the Chamber to the lowest level.

I now refer to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton). I have been trying hard to get to him, because again he came up with the business of the mandate. If he ever aspires to be a member of a Government and sit on the Government Benches, he must think carefully about what he is saying. If he is saying that if any part of the United Kingdom, whether it be Scotland, England, Wales or Northern Ireland, returns a preponderance of hon. Members of one party it can somehow declare that there is no mandate, he must recognise that he is denying the right of himself and his party ever to sit on the Government Benches.

I know that that is not the aspiration of most of those who want to sit on the Government Front Bench. They would like to form the Government. When they do so and introduce orders of the type that they judge are necessary to operate their policies, they will expect support from all the members of their party so that they can get their measures through. We in the Conservative party understand that. It is time that the hon. Member for Cathcart realised that he must be sure of exactly what he is doing on behalf of his party and of the commitments that he is entering into, because he speaks from the Front Bench on behalf of his party

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth): Does my hon. Friend accept that so many English, Scottish and Welsh Members are present in the House of Commons as we approach 3 am because we care about Edinburgh? We care that the taxpayers of the United Kingdom are having to pick up the bill. We care that the ratepayers of Edinburgh are having to pick up the bill. That is why we are prepared to stay here at Westminster into the small hours of the morning, to fight against the Left-wing council in Edinburgh.

Mr. Walker: I thank my hon. Friend for that helpful intervention. There is no doubt that it is because we care that we are all here. It may be that the reasons for caring are different — often they are — but no one can deny that we are here because we care. Perhaps some of us are here because Government or Labour Whips may not take kindly to our absence. Others, such as myself, are here because we feel that we must make a contribution to this important debate and say what we believe to be essential. Much of our debate tonight has concentrated

Mr. Canavan: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Walker: I am always delighted to give way to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Canavan: The hon. Gentleman is making great play of the United Kingdom mandate. I suppose that the Tory definition of the United Kingdom is a voluntary union between what was originally four nations, but that is nonsense, because the people of Scotland were never democratically consulted about the union in the first place. At the general election, 76 per cent. of the people of Scotland voted for parties that were committed to set up a Scottish assembly or parliament of one form or another. Does the hon. Gentleman accept that the people of Scotland, like those of any of the nations of the world, are entitled to as much self determination as they want, and even to disunite this Parliament if it comes to the crunch?

Mr. Walker: I understand that the hon. Gentleman used to be a mathematics teacher. If he had been a history teacher he could not have told his pupils about modern history; otherwise he would have had great difficulty explaining to them how Labour Governments have governed the country since 1945 without a majority in England. Whatever the hon. Gentleman thinks, every hon. Member who stood for election — including members of the Scottish National party — did so to the unitary Parliament. The difference between Scottish National party members and Labour party members is that the former have never made any secret of their desire; at least, that is honest. The hon. Gentleman wants to have his cake and eat it. He cannot come to the House when a Labour Government have a majority in the United Kingdom Parliament and say that they will govern on Labour party lines —

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. There has been a number of incidental references to these matters in nearly every speech, but the hon. Gentleman is now straying well away from the report. He must address his remarks to the report concerning Edinburgh.

Mr. Walker: I had no intention of going into that area. I was replying directly to an intervention. If you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, read the debate tomorrow, you will see that the suggestion was that the Government had no mandate to introduce the report tonight. I was merely drawing attention to the fact that many reports passed through Parliament in the past. Labour Governments that

put through reports relating to England were in exactly the same position with regard to a mandate as the Government are tonight. There is no way in which—

Mr. Fairbairn: It is suggested that there was no mandate for the Act of Union. Were the Canavans about in Scotland at the time of the Act of Union to take part in such a matter?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We are not discussing the Act of Union. We are discussing a report that concerns Edinburgh, and I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will address himself to that.

Mr. Walker: We all hope that the report relating to Edinburgh district council will be the last of its kind that we shall ever have to face in this Parliament, because this is the third successive time that this has occurred with Edinburgh district council. That cannot be good for it or for this Parliament. We hope that the community charge will make people think carefully and clearly, knowing as they do, that they will have to pay for the expenditure for which they vote.

One of the reasons for the noises that we hear from the Opposition against what will happen in the future—as against what is happening tonight—is that they know that the community charge will be a wholly different ball game at local government level. No more will Edinburgh district council spend, and propose to spend—had not the report been brought in—ratepayers' and taxpayers' money on a basis that is judged by central Government to be wholly unacceptable. We must recognise that the laws of this country are made in this House and in another place. We are a United Kingdom.

Mr. Canavan: Four countries are represented here.

Mr. Walker: If the hon. Gentleman is suggesting that the House does not pass legislation for a country of which we are both proud to be members, we will just have to disagree, as we so often do. It is in this House and the other place that legislation which affects Edinburgh and Scotland is passed. It is not made in Edinburgh.

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When will the hon. Gentleman start to talk about Edinburgh's rate cut?

Mr. Walker: I have tried to talk about Edinburgh, but I have had to respond to Opposition Members' interventions. The hon. Lady will learn that this is a Chamber for debate, and the essence of debate is response to what the other side of the House says.

Edinburgh council has complained that it has no reserves on which to draw and that it is unable to borrow to finance its planned expenditure. It claims that those factors have contributed to its planned rate increase. Anyone who studies the matter knows that Edinburgh's creative accounting and its choice to live now and pay later has caught up with it.

No Government would allow what has been going on in Edinburgh to continue. This is the third time that a problem has arisen. Nor is it as though the council's additional expenditure is on services. It has indulged in what one might call odd activities. It decided, as my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) said, to have an artist in residence.

Mr. Canavan: What is wrong with that?

Mr. Walker: There we are. I am asked what is wrong with that. It is claimed that priority areas of housing are starved of resources.

Mr. Canavan: The Queen has a poet laureate.

Mr. Walker: Nor do I know what the writer in residence will do. I am sure that the people of Edinburgh who have dampness in their houses will find it difficult to understand what a writer in residence, at a salary of about £8,000, will do for them. My hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood mentioned the action against apartheid. Why should a council that is allegedly strapped for cash spend £7,000 on that, especially when it has been warned by its own legal officers that that is likely to be regarded as excessive and unreasonable expenditure, thus leading to confrontation with the Secretary of State.

Council officers also warned that entering into other obligations might be construed as an act of fraud by councillors. That is serious. It was reported in the *Glasgow Herald*, to which the hon. Member for Cathcart referred, so it must be important, although it is not the most widely read paper in my constituency. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Warley, East who, I gather, treads the boards, seems to be feeling like treading them again. I can hear his loud voice from the back.

There can be no doubt that any Parliament sitting at 2.30 am to debate whether it is wise to take action against Edinburgh district council would realise that there is something seriously wrong with the way in which we finance and support local authorities. I am happy to support the Government, because I know that when we have the community charge and people consider how to vote in local elections, we shall never again be faced with such a motion.

2.30 am

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): As a new Member, I think that the events of the past hour have been a disgrace, an embarrassment and a pathetic farce in the name of democracy.

If the Tories on the Government Front Bench think that they will be able to run the affairs of Scotland with the aid of the motley crew of unemployables that we have listened to tonight, they have another think coming. The hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) said that there is only one mandate. There is the voice of the obscurantist and the reactionary. If the hon. Gentleman believes that what we have been hearing is the one mandate that matters in Scotland, he also has another think coming.

Mr. Julian Brazier (Canterbury): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Wilson: No. I will not give way. We have listened to quite enough nonsense already.

We are not talking about the idiotic debating points made by halfwits from Perth over the past hour and a half; we are talking about the living standards of the people of Edinburgh. We are talking about poor people, about housing conditions and about the fundamentals of democracy. When I hear this alleged democratic debating Chamber reduced to the trivia and idiocies of Conservative Members, I object, not just as a Scot and a Socialist, but as a democrat.

We are talking about democracy and about the Conservative party which has the grossest and utmost contempt for the ballot box—unless it gives an

[Mr. Wilson]

acceptable answer. Tories despise the democratic outcome, yet prate about democracy in debates such as this. We are talking about the centralisation of decision-making and the taking of power from local authorities. I do not believe that that centralisation is even in the Tory tradition. It is in an anti-democratic tradition in which the ballot box becomes the tool of authoritarianism rather than the master of those who temporarily hold power.

I do not believe for a moment that there is any mandate for what has been done to Lothian and Edinburgh. If anyone in this United Kingdom believes that there is only one mandate—the mandate of the House of Commons—and ignores every other mandate at every other level of government and ignores the different dimensions of the United Kingdom, he is playing with fire.

When clowns such as the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) and drunks such as the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn)—

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. That is unparliamentary language and I must ask the hon. Member to withdraw that word.

Mr. Wilson: I withdraw the word.

The contempt with which the affairs of Edinburgh and Lothian have been treated tonight by Conservative Members is beyond forgiveness. I hope that *Hansard* will be read more widely than usual in Scotland over the next few days, because the speeches of Tory Members have been a disgrace and an affront to democracy.

Some people believe that the only mandate in Britain comes from the election of a central Government and that every other dimension of democracy can be ignored. The devastation that the Conservatives leave behind will remain long after they have been consigned to the ash pit of political life. They will leave behind them devastation if they undo the work of 280 years; if they undo the idea of the United Kingdom as a progressive force. If they are blind and obscurantist and refuse to accept the verdict of 11 June and refuse even to accept that there are different dimensions to the verdict of 11 June they will commit terrible acts of ignorance and stupidity. The glib lawyers on the Government Front Bench may laugh and sneer and enjoy the passing moment, but that has a legacy and it will be paid.

I think I know why Edinburgh is chosen for these motions and this treatment. It is chosen because the Scottish Tories believe that Edinburgh and Lothian should be theirs. They think that this is a precinct within which they should have divine rule. They despise the fact that the electorate through the ballot box, which the Opposition respect, have given another verdict. The people who voted for Labour councils in these areas are to be punished.

There is an odd relationship between the right hon. and learned Member for Edinburgh, Pentlands (Mr. Rifkind) and the Mekon of Edinburgh politics, Mr. Brian Meek. I should like to quote from an article in the *Glasgow Herald*. Mr. Meek deals in hagiography of a very unusual kind which, by comparison, makes Uriah Heep seem like an ascerbic critic. Writing about the right hon. and learned Gentleman's election campaign, he says:

"It starts to go horribly wrong at about 3 pm sitting in the car in Braidburn. MR is using the portable telephone . . . Outside, a child stares in wonder as he recognises the man making the call . . .

The third message comes from Logan Cotter, the party's press officer and it gives details of a System Three poll in South Edinburgh to be published in the Glasgow Herald. Rifkind is stunned, knocked back in a way I have never seen before . . .

'Let's go back to the office,' he says. For half an hour we sit trying to make some sense of it all. Is it an isolated instance, is there some trend, what the hell is happening?'"

What has this got to do with the report? Wait for the next paragraph.

"'Poor Michael, (Ancram)' says Malcolm, genuinely concerned. 'This is a cruel business.' I have the feeling it is going to become even harder."

There is slightly slightly better news the next day. The article says:

"**Saturday, May 30**

NO LACK of enthusiasm at the Balerno fete . . ."

Where does Mr. Meek come into it? Mr. Meek has duties to perform. Mrs. Rifkind enters the scene. The article says:

"At 9.15 pm she has had no supper but stops the car when she sees a tiny Rifkind sticker in a top flat window. 'They should have a bigger poster.' 'Go home.' I told her. 'I'll do it.'

The Secretary of State for Scotland then spends the next two hours on his knees stapling his name onto sheets of cardboard."

Mr. Meek, Tory leader of Lothian regional council says:

"I organise people to put them on lampposts."

Then comes the denouement, the eve of poll meeting at Colinton. Mr. Meek reports that Mr. Rifkind:

"gives a brilliant impromptu performance, turning hostile questions into own goals."

Apparently in the Conservative party turning hostile questions into own goals is a virtue. Now we come to the crunch, and this is very relevant to the report.

"Not for the first time"

writes Mr. Meek,

"I am genuinely proud of this young man whom I encouraged to come into politics."

I suggest that in the vendetta that is being conducted against Lothian and Edinburgh on behalf of the Conservative party, debts are being repaid. The Edinburgh Tories are being shored up in this place in an undemocratic manner by MR, the man on the portable telephone who is lauded in the article. At the expense of poor people, decent people and democratic people in Edinburgh and Lothian, a vicious political campaign is being waged without any regard for their best interests.

An apology for democracy is before the House, and the interests of our people can be swept aside with sneers, gibes and laughter, along with all the clowning and buffoonery that we have seen over the past few hours. At least Mr. Meek had the honesty to acknowledge the outcome of the general election in Scotland. After the Secretary of State's great victory has been proclaimed, Mr. Meek writes:

"But other heads are rolling all over Scotland. Micky, Anna, Gerry, Alex, Albert"—

my opponent, poor old John, is not even mentioned—

"all gone, and Alex and Michael disappearing before our very eyes. I have to tell him that there is a recount at Ayr."

That was the lesson of 11 June.

The Government have introduced punitive measures against Edinburgh and Lothian. They did so on the eve of the election with a view to gaining political capital through the ballot box. Despite the mockery of democracy that we see in this place, the ballot box is still the instrument of democracy. The people of Edinburgh and of Lothian still have the right to elect local authorities, reject electoral bribes and dismiss what the Government are now doing as part of a political package. If there were decency and democracy in this place, the measure that is before us

would be rejected. If the Government continue to treat the people of Edinburgh, Lothian and Scotland generally — indeed, everywhere that did not vote Tory — with the contempt, disdain and idiocy that we have witnessed tonight, the worm will turn, and in a big way. I shall not seek to defend the Mother of Parliament when there are imbeciles on the Government Back Benches reducing the serious issues that have been under discussion to the lowest of levels.

2.43 am

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Does the Minister agree with Edinburgh district council that the expenditure per head of population in Edinburgh that is proposed for 1987-88 is substantially less than that proposed for Glasgow? Edinburgh's 1987-88 expenditure per head will be £110·83, which will be less than the £117·30 that Glasgow was spending per head in 1978-79. Is that true or is it not?

Two of the five comparators, Glasgow and Dundee, have rate poundages that are substantially greater than Edinburgh's declared rate. Edinburgh is 19p, and after selective action that comes to 16·2p. Glasgow is 27·5p and Dundee is 22p. I ask the Minister to check with those who occupy the Box, who are experts in these matters, whether those figures are true or false.

Edinburgh is criticised for increasing staff levels, but the number of staff per head of population is less than in any of the comparators. The figures are as follows: Edinburgh, 11·1; Dundee, 16·4; Aberdeen, 14·2; Falkirk, 12·6; Glasgow, 17·5; and Carrick, 12·3. I represent south Queensferry, which is part of the Edinburgh district. The manner in which Edinburgh district council and its officials have dealt with difficult matters such as housing and what has happened over VAT 69 and the reconstruction work has impressed me greatly. I do not say that in a partisan spirit.

It is claimed in addition that Edinburgh's 1984 rate was at an artificially low base — a product of years of low spending on services. Even in 1986-87, Edinburgh's rate was lower than that of 24 other district councils in Scotland. Do the Government accept that figure? With a low base rate poundage, any increase is bound to sound exaggerated in percentage terms. However, the average ratepayer will pay an extra 62p per week as a result of the 4·3p increase. Seventy-five per cent. of households will face an average weekly increase of less than 75p and only 11 per cent. of households — those with rateable values of over £1,200 — will pay more than £1 a week extra to the district council. Some 40·6 per cent. of the Scottish population will this year face a district rate poundage greater than or equal to that of Edinburgh.

I keep my speeches short. As on the previous motion, we are dealing with facts here. I have given the statistics that Edinburgh district council and its officials have produced. I ask the same question: are they true or false? If they are wrong, the Government should say so. If they are true, what on earth are the Government doing introducing a motion such as this?

2.47 am

Mr. Calum A. Macdonald (Western Isles): The Government argue that the motion is necessary to punish and discipline spendthrift Labour councils. I represent a constituency governed by a council that is neither spendthrift nor Labour. It is not a Labour council because it is formally non-political, and it is not spendthrift because it has kept within the guidelines imposed by the Government ever since they were introduced. In fact, it is just the kind of local authority that the Government would like Edinburgh to be.

What has been the council's reward for its double virtue? What has been the result for the Western Isles? It has been declining services, lost jobs, roads falling into disrepair, schools squeezed by lack of resources, a chronic lack of home helps and other social services and council rents which have been among the highest in Scotland for the past seven or eight years.

Things have not got better as a result of my council's following the guidelines. Every year they have got worse. The route recommended by the Government for Edinburgh district council and for Lothian regional council leads not to nirvana but to a crisis of services such as we are suffering in my constituency. That is why my constituency and the Western Isles council are standing four square with Edinburgh district council and Lothian regional council against the Government.

Lost jobs, declining services, attacks on local democracy, are all fine phrases, but what do they mean in practice for the people whom they affect? Let me give one example drawn from my constituency. I know of a brother and sister in my constituency who live together in the same house and suffer from a crippling and incurable illness. They want to live at home. They have a lively and bright interest in the croft on which they live and which they own. Much of the work is done for them by neighbours. To stay at home, they need a great deal of help and attention. During the day, they need help to look after the house and to cook meals. At night, they need help getting to bed. In the morning, they need help to get up. They need more help than even the best-meaning neighbours can provide. In short, they need social services.

There is a will and desire in the Western Isles to help this couple and couples like them. But we cannot help them because of the cuts in the social services budget, enforced by the Secretary of State for Scotland. The cuts mean that these two people are likely to have to leave the home in which they want to remain and go into institutional care. This shows that the Government's statement about community care is the humbug it is. We are talking about exactly the same principles in the motion.

If my people in the Western Isles want to help this couple and provide this service and are willing to dig into their pockets to pay for that service with their rates, how dare the Secretary of State tell them that they cannot provide it? That is not a rhetorical question. I hope that I will get an answer from the Government. I have a letter from this couple. They want to know why they cannot get the support that would allow them to stay in their home and not be forced into institutional care. The people of the Western Isles, Edinburgh district and Lothian region believe in these services because they believe in being good neighbours. It is a disgrace that the Secretary of State and the Government should interfere with their will to be good neighbours to each other.

2.51 am

Mr. Lang: With permission, Madam Deputy Speaker, I should like to reply to this interesting debate.

The issues are clear. Edinburgh is planning spending well above its guideline, its assessed need and its

[Mr. Lang]

comparators, and well above previous years. Edinburgh's rates have gone up by nearly 30 per cent. Against that background, should my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State use his power to propose a rate reduction, or should he simply stand by? Put in those terms, I believe that the question answers itself. No responsible Government could ignore overspending of this kind. It runs against the Government's overall economic policy and it has severe effects on local ratepayers. This is particularly true when one bears in mind that Edinburgh's ratepayers are blessed with a regional council which has also increased its rates by 30 per cent.

The House may be interested to hear the benefits to Edinburgh ratepayers of the reduction which we have already approved for Lothian and will, I hope, shortly approve for Edinburgh. The average domestic rate bill will fall by nearly £51, and many householders will benefit by more than that. I should have thought that the Opposition with their professed concern for local taxpayers — at least under the new system—would welcome that.

Mr. Maxton: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Lang: No, I am sorry, but I shall not give way. There are only three minutes left.

Mr. Maxton: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Lang: No, I will not. I have to reply to the debate. I am sorry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The Minister is not giving way.

Mr. Lang: For commercial and industrial ratepayers the savings will be significant. A department store in Princes street will save over £60,000 and a manufacturer in the north of the city nearly £17,000. I should have thought that the Opposition with their professed concern for jobs, would welcome that.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) referred in his opening speech to the fact that Edinburgh is unique. Certainly, it is. It is a remarkable place, but it is made unique in the context of this debate by the fact that its budget for 1987-88 is 24·7 per cent. over guideline compared with an average for districts other than Edinburgh and Clackmannan of 3.3 per cent.

Mr. Maxton: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Lang: its budget for 1987-88 is 29·3 per cent.—

Mr. Maxton *rose*—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The Minister is not giving way.

Mr. Lang: I am trying to reply to the points raised by the hon. Member for Cathcart in his opening speech. Edinburgh's budget for 1987-88 is 29·3 per cent. over assessed need compared with an average of 6·9 per cent. for districts other than Edinburgh and Clackmannan. The hon. Gentleman made much of the mandate. That argument was developed later in the debate, but I sense that the feeling of the House is that the issue has been fairly well discussed and is not strictly relevant to the subject before us, so I will not dwell on that.

The hon. Member for Cathcart asked us which services need to be cut. I point out to him that, after the action proposed by my right hon. and learned Friend, Edinburgh district will still be 3·3 per cent. above its guideline and 7·1 per cent. above its assessed need. I draw his attention to the plans that the district council has. It is not planning cuts so much as increases. It is planning an increase of £1·6 million, or 15·9 per cent., on leisure and recreation; 5·5 per cent. on cleansing; 11·6 per cent. on museums, libraries and galleries; and 7·1 per cent. on central administration —increases overall of 14·5 per cent. in volume terms. So we are not talking about cuts, we are talking about proposed increases that may not be able to go so fully ahead.

My hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) gave a number of examples of expenditure which, by no stretch of the imagination, could the House regard as essential. The hon. Member for Cathcart also referred to the special needs of Edinburgh that arise from tourism. Of course, that does create special needs, but the assessment of relative expenditure needs takes account of tourism where appropriate — for instance, assessments for refuse disposal, street cleaning, environmental health, and leisure and recreation. Despite this, Edinburgh is budgeting to spend nearly 30 per cent. over its assessed need.

It being one and a half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted Business).*

The House divided: Ayes 173, Noes 83.

Division No. 22] **[2.56 am**

AYES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Hon Peter
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*

Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Lang, Ian
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Mans, Keith
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rost, Peter
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Maclean and
Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

NOES

Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beith, A. J.
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Doran, Frank
Dunnachie, James
Eadie, Alexander
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Faulds, Andrew
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Grocott, Bruce
Henderson, Douglas
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Ingram, Adam
Johnston, Sir Russell
Kennedy, Charles
Lambie, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Michael, Alun
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Mowlam, Mrs Marjorie
Neillst, Dave
O'Neill, Martin
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter
Prescott, John
Reid, John
Robertson, George
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis
Strang, Gavin
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wilson, Brian
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Allen Adams and
Mr. Dick Douglas.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Rate Reduction (City of Edinburgh District) 1987-88 Report, a copy of which was laid before this House on 10th July, be approved.

Opren

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Garel-Jones.]*

3.7 am

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): Thalidomide was the drug disaster that devastated the lives of young children, shocked the public, and led to revolutionary changes in our approach to drug testing. Many people expressed the hope, "Never again".

Opren is another drug disaster, one that has mainly hit those at the other end of the age group—old people. Although their suffering has yet to capture the imagination of people, I believe that it will lead to an equally important revolution — this time about the methods of paying compensation for drug damage.

The battle for compensation for victims of the drug Opren highlights the cost and the strain involved in such struggles. I note the claim of Mr. Richard Bailey, the British managing director of Eli Lilly, that it is a caring, responsible pharmaceutical company which is concerned to do the right thing. I am not optimistic. This is a compay with an appalling record for integrity. The Amerian Food and Drug Adminstration, the drug watchdog, issued no fewer than 20 summonses against it, incuding one for not disclosing 26 deaths due to Opren. The company accepted fines rather than fight the charges and be publicly exposed. This is the company whose statiticians stressed that an unusually high incidence of adverse reactions among elderly people taking part in trials was not statistically significant. In fact, it was significant and, had this been recognised earlier, much suffering could have been avoided.

The Government also claim to be caring and responsible. I await action which shows their determination that British victims of Opren should get the same consideration as United States victims, who have now been paid. There are several reasons why the Government should intervene. The first is the scale and intensity of the suffering. It is doubtful that we shall ever learn the exact numbers of people who have suffered death, kidney or liver failure because of Opren. The Committee on Safety of Medicines had 332 adverses reaction reports including 77 deaths. It is generally accepted that adverse reactions to drugs are under-reported, so the actual figures will alomst certainly be higher.

Some idea of the suffering can be gleaned from this extract from a letter written to me by the son-in-law of a man who died:

> "My father-in-law died in March of 1986 from the now proven symptoms created by the administration of Opren, the miracle drug for arthritis. Among the cocktail of problems he endured for 4-5 years were respiratory problems, lung and liver deteriroration, and photosensitivity to the skin. Really his death ensured relief from those years of suffering".

Some people suffering photosensitivity cannot go out of their houses. They are prisoners in their own homes because they cannot be exposed to sunlight. They cannot cook or enjoy the warmth of a fire or even a warm bath. In tests on five healthy students, reported in the *European Journal of Rheumatology and Inflammation 1982*, two students who had taken Opren refused to continue with the planned exposure of a small patch of skin to 20 minutes in the sun because the burning pain was so intense. I hope that, in addition to noting this information, the Government will ensure that urgent medical research into photosensitivity is carried out.

The Government are responsible for helping all sick and disabled people, but they have a particular responsibility for any drug-induced disability because it is Government procedures which determine the availability of particular medical drugs.

The relationship between the drug, consumer and manufacturer is unique. The product determines whether he or she lives or dies, is well or ill, yet the consumer swallows it with virtually no knowledge of it. He is guided by his general practitioner who is guided by the Committee on the Safety of Medicines.

Some Ministers, such as the right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe (Mr. Clarke), try to parody critics of damaging drugs, such as myself, and imply that we demand 100 per cent. safety. I realise that that is impossible. Nevertheless, there is a vital difference between unpredictable side effects which catch out all the world's experts, and side effects which damage patients in only one or two countries, while others with more vigilant drug regulation bodies stay unharmed.

The British Government, through the CSM, licensed Opren at a time when the United States watchdog, the Food and Drug Administration, was turning it down. Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden and the Benelux countries all rejected Opren. Britain got it wrong—with terrible consequences. The Government have a clear moral responsibility to make amends.

The CSM accepted carcinogenicity tests that were rightly refused by the regulatory bodies in other countries. It licensed Opren on the basis of seriously flawed clinical trials which contained too few people taking the relevant dose and for too short a time. It accepted evidence from the company on sensitivity to the sun based on trials which took place in winter or on hospital patients not exposed to the sun. No doubt it is these issues among others which have led to the compensation settlements with United States claimants and to the approaches made to some selected British victims.

I realise that the Government cannot instruct the company on how it should pay compensation. But this horrendous affair has focused attention on the question of compensation. I have no doubt that reputable drug companies — and even the Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry—are concerned that Eli Lilly is not following the excellent example of ICI after the Eraldin disaster.

When there is a comprehensive drug disaster, there must be a comprehensive compensation scheme. A schedule of payments related to the degree of disability must be agreed.

Those damaged most should receive most, but no legitimate claimant should be overlooked. Once the schedule is agreed, it would be necessary for a claimant to argue that the damage was due to a particular drug. That is how the Eraldin scheme operated and, generally, it worked well.

This type of proposal was well on the way to being accepted by Eli Lilly in the spring of this year, but at the last moment there were instructions to call off the deal. No doubt the company calculated that the legal ruling on costs would lead to many claimants backing off. Its calculation was correct, but it had not counted on the remarkable generosity and public spirit of Mr. Bradman. I warmly

applaud his kindness and concern, and I pay warm tribute to the ability and persistence of Miss Kathleen Grasham, without whom this whole campaign could not have survived.

I want to ask the Minister if she accepts the need for meeting a comprehensive disaster with a comprehensive solution and, if so, whether she will encourage the company to offer the same compensation for British citizens as has been given to United States ones.

If the company rejects this approach, the Government should sponsor a boycott of all Eli Lilly's products where alternatives are available. They should refuse to use such products in the NHS and find sources elsewhere. In this way they would be showing that they were determined to defend the interests of British claimants and that they would not allow a powerful multinational company to use its muscle to deny justice.

3.19 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): May I first offer the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) the usual courtesies on his success in the ballot.

This debate concerns the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug—NSAID for short—Opren. The last occasion that Opren was debated in the House was in January 1983. Hon. Members might find it helpful if I begin with a brief history of the drug to help place the current debate in perspective.

In 1974, the Secretary of State and the Ministers who comprise the licensing authority, sought the advice of the Committee on Safety of Medicines on an application by Lilly Industries Ltd. for a clinical trial certificate for Opren. This was to enable trials to take place on the drug as a treatment for rheumatoid arthritis. From 1974 onwards, an increasing number of clinical trials on the drug were authorised and in 1977 the company applied for a product licence to sell and supply the drug. The CSM considered all the evidence available at the time and called for more information on a number of side effects. On receipt of this further information, the CSM advised the licensing authority that a licence should be granted and a licence was accordingly granted in March 1980. The licence and its accompanying data sheet, which was to be made available to all medical and dental practitioners to see, included data on the product approved by the Committee covering contra-indications, warnings and precautions.

During its two years of marketing, Opren, like most NSAIDs, brought welcome relief to a large number of people who suffer from osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. However, all NSAIDs are quite toxic, which is why most are available only on prescription. The most notable exception is aspirin.

Continued monitoring of adverse reaction reports takes place to ensure that only drugs whose efficacy in relation to safety are considered to be acceptable by the CSM and licensing authority remain licensed. The CSM has a statutory duty to promote the collection and investigation of information relating to adverse reactions, known as the yellow card system. Following consideration of the evidence on adverse reactions by the CSM, the licensing authority suspended the licence for Opren in July 1982 and the company withdrew the product from the world market in August 1982 and surrendered its United Kingdom licence. Opren was withdrawn because the benefit risk ratio was considered unacceptable by the CSM and the licensing authority.

The decision to suspend the licence for Opren was controversial. Many doctors felt that it should not have been withdrawn as many patients derived benefit from it; on the other hand, others argued that it should have been withdrawn earlier.

In the debate in 1983, referred to by the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South, my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Rushcliffe (Mr. Clarke), then Minister for Health, expressed his sympathy for all those people who felt they had suffered after taking Opren and for the relatives of those who had died. I do, of course, repeat those sentiments, which the whole House will share. However, because of the current High Court actions, I am advised that it would be inappropriate for me, as a representative of the licensing authority, to go into any more detail at this stage about the effectiveness of the monitoring of the drug and the reasons behind the decision to withdraw it.

I turn now to the current litigation but must repeat that my legal advice is that it would be wrong for me, as a representative of the licensing authority joined in this action, to make any comments today which might prejudice the outcome of the case. Both the licensing authority, which consists of the Health and Agriculture Ministers, and the Committee on Safety of Medicines, which is one of a number of statutory committees established under the Medicines Act 1968 and advises the licensing authority on the safety, quality and efficacy of new medicinal products, have been joined with Lilly, the manufacturers of the drug, as defendants in an action for negligence. These actions have been brought by a large number of plaintiffs—our records show these to be in excess of 1,300—who alleged that they or their deceased relatives have been damaged as a result of Opren treatment. The Opren Action Committee is co-ordinating the litigation on behalf of a large number of the plaintiffs. It was decided by the court that, because of the large number of plaintiffs, lead actions should be agreed between the parties and the question of any liability in these should be decided first. The remaining cases would be stayed until the liability issue in the lead actions had been decided.

The actions allege negligence on the part of the Government defendants, and these allegations can be roughly divided into two groups. The first is that sufficient care had not been taken in the consideration of the applications for the clinical trial certificates and the product licences. The CSM should not have advised that Opren should be licensed; the licensing authority should not have acepted that advice.

The second is that action was not taken quickly enough to remove Opren from the market in 1982. It must be stressed that on the advice of Government lawyers and counsel, all claims of negligence are denied categorically. During the debate on Opren in January 1983, referred to earlier, the Government defended the action taken by the CSM and the licensing authority. At this point I must make it clear once again that, while the Government have sympathy with the plaintiffs who allege some adverse effect caused by Opren, as a defendant in the case it would be inappropriate for me to debate the issues involved. I am a defendant in this case. The right hon. Gentleman was a Minister of the Crown and is well aware of the difficulties

[Mrs. Edwina Currie]

under which he places me on an issue which is sub judice. It is also not possible for me to speak now about any question of compensation and/or settlements relating to the Opren action, nor to comment on any settlements which may have occurred in the United States. It could be prejudicial to the proceedings if the licensing authority and the CSM, as co-defendants in this action, were to express a view on the reported activity of Lilly and the plaintiffs, or were seen to take sides or otherwise to get drawn into the current public debate. I offer my apologies but regret that I cannot be more forthcoming with the House on this occasion.

Before I close I should like to make one or two general remarks which should not be taken as applying to any particular or general aspects of the Opren case. It is most important that we should remember the enormous benefits that millions of people have gained, and continue to gain, from drug therapy. People suffering from all kinds of debilitating illnesses can now find relief thanks to treatment with medicinal products, and in many cases can be enabled to lead normal lives, which would not have been possible only a comparatively short time ago. I am an asthmatic. Common ailments such as asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure and many others can be seriously disabling and life-threatening, but a range of medicinal products for treating these conditions has been developed in recent times by the pharmaceutical industry, not least by companies based in the United Kingdom. However, the public should be aware that any medicine which can be used as an effective treatment for an ailment cannot be regarded as totally without risk, particularly in the case of a medicine available only on prescription. The advice of doctors or pharmacists should be followed whenever appropriate.

Modern drug therapy has made an enormous contribution to improving the quality of life for many people. While we all have sympathy with those who may be adversely affected on the rare occasions when something goes wrong, we must also recognise the enormous contribution to a better life made by products developed by these great industries.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-seven minutes past Three o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 21 July 1987

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

MASONIC TRUST FOR GIRLS AND BOYS BILL
Lords amendments agreed to.

ESSEX BILL *[Lords]*
Queen's Consent, on behalf of the Crown, signified.
Read the Third time, and passed, with amendments.

WHITCHURCH BRIDGE BILL
Read the Third time, and passed.

HAMPSHIRE (LYNDHURST BYPASS) BILL *[Lords]*
To be read a Second time tomorrow.

Oral Answers to Questions

EMPLOYMENT

Training Schemes

1. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of people gain a job on leaving YTS, JTS and the community programme.

The Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Norman Fowler): The latest complete figures show that of those young people who left YTS, some 61 per cent. were in employment three months after leaving and a further 14 per cent. went into further education or training. Information for those leaving the new job training scheme is not yet available. The latest survey of those leaving the community programme shows that some 60 per cent. have had at least one job within 12 months of leaving.

Mr. Bennett: In view of those extremely disappointing figures, does the Minister accept that the major scandal in this country at the moment is the skills shortage, which contrasts with the very large numbers of people who are unemployed? As YTS was in many cases used as an inefficient substitute for the old apprenticeship scheme, should we not be looking for 100 per cent. of people leaving YTS getting jobs? What will the Minister do to match the chronic skill shortages with the appalling level of unemployment, particularly among young people?

Mr. Fowler: The hon. Gentleman knows that we are developing programmes for YTS and JTS. With regard to the success of the schemes, the figures show that very substantial numbers of people coming off YTS, job training schemes and the community programme are going into employment. I would have thought that the hon. Gentleman would welcome that.

Mr. Andrew MacKay: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the proof of the pudding is in the eating and that in my constituency and elsewhere young people are taking up YTS with great enthusiasm and reporting on their success? That means that at last they have an option other than to join the dole queue. Does that not contrast with the position under the previous Labour Government, when there were very few proper training schemes? It ill behoves Opposition Members to complain about YTS.

Mr. Fowler: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. We have now reached the position where everyone has the opportunity of a YTS place. That is a major step forward that is welcomed by the public.

Mr. Leighton: Is it not the case that very few people could have obtained jobs after leaving JTS because so few people have gone on that scheme? Is it not also the case that that ill thought out plan has flopped badly and is monumentally unpopular with employers and its potential clients?

Mr. Fowler: No, I do not think that that is remotely the case. It is very sad that the TUC is not supporting the scheme. Under the old JTS, 67 per cent. went into jobs. The results for the new JTS are not yet available. However, the new JTS offers opportunities to unemployed people and I believe that the mass of the public, if not the TUC, will support the scheme.

Mr. Waller: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the cause of young people who would particularly benefit from the youth training scheme is not helped by the fact that the scheme is continually attacked by opponents of the Government? Will he ensure that it is widely known that the people who really matter — the young people themselves — have shown very clearly in surveys that they think that the training that they have received is good?

Mr. Fowler: My hon. Friend is right. All the surveys carried out by the MSC into the effectiveness of the YTS show that those who have had experience of it, as opposed to those who give their views on it, are overwhelmingly satisfied with their training and experience.

Mr. Meacher: Is not the recent Public Account's Committee's report a devastating indictment of the Government's training policies? How can the Government fill training gaps when they have abolished their main source of information on training by employers? What enforcement do the Government propose to ensure that employers carry out their training responsibilities? Above all, will the Government now repudiate their political motive in extending the JTS before the problems associated with the pilot scheme are fully resolved?

Mr. Fowler: May I first welcome my eternal shadow to his new Front-Bench job for employment. I regret that he is as way off the mark on employment as he was on the Health Service. The JTS pilot started only last autumn. The JTS is designed to provide not only good training but training leading to good vocational qualifications. The hon. Gentleman would be better employed trying to persuade the TUC to change its attitude to this scheme, which provides a tremendous opportunity for many people.

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson: Will my right hon. Friend consider the position of the community programme,

especially for those over 50? Although the community programme gives them the opportunity to make a valuable contribution to society, the probability is that, when it ends, they will become unemployed and will remain unemployed. In those circumstances, has my right hon. Friend any plans for extending the community programme?

Mr. Fowler: As my hon. Friend knows, we have plans under the community programme to give help and training to those who have been continuously unemployed for 12 months. I should like to look more carefully at the position of the over-50s — the precise point raised by my hon. Friend. I agree with his general points.

Service Industries

2. **Mr. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on regional differences in the changes in numbers employed in the service industries since 1979.

The Minister for Employment (Mr. John Cope): Since 1979 there has been an increase in service sector employment in every region except Wales and the north-west. Since 1983 employment in the service industries has increased in every region.

Mr. Thomas: Does the Minister accept that the figures for Wales over the 1979 to 1986 period are extremely disappointing? To what does the hon. Gentleman attribute the failure of the Welsh economy to increase service employment on a par with the other nations and regional economies in the United Kingdom?

Mr. Cope: The figures were disappointing, but they are improving now. That was the main point of my answer. As I hope the hon. Gentleman knows, in the past 12 months unemployment in Wales has fallen more rapidly than in any other part of Britain.

Mr. Roger King: I congratulate my hon. Friend on his new position. Does he agree that the service sector, especially tourism, is an essential growth area within some of our older cities and cities such as Birmingham, which has introduced the National Exhibition Centre, the Convention Centre and the August bank holiday super-prix, pointing the way forward for new job creation?

Mr. Cope: I agree with my hon. Friend. I am grateful to him for his good wishes — it seems popular to stop being a Whip.

Mr. Sheerman: The Minister knows that no Opposition Member decries the service sector or tourism, but the fact is that there is a regional imbalance. In most of the regions of the north, in Wales and in Scotland manufacturing jobs and opportunities have been destroyed and service jobs have not been able to make up those numbers anywhere. The greatest cause of concern for our country is this failure in the manufacturing sector. We cannot live by service jobs alone.

Mr. Cope: Of course we cannot. However, in many countries, including ours, service jobs are increasing and manufacturing jobs are declining. That was so under the Labour Government before we took office.

Labour Statistics

3. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the recent labour market statistics.

Mr. Fowler: In the last year there has been the biggest fall in unemployment since records were first kept. The seasonally-adjusted figures have fallen by almost 300,000 and unemployment is now below 3 million.

As well as the fall in unemployment there has been a growth of over 250,000 jobs between March 1986 and March 1987. Vacancies are up by 27 per cent. on a year ago, and productivity growth is at its highest for over three years.

Unemployment, then, is falling without a return to the overmanning of the past.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Has my right hon. Friend noticed that that vastly improving employment picture is being greeted with mounting dismay on the Opposition Benches? It is as though the Opposition had a vested interest in bad news. Will my right hon. Friend confirm that unemployment among the under-25s is now lower in this country than in any other Common Market country, and will he call upon Opposition Members to welcome that?

Mr. Fowler: My hon. Friend's initial point is correct. As for the unemployment rate among the under-25s, the latest European Community average — for 1986 — is 23 per cent. The United Kingdom rate at that time was 18 per cent. That must be compared with a rate of 34 per cent. in Italy, and 23 per cent. in France. In the past 12 months, unemployment among the under-25s has decreased further to 16 per cent.

Mr. Cryer: Will the Secretary of State tell us when the unemployment level will reach the figure for 1979? In this much-vaunted increase in jobs, how many are low-paid service sector jobs, and how many are in manufacturing? Is it not true that under the Tory regime our country has lost 2 million jobs in the manufacturing industry, and that the Prime Minister has destroyed more factories in our country than Hitler managed to between 1939 and 1945?

Mr. Fowler: Typically, the hon. Gentleman is wrong in virtually everything that he has said. Service jobs in this country are certainly increasing, and those jobs are real and important. As the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) sought to say a moment ago, that should surely be welcomed by every hon. Member, and I ask the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) to do that.

Mr. William Powell: Is my right hon. Friend aware that when I was first returned by the electors of Corby four years ago unemployment in that constituency stood at 8,000? Last week's unemployment figures showed that it was down to 3,900. Is that not the biggest fall in unemployment anywhere in the country, and is it not mainly the result of Government policies?

Mr. Fowler: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The crucial point is that the strength of the economy has meant unemployment coming down throughout the country. It is coming down, not just in my hon. Friend's area, but in all other regions. Some of the biggest falls have been in such areas as Wales, the west midlands and the north-west. It is about time that the Opposition welcomed that trend.

Mr. Strang: Is it a matter of concern to the Secretary of State that the distribution of job opportunities in the different regions is so unequal? For example, whereas in the south-east there are eight unemployed people for every vacancy, in Yorkshire and Humberside there are 17. Is the Government's attitude to that distribution one of laissez-faire, or do they seek to change the position?

Mr. Fowler: If the hon. Gentleman had been listening, he would have heard me say to my hon. Friend the Member for Corby (Mr. Powell) that there has been a real fall in unemployment in all regions of the United Kingdom in the last month—indeed, over the past year—and that some of the biggest falls have been in areas such as Wales, the west midlands and the north-west: in other words, in the regions where unemployment had previously been the highest. In addition, we have found that long-term unemployment has fallen by some 61,000 in the last year. That is the largest 12-month fall since records began. Moreover, unemployment has fallen faster in the past year than in any other industrialised country. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would welcome that.

YTS

4. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what measures he is taking to ensure that YTS training is of a high quality.

Mr. Cope: We are working with the Manpower Services Commission to build up the quality of training on YTS so that every trainee will be working towards a recognised vocational qualification from an appropriate examining body. From April 1988 all YTS providers will have to meet the stringent standards laid down for approved training organisations. And the training standards advisory service now provides quality audits of YTS schemes.

Mr. Mitchell: Given that in my constituency 65 per cent. of young people on YTS have graduated to full-time employment, what steps has the Minister taken to spread this good news more widely?

Mr. Cope: We do our best—so does the Manpower Services Commission—to spread the news, particularly about the quality of YTS, as much as possible. The best advertisement for YTS are those who have done it. That is the theme of the television advertising campaign that the MSC is undertaking.

Ms. Armstrong: Does the Minister recognise that there are great regional variations both in the quality of the YTS schemes on offer and in the number of young people who succeed in obtaining jobs at the end of their training, and that in the north we suffer on both counts? What will the Minister do to redress the balance and ensure that young people in the north are given the same opportunities as exist in other regions?

Mr. Cope: I am afraid that there are bound to be regional variations in everything. That is why we are having this drive to increase the quality of YTS, not only in the south, but in the north.

Mr. Oppenheim: When my hon. Friend has a moment to do so, will he look at the Labour party's 1979 election manifesto, which boasted that the then youth opportunities programme was the finest training programme in Europe? Why is it that Opposition Members thought that that was a fine training programme when its much improved successor, the YTS, is constantly whinged about?

Mr. Cope: I suppose that it was the best that they could think of in 1979, and I am sorry that they do not recognise that YTS is an improved version of it.

Mr. Sheerman: Surely the Minister knows, as we know in Yorkshire, that one gets owt for nowt? Unless we spend more money and resources on youth training, it will never make good the skills deficiencies that are emerging throughout British industry and that are preventing our manufacturing base from recovering to the extent that it should.

Mr. Cope: I referred earlier to our manufacturing base. However, we are spending £1 billion a year on YTS, which is a lot of money.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: Will my hon. Friend, who did an excellent job in his last appointment, as I am sure he will in this, ensure that one defect in the quality of YTS is remedied, namely, that if a young person is one day over the specified birth date when he enters the scheme he is kicked out of the two-year scheme after only one year in it?

Mr. Cope: Wherever we drew the line, I am afraid that there would be somebody who was one day on the wrong side of it. My hon. Friend was kind enough to raise a constituency case that drew attention to this problem. I have undertaken to look into it, and I shall do so.

Mr. Bruce: Does the Minister accept that within the nursing profession there is concern about the impact of YTS? First, it cuts across the Government's stated objective of providing more professional training within nursing. Secondly, the supervision that is required to ensure the required quality of training takes experienced nurses away from their prime job of looking after patients.

Mr. Cope: I do not think that concern about YTS coming into the National Health Service is justified. We are doing our best to introduce YTS into many parts of the public service, and that is how it should be. To improve the quality of YTS we have introduced approved training organisations and the other measures.

Tourism

5. **Mr. David Nicholson** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has on the progress of the programme for introducing a new system for signposting sites of tourist interest.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. John Lee): Signposting is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport. However, I understand that good progress is being made. Signs have been authorised for about 2,000 attractions and more are about to go up.

Mr. Nicholson: I thank my hon. Friend for his reply. I recognise the importance of these initiatives for the hope of prosperity in my constituency, in other parts of Somerset and in the inner cities. Will he describe what broad criteria are used to designate tourist interest sites on motorways? Will he and his ministerial colleagues pay attention to the desirability of attracting foreign tourists in particular to areas of the country other than the congested sites of London, Windsor and Oxford?

Mr. Lee: My hon. Friend represents a lovely part of the country; Somerset has many tourist attractions. At Easter we had a happy family holiday at the Caernarvon Arms near Dulverton, and I strongly commend that part of the country.

The criteria for signposting are set by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport. They are, first, where there are over 150,000 visitors a year; secondly, where there is adequate car parking; and, thirdly, where tourist attractions are sited within 20 miles of a motorway junction. I take the point about spreading the benefits of tourism to the many regions that are outside some of the traditional tourist spots.

Mr. Ashton: Is it not a fact that tourist areas do not need signposting? It is easy to see where they are because they are ankle-deep in litter. Is the Minister aware that it is a year since Mr. Richard Branson, the famous entrepreneur, was appointed to clear up litter, yet it has become worse? Why does he not——

Mr. Speaker: Order. What does this have to do with signposting?

Mr. Lee: The hon. Gentleman is talking nonsense. UK 2000, which is making satisfactory progress, was not set up to clear litter. With regard to the clearance of litter—I take the hon. Gentleman's point — as Minister with responsibilities for tourism I am campaigning for a spotless Britain. We could do a lot more to clear up the excess of litter. There are too many areas of this country that have too much litter, which is appalling in comparison with many other overseas tourist attractions.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It would be helpful if senior hon. Members set a good example by sticking to the question.

Mr. Mans: Will my hon. Friend give the latest estimate of the number of new jobs that have been created in the tourist industry this year and in previous years?

Hon. Members: Signposting.

Mr. Lee *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That question is miles wide of the subject.

Labour Statistics

6. **Mr. Roy Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of the reduction in the underlying unemployment figures is due to the Government's restart programme and other similar measures; and what proportion is due to an increase in the actual number of jobs available.

Mr. Fowler: It is not possible to assess separately the effects on the unemployment count of Government measures and of the increasing number of jobs that are available in the economy. Government measures, including the restart programme, are helping unemployed people to compete more effectively in the labour market and take up the new jobs that are being generated.

Mr. Hughes: Does the Secretary of State appreciate that people in Wales, in particular, are a bit fed up with the Government's claims that unemployment is falling, when they witness and experience mass unemployment all around them? Does the Secretary of State appreciate that the problem of unemployment will not be solved by shuffling people from one register to another or by fiddling the statistics? What we need is an upsurge in manufacturing industry.

Mr. Fowler: I thought that I had said earlier that one of the biggest falls in unemployment over the past 12 months was in Wales. Surely the hon. Gentleman should welcome that as being the case. The restart programme provides an entry into a number of programmes, such as the community programme, enterprise allowance and job clubs. That is serving a useful and valuable function.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: Does my right hon. Friend accept that many Conservative Members commend the expertise of the staff of his Department? It has played a valuable role in the restart programme. Not only has the programme enabled many people to find work who were finding it difficult to compete in the labour market, but it has also identified those few people who clearly have no intention of working.

Mr. Fowler: The purpose of restart, as my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) said, is to provide regular employment interviews for people who have been out of work for more than six months and to help them find a suitable job. I believe that that has been valuable. I also believe—this goes further than restart—that there is no point in seeking to pay social security payments to those people who are not genuinely unemployed.

Mr. McAllion: Will the Secretary of State accept that a reduction in the unemployment figures is not the same as finding real work for the unemployed? Will he accept that only one in every 100 of those who go on to the restart programme find real jobs? When are the Government going to start to honour the commitment they made in the 1979 election to create real and not phoney jobs for the unemployed?

Mr. Fowler: I do not accept for one moment the statistic used by the hon. Gentleman. It is based on a total misunderstanding of the position. The number of jobs has been increasing every quarter for the past four years, and 1·2 million jobs have been created since March 1983. There are over 24 million people in employment in this country. They are significant figures and they are real jobs.

Mr. Baldry: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the vast majority of those who are unemployed are unqualified and unskilled and that the vast majority of jobs available require skills and qualifications, and that the restart programme helps direct people towards training for skills? To that end, my right hon. Friend would be welcome were he to visit the skills shop in Banbury, part of the training access points initiative, where people can walk in off the street, find out what skills are required in the labour market and obtain training for those skills. It has been a great success in helping bring down the unemployment rate in north Oxfordshire.

Mr. Fowler: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Restart provides an entry to programmes such as the community programme, enterprise allowance schemes and job clubs. In that respect, it is a valuable way of bringing people back into employment.

Mr. Pike: Will the Secretary of State accept that, although the restart scheme may be of help to some of the long-term unemployed, it does not create any additional

new jobs? He may take credit for the reduction of unemployment levels at present, but is that not outrageous in view of the fact that the Government have created the highest level of unemployment and then sit there confidently and claim that they are reducing it, when it is still at an unacceptable level?

Mr. Fowler: Unemployment is coming down and that is shown not just in the figures for the past month but for the past 12 months. That trend is unmistakable. The number of new jobs created has been increasing in every quarter for the past four years. I would have thought that that was something that Labour Members would welcome.

Mr. Fallon: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the bulk of the reduction has been through people going into jobs rather than schemes and that unemployment in the north-east has now been falling by 1,500 per month for the past six months? Will he also confirm that evidence of recovery in the region is now unmistakable, even for the professional pessimists in the Opposition?

Mr. Fowler: My hon. Friend is right. The same can be said of many other regions of the country. It is true not only for the north-east but for the west midlands and many other areas. The trend is unmistakable and, as my hon. Friend said, it is only the Opposition who are seeking to challenge that.

Tourism

7. **Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are employed in the tourist industry in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Lee: Estimates of the number of jobs supported by tourism spending range around 1·4 million.

Mr. Wigley: Does the Minister accept that a large number of jobs in tourism are seasonal and, as such, after three years people involved in those jobs will lose their entitlement to unemployment benefit? That not only hits those seasonal workers hard, but distorts the unemployment figures. What does the Department intend to do to ensure that unemployment benefit will be payable to seasonal workers who have been working in tourism for more than three years?

Mr. Lee: Of course, some of the jobs in tourism are seasonal. One accepts that. If I remember correctly, that was the point made by the hon. Member in the Adjournment debate on tourism about 10 days ago. I draw the hon. Gentleman's attention to the whole range of schemes available under the action for jobs programme, which will provide every opportunity for those who are in seasonal work to seek and achieve other job opportunities in their free period.

Mr. Soames: Does my hon. Friend accept that employment will not increase in the tourist industry unless we solve our serious litter problem? Will he join me in approaching our hon. Friends to ask them to consider whether a Government litter warning could be placed on every disposable package sold over the counter in this country to try to cure this dreadful curse?

Mr. Lee: I very much agree with my hon. Friend. We should be ashamed of the quantities of litter on our streets and our resorts. I agree, too, with the earlier point of the hon. Member for Bassetlaw (Mr. Ashton). I shall examine the specific suggestion made by my hon. Friend.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: Does the Minister accept that in many areas of the country tourism is declining as more people are able to go to areas offering year-round facilities and guaranteed sunshine? Will he use his influence in the Cabinet to push for more indoor all-weather facilities to create, not only more seasonal jobs in tourism, but more year-round jobs of use to the community as a whole?

Mr. Lee: Cornwall and the west country have many popular tourist attractions and people come to Cornwall for specific reasons. Increasingly, all-weather facilities are being constructed. Indeed, in all, £1 billion-worth of construction jobs are under way in the tourism and leisure industries.

Mr. Adley: Will my hon. Friend take an early opportunity to publish in the *Official Report* the fact that a fundamental change has taken place in the relationship of manufacturing and service sector jobs since 1945? Having accepted, as most sensible people do, that the trend will inevitably continue, may I ask my hon. Friend to examine the ways in which tourism in particular, and the service industries in general, can help the Government to achieve their objective of increased employment opportunities in inner-city areas?

Mr. Lee: The trends in manufacturing and service employment since 1945-46 are well known and well documented. Often, jobs in tourism and the service industries complement manufacturing, and vice versa. Let us take the example of the construction of a new hotel and the manufactured products that go into it — from building materials to kitchen equipment, furniture and uniforms for the staff. Tourism and manufacturing are in many cases complementary.

Inner Cities

8. **Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what contribution his Department will make to Her Majesty's Government's strategy towards inner-city areas.

Mr. Cope: Our Department and the Manpower Services Commission contribute an estimated £240 million towards employment, training and enterprise programmes in inner city partnership areas and the 16 task force areas. The inner cities already have a high priority for those programmes and will continue to do so.

Mr. Hughes: Will the Minister help us to resolve the apparent dilemma that exists in the Cabinet between his right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment? The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster is reported as saying that it is possible for inner-city residents to win inner-city jobs and that it is legally possible to discriminate in their favour. The Secretary of State for the Environment said that it was not possible to discriminate in favour of inner-city residents.

Does the Minister think that in future his Department might do rather better than creating bodies such as the London Docklands Development Corporation, which has meant that unemployment in constituencies such as mine

has increased every year and that jobs have gone principally to people who live a long way outside the inner cities?

Mr. Cope: The hon. Gentleman asks me to deliberate between my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Section 35 of the Race Relations Act 1976, to which my right hon. and learned Friend referred, deals with the restriction applied to members of a particular racial group, of access to education, training and welfare on the ground that that restriction fulfills a special need for improvement in those respects. That in no way contradicts what my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment said.

On the hon. Gentleman's second point, he knows that the south London business initiative and the north Peckham task force and other agencies of my Department are doing their best to help in his constituency.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: I am sure my hon. Friend accepts that the resolution of our inner-city problems does not rest on his Department alone and requires the willing co-operation of the Department of Trade and Industry, the Home Office and others. In his specific contribution to the problem, may I urge him to view with caution the speeches that he will hear from people in the inner cities who claim to represent various groups—they do not—and others who want to help but who should not be let out without a lead? Those people can usually spend vast sums of public money to very little effect.

Mr. Cope: I shall do my best to identify the people to whom my hon. Friend refers.

Mr. Rees: Does the Minister realise that, despite what was just said, few of the people who take the major decisions on the inner cities know much about them, live in them or work in them? Will he ensure that his and other Departments accept advice from those who live and work in the area, because some of the decisions that are taken are palpably foolish?

Mr. Cope: Yes. The right hon. Gentleman has a lot of experience and will know that we take advice from those who are there and from people elsewhere who can contribute to the inner cities. We must bring expertise and assistance into the inner cities from outside those areas, as well as try our best to encourage enterprise and vigour in the people of the inner cities. We shall try to combine all these things.

Mr. Leigh: What contribution has been made to the regeneration of inner-city docklands in London and Liverpool by the national dock labour scheme?

Mr. Cope: I do not have responsibility in the Department for the national dock labour scheme. The scheme undoubtedly has a high priority in some people's minds and less in others. It is extremely difficult to tell what its contribution has been to employment.

Mr. Heffer: Since, immediately after the general election, the Prime Minister said that her strategy was to win back votes for the Conservative party in the inner cities, will the Minister explain precisely what the Government's strategy is in relation to the inner city of Liverpool?

Mr. Cope: The Government's strategy has been and remains to do all that we can to revive the inner cities. The hon. Gentleman knows that much has been done in Merseyside, to some of which he has contributed. There is a series of schemes to improve it. The Department of Employment provides training and encouragement of enterprise, and other Departments provide urban development corporations, urban regeneration grants, enterprise zones, estates action and a series of other programmes.

Mr. Heddle: Does my hon. Friend agree that a large measure of the blame for joblessness in the inner cities rests with profligate Labour-controlled local authorities, whose high-spending policies have forced up rates, which in turn have forced out businesses and jobs?

Mr. Cope: It is noticeable that the problems in the inner cities have grown while many local authorities have been spending a great deal of ratepayers' and taxpayers' money.

Mr. Meacher: Is it not clear from the Department of Employment's subordinate position in the division of responsibilities that, after eight years of destroying jobs in the inner cities, the Government still have job creation well down their order of priorities? Since the Local Government Bill prohibits contract compliance – the Minister has not answered this question—what incentive will there be for suburban building contractors to take on local labour? What guarantee can he offer to local people in greatest need of training and employment that they will not simply be left on the sidelines?

Mr. Cope: No one can guarantee the training and employment, but we have targeted our training and employment measures towards the inner cities in particular. The hon. Gentleman knows exactly why we have done that. My Department is working alongside the Department of the Environment, the Department of Trade and Industry and others in trying to solve these problems, under the leadership of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Office.

Tourism

9. **Mr. Kirkhope** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is his latest estimate of the number of tourist visits made to the United Kingdom in 1986.

Mr. Lee: There were 13·8 million visits to the United Kingdom by overseas residents in 1986.

Mr. Kirkhope: I welcome that reply by my hon. Friend. What further measures is he considering to encourage an increase in the number of tourists to industrial areas and cities in the north of England, especially Leeds?

Mr. Lee: The British Tourist Authority is working extremely hard abroad and the regional tourist boards are working very hard in the United Kingdom. I also pay tribute to what the Leeds city council is now trying to do in the area of tourism, and I draw to the attention of the House and my hon. Friend the new playhouse at Quarry Hill, the conference and exhibition centre close to the Dragonara hotel and the construction of the tropical house and butterfly house at Canal gardens at Roundhay park, among others.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Atkinson** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 21 July.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. Atkinson: With Iran exporting its terror on to the streets of London, Paris and Vienna once again, will my right hon. Friend consider new initiatives with our European allies to combat this form of international terrorism by the Ayatolla that will, for the first time, take into account the substantial and growing resistance to the Khomeni regime within Iran?

The Prime Minister: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend that terrorism cannot be tolerated, whatever its source. He will know that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has been very active, together with his opposite numbers throughout the European Economic Community, in trying to get maximum co-operation on intelligence and all other matters between countries in the Community to enable us the better to fight terrorism. Matters inside Iran are for the Iranian people to deal with.

Mr. Kinnock: I first of all support what the right hon. Lady has just said about the intensification of anti-terrorist measures. While it is clearly right that the Royal Navy Armilla patrol should act in self-defence if that is necessary, will the right hon. Lady confirm that she will not allow the British Ensign to be flown on any ships other than British ships?

The Prime Minister: It is the Royal Navy's duty, through the Armilla patrol, to protect ships going through the Straits of Hormuz, and it does. The ships that it protects are ships that fly the British flag.

Mr. Kinnock: I do not know whether the Prime Minister misheard me. Will she confirm that no ships other than British ships will be allowed to fly the British Flag?

The Prime Minister: If other ships apply to fly the British flag, that application is considered separately in each case.

Mr. Kinnock: If the Prime Minister is speaking of registration in Britain, that is one thing. If she is talking about a reflagging procedure, that is entirely another. Will she confirm that she will not follow the course of action followed by the United States Administration and permit the reflagging of ships that are not British ships, with the British Ensign?

The Prime Minister: For "flagging", let me substitute the word "registration". If other ships apply for British registration, the ordinary conditions apply, and we consider each of them separately.

Mr. Hill: Does my right hon. Friend agree that, although there is concern at the moment about the Iran-Iraq conflict, the campaign in Afghanistan seems to be completely forgotten? Is it not time to have another effort, in the United Nations in particular, to resolve the fighting in Afghanistan and to achieve the withdrawal of Russian troops?

The Prime Minister: As my hon. Friend knows, Afghanistan is never forgotten by this country, nor, do I believe, by the whole of the Western free world. We are constantly saying to the Soviets that so long as they are in Afghanistan there will never be any fundamental trust and friendship between our country and theirs. We are also constantly saying that Soviet troops should withdraw and that we would accept a completely non-aligned Afghanistan.

Q2. **Mr. Alton** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 21 July.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Alton: Is the Prime Minister aware that, whereas the Church of England enjoys exemptions that have enabled it to provide facilities for the homeless, the infirm and the dying, the community charge will cost the Church of England an estimated additional £4 million a year, and that some monasteries, churches and convents will have to find an additional £10,000 a year? In view of that, how can the Prime Minister justify such a crippling burden? Does she accept the charge made by many churches that it is a tax on prayer and care?

The Prime Minister: I have written — I am not quite certain whether to the hon. Gentleman or to other hon. Members — about the matter. The community charge will be a personal charge. The Church of England would not wish to avoid a charge that all other citizens would have to pay.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Is my right hon. Friend aware that the Government's initiative to stimulate scientific research and development will be widely welcomed? Do we not need the full support of the scientific community and industry's wholehearted commitment and investment in research and development, which are vital to their future and to our prosperity?

The Prime Minister: As my hon. Friend is aware, the Government's response to the Select Committee on Science and Technology in another place shows the importance that we attach to the subject. She will be aware that the proportion of our national income that we devote to civil research on the part of the taxpayer exceeds that which is devoted in either Japan or the United States. She will also be aware of the strenuous efforts that we have made to bring universities and private business more closely together. The new arrangement ensures that we shall have a committee within the Cabinet, to consider, together with the scientific community, the proper priorities for science and technology and to try to apply them in all the allocations of money to the several Departments.

Q3. **Mr. Michael J. Martin** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 21 July.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Martin: Referring to the Prime Minister's earlier reply, is she inviting merchant marine vessels from other countries to sail under the British flag and seek British registration so that they can be protected by the British Navy?

The Prime Minister: No, nor can the hon. Gentleman interpret anything that I have said in that light.

Q4. **Mr. Lawrence** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 21 July.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. and learned Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Lawrence: Does my right hon. Friend agree that if Mr. Gorbachev wants to be seen in the West as a genuine peacemaker, he should show a bit more enthusiasm for the nuclear arms reductions discussions that are now going on and which are beginning to slow down?

The Prime Minister: It has been said that the Soviet Union was dragging its feet in relation to the arms talks in Geneva. It is important that we take time to get the verification measures absolutely right. They are complicated, particularly if the Soviet Union wishes to retain 100 SS20s further over on the eastern side of the Soviet Union. We would like a global zero of such weapons. That is difficult enough to verify, but the additional retention of 100 would make it more difficult. It is possible to get an agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States by the end of this year. They must all now get down thoroughly to the detailed negotiations.

Q5. **Mr. Maxton** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 21 July.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Maxton: In view of the growing speculation that the poll tax in England will be phased in over a five-year period, will the right hon. Lady give an assurance that, first, there will be no reintroduction of phasing-in in Scotland, but that the full implementation of the poll tax in Scotland will be delayed until the full implementation of the poll tax in England and Wales? Secondly, will she give an assurance that the long title of the English and the Welsh Bill will allow for any amendment of the Scottish legislation that might take place?

The Prime Minister: The legislation as if affects Scotland has gone through all its stages and passed into law through all the proper procedures. It will be implemented in Scotland exactly as it was intended. It is a matter for the United Kingdom Parliament. I assume that the hon. Gentleman is not applying for separatism and is, therefore, prepared to submit to the United Kingdom Parliament.

Mr. Wells: What was the reason for, and the result of, my right hon. Friend's visit to Jamaica?

The Prime Minister: I went to Jamaica to discuss the situation there with Mr. Seaga. The country has considerable economic difficulties and a difficult restructuring programme. It is receiving help from the International Monetary Fund. We give it some aid. For example, among other things I visited the police academy there, which receives help and resources from our police. I looked at the way in which Jamaica is fighting the drug problem. We discussed aid for another project because Mr. Seaga is keen to raise the standard of education in schools. We also discussed investment in Jamaica and the prospects for the world economy, among other things.

Q6. **Mr. Terry Lewis** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 21 July.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Lewis: Now that the right hon. Lady has confirmed that those who care for their elderly at home will suffer under the poll tax, what is she proposing to help to keep those families together?

The Prime Minister: If those who care for their elderly at home receive only supplementary benefit, as the hon. Gentleman is aware the community charge will first be rebated to the extent of 20 per cent. After that, such people will receive a payment equal to the average community charge for the United Kingdom to enable them to meet the rest. That payment may be above the amount of the community charge, or it may be slightly less. I remind the hon. Gentleman that the principle of the community charge is that adults in all parts of the country will pay the same charge for the same level of services after taking account of the needs of different areas. Therefore, people who receive only supplementary benefit will have that remission.

Mrs. Gorman: Will my right hon. Friend comment on the litter situation in Jamaica and say whether we have anything—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. As we are approaching the summer holiday perhaps the hon. Lady will rephrase that question. I do not think that the Prime Minister is responsible for litter in Jamaica.

Mrs. Gorman: Did my right hon. Friend discuss the problem of litter in Jamaica? Will she inform the House whether we can learn any lessons from the way in which that problem is handled there?

The Prime Minister: The Government of Jamaica—*[Interruption]*—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

The Prime Minister: The Government of Jamaica pursue a vigorous policy of privatisation, as a result of which the streets are extremely clean. There is not a piece of litter to be seen. The amount that the local authorities had hitherto spent on street cleaning, under which the streets were not clean, was put out to privatisation as a result of which—I am glad that my hon. Friend asked me this question—for the same amount of money the streets are cleaned privately three times a day, and are clean.

Q7. **Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 21 July.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Hughes: In view of the widespread disquiet on all sides of the House about the morality of the poll tax, will the Prime Minister accept that she ought to follow the precedent that she established last year and allow it to be decided on a free vote of the House?

The Prime Minister: No. This was a foremost part of our manifesto. If people pay a high community charge it will be because they have grossly extravagant local authorities, which are frequently taking time to get expenditure down.

Iran-Iraq Conflict

3.30 pm

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Geoffrey Howe): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about yesterday's Security Council resolution 598 on the Iran-Iraq conflict.

My attendance at yesterday's Security Council meeting, together with six other Foreign Ministers, underlines the importance which we attach to this resolution: as well as representing a united approach by the five permanent members, it owes much to British initiative, and is the culmination of many months work.

This resolution, which was passed unanimously by the Council, is mandatory, and demands an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of forces to internationally recognised boundaries without delay. It is carefully balanced and favours neither of the parties more than the other. Both should be able to accept it. In the event of non-compliance, the Council will meet to discuss possible enforcement measures.

The Secretary-General will have a major role in the implementation of the resolution and with bringing the parties to a negotiated settlement of the conflict.

This mandatory resolution reflects the gravity with which the whole international community views the continuing conflict between Iran and Iraq and the consequent threat to stability and peace. The resolution is a determined attempt to tackle the underlying causes of tension in the region.

Attacks on shipping are at present the most dangerous symptom of that tension. I made clear in yesterday's Security Council debate the urgent need not only for a settlement of the conflict as a whole, but also for a halt to attacks on shipping in the Gulf. It is vital to uphold the principle of freedom of navigation, and the Armilla patrol continues to play its part by providing protection for British vessels.

The world has never been more united in seeking an end to this bloody and senseless conflict. The international community yesterday made plain to the parties that it looks for a comprehensive, just and honourable settlement of the dispute through negotiation and diplomacy rather than by force of arms. The United Nations resolution offers both parties the right way forward. I am sure that the whole House will join me in urging them to seize that opportunity.

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton): Is the Foreign Secretary aware that Her Majesty's Opposition fully support the unanimous mandatory Security Council resolution? We regard it as right that the Foreign Secretary went personally to the United Nations to advocate it.

Can the Foreign Secretary tell us how long the Government will wait to decide whether there has been compliance or non-compliance? Unless the resolution is speedily obeyed by both sides, we believe that the United Nations must take further action speedily in the shape not of Britain's curious present ban on what it calls lethal arms, but a total international arms embargo.

Britain should take the lead and should immediately examine whether the Iranian arms procurement agency at 4 Victoria street should be allowed to continue its activities. It is vital that nothing should be done to exacerbate a dangerous situation. Will the Government, even at this late stage, discourage the United States from any adventurist plans to escort a reflagged fleet through the Gulf? Such an action is unpredictable and could lead to uncontrollable escalation and grave consequences not only for peace in the immediate area but for world peace. It could alienate the Russians, whose co-operation is both essential and encouraging.

We support the Government's assertion of the right of self-defence for British warships in the area. Will the Foreign Secretary give the House a firm assurance that the British Government will not go beyond that and take provocative unilateral action? Will he distinguish between the formal registration procedure and the charade of a reflagging procedure—what we might call rent-a-flag? We believe that the Secretary of State for Defence was absolutely right yesterday to say that Britain should keep a non-provocative low profile. Any additional peace-keeping action should not be unilateral action by a single power but should be organised through the United Nations.

Is the Foreign Secretary aware that Her Majesty's Opposition will support firm British action to stamp down on Iranian or other terrorism here in Britain, and that if the perpetrator of Saturday's bomb attack is tracked down Britain must stand firm against any blackmail of the sort that is being used against France? Every effort must be made to keep potential terrorists out of Britain and to throw out provocateurs who are already here. Britain's streets must not be allowed to become a battleground for murderous factions, and Britain must play her part in reducing tension in what is today the world's most dangerous flash point.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: May I begin by welcoming the right hon. Gentleman to his new-found role in foreign affairs? I also welcome the support that he has given to the part played by the Government in the Security Council yesterday. I welcome, too, the vigour with which he expressed his support for appropriate measures against terrorism in all its manifestations in this country. I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary will look forward to receiving that support from him and his hon. Friends on every appropriate occasion.

It is clearly premature at this stage to give any judgment about the timing of further measures and further consideration because they depend on the progress that is made by the Secretary-General in the days and weeks ahead. The right hon. Gentleman may be assured, however, that Her Majesty's Government already refuse to sell defence equipment to either side if such equipment would significantly enhance capability to prolong or exacerbate the conflict. That position is firmly upheld and widely respected by other countries around the world. It is recognised as probably being contrary to Britain's economic and commercial interests, but it is undoubtedly morally right. On that basis, I made plain yesterday that we should be willing—if that was judged right—to support a United Nations embargo on arms sales to either party to the dispute if that was thought necessary.

I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that the arms procurement office is kept under the closest possible scrutiny, and its status—not only for compliance with the present state of the law and the present ban—will remain under close scrutiny in the light of changing events.

[Sir Geoffrey Howe]

As regards other vessels in the Gulf, the right hon. Gentleman will recognise that not only are United States and British vessels there, but French and Soviet vessels are, too. I think that there are some minesweepers, a frigate and some trawlers. They are all there upholding the vital principle of freedom of navigation.

There is no question of denouncing United States activity for adventurism or anything else, although the phrase, coming from the right hon. Gentleman, did not surprise me. Each country is making its own contribution to upholding the principle of freedom of navigation. The United States has responded today to the Kuwaiti request. Britain has deployed the Armilla patrol since 1980, and, as the right hon. Gentleman pointed out, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence yesterday said that our ships are maintaining a non-provocative low profile presence. Our forces in the Gulf have the ability to defend themselves if they are attacked, and they have instructions to do just that. In other words, their role is self-defensive in support of British ships and non-provocative.

With regard to the suggestion about a United Nations naval presence, that would raise a number of very substantial complications. So far it has not been canvassed or suggested in the course of the proceedings in the Security Council, but, of course, it is not excluded from the range of possibilities.

Mr. Dennis Walters (Westbury): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that, while the Iran-Iraq war poses the most immediate and serious threat in terms of an escalation of war and that, therefore, while this resolution is much to be welcomed, the whole area continues basically to be destabilised by the Arab-Israeli conflict? Will he now use every endeavour to bring about a settlement in that long-standing and apparently permanent dispute?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend is entirely right to draw attention to the wider although distinct conflict that has caused us so much anxiety for so many years—the conflict between the Arab and Israeli sides. I remind him that we firmly believe that an international conference is the most practical way forward to the negotiations that are necessary between the parties directly concerned. That was fully discussed last week between my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and President Reagan, and I discussed it again yesterday with Secretary of State Shultz. We have made plain our view about progress in that direction. We hope that the United States will take the lead in exploring the way forward to direct negotiations between the parties. It is clear that the next step will depend in large part on agreement within the Israeli Government about an approach to the international conference.

Dr. David Owen (Plymouth, Devonport): I congratulate the Foreign Secretary on the Western diplomacy that has made it possible to involve the Soviet Union and China in the Security Council. Has he seen Mr. Gorbachev's statement of only a few hours ago in which he says that he is ready for discussions in any format and to undertake superpower action for peace in this area? In the light of that, and in the light of the British decision to have a non-provocative low profile naval presence in the Gulf, will the United Kingdom make representations to the United States to take very seriously the Soviet concerns about the United States's build-up of naval vessels? That would give a little more opportunity for the Security Council's resolution and the Secretary-General's initiative to take effect.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for the support that he expressed in his opening remarks. Like each of the other countries providing some measure of naval protection in the Gulf, the United States is well aware of the dangers of confrontation in the current tense situation. It joins with us in the terms of the resolution in urging restraint and caution on all nations.

I welcome the right hon. Gentleman's endorsement of the steps that we have been able to take to promote closer co-operation among the five permanent members. It is important for that kind of consultation and co-operation to continue and not for it to be confined to the five permanent members.

Mr. Michael Latham (Rutland and Melton): I welcome the resolution, but will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that it is far from the first Security Council resolution calling for a ceasefire in this war? Since the initial reaction of the Iranians was not very good as they did not attend the debate at all and condemned it, and since both countries are led by extremists, will my right hon. and learned Friend assure us that the two superpowers in particular will do everything possible by diplomatic means to bring pressure on the two leaders of those countries?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I agree with my hon. Friend that this resolution by no means represents a solution to the problem. Even so, it is right to say that previous resolutions have been accepted by Iraq, provided that they are taken as a basis for producing a comprehensive settlement. I trust that Iraq will abide by the new resolution. I also agree with my hon. Friend that it is important for us to continue to urge Iran to respond positively to this new step. I can understand why my hon. Friend may have some doubt about the likely effectiveness of what is taking place.

It is important to remind the House that this is a formidable new step. The resolution is even-handed between Iran and Iraq and has the backing not only of East and West alike but of the non-aligned countries, and includes all five permanent members of that group on the Security Council. It carries the prospect of a further resolution if necessary to enforce it. In my judgment, it represents the best available springboard so far for peace in the area.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Will the Foreign Secretary reflect on the complexity of the issue in relation to the fact that, while he is trying to achieve co-operation within the United Nations, it seems increasingly difficult to achieve co-operation between the four powers with naval vessels in the Gulf, especially on rules of engagement? Without disclosing anything confidential, can the right hon. and learned Gentleman say whether there have been any discussions between ourselves and the United States with regard to determining agreement on rules of engagement and the escort of merchant vessels through the Gulf? In addition, what, if any, additional facilities have the United States asked for in relation to the base on Diego Garcia?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I preface my remarks with the observation that there are a number of matters which it is customary not to discuss in detail. For example, it is not customary to discuss the rules of engagement in detail. However, the presence of the Armilla patrol is intended to be non-provocative and de-escalatory. Its position is constantly reviewed in the light of changing circumstances. The United States Administration are of course well aware of the presence of other naval forces in the area and of the dangers of confrontation in the current tense situation. We keep in close touch with other naval forces in the area, but there is no question of any formal integration.

Sir Ian Lloyd (Havant): As the ability of both Iran and Iraq to finance their massive imports of arms is substantially, if not wholly, dependent on their ability to export oil, has the Security Council considered an embargo on the export of oil from those two countries? That would be by far the quickest and most effective way of bringing the war to a halt.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I confess that my hon. Friend is more frequently to be found among the ranks of those drawing attention to the difficulties, if not the improprieties, of embargos of that kind. In fact, the discussions in the Security Council, so far as this point has been discussed, have concentrated on the importance of an arms embargo as possibly the most effective measure.

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): While the resolution is very welcome, does not the Foreign Secretary recognise that its effectiveness will require not just an arms embargo but a serious attempt to deal with the massive arms trade which is being carried out under his very nose in the city of Westminster at a time when it is reckoned that there may be as many as 500 arms dealers in London?

Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman also consider the fact that the protection of merchant shipping is an international issue, and should we not now consider ways of using the United Nations flag in that role of protection?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman's second point, as I have said, raises a formidable range of difficulties and it has been recognised in the past to do so. It has not therefore been the subject of discussion or consideration in the proceedings in the United Nations. That is why a number of different national forces are playing the parts that they are playing. However, it is not excluded from further consideration.

With regard to activities within this country, the law is enforced in this country. The organisation of transactions in arms sales is not illegal unless the goods concerned are imported into or exported from the United Kingdom in breach of British law. Any rumours or suggestions of breaches of the law in that respect have been investigated and have not been substantiated. Any evidence of illegal activity would be investigated most thoroughly by the appropriate authority.

Mr. Patrick McNair-Wilson (New Forest): As Iran has a vested interest in keeping the gulf shipping lanes open and peaceful to operate its terminal at Kharg Island and elsewhere, does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the somewhat unhappy juxtaposition of the Irangate hearings and the much heralded reflagging of Kuwaiti ships tends to give the impression to the world that Iran will be the most likely aggressor in the Gulf when history has proved that that is completely incorrect? To ensure that the resolution is given a fair wind, will he therefore make it crystal clear that apportioning blame in the Gulf about the starting of that war is not possible and that the British Government will remain completely even-handed in any dealings they have with any of the combatants?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Our position is one of even-handedness without any discrimination between the two parties in relation to our ban on arms sales and in every other respect. One of the components of the Security Council resolution provides for the possibility of an inquiry into the blame for the initiation of the conflict, since that matter has often been pressed by Iran. Beyond that, we press strongly the need for a cessation of all attacks on shipping both ways by both sides. In our judgment, they are the most potentially dangerous components of the present scene. We believe that Iran and Iraq should refrain from any such attacks.

Mr. James Lamond (Oldham, Central and Royton): Is it not rather late in the day for the Foreign Secretary to discover that the sales of arms to other countries is immoral? Does he recall that any time any Opposition Member makes that point he is met by a clamour from Conservative Back Benchers about the jobs that would be lost in this country if we were to take such a moral stand? Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman sure that the Prime Minister will satisfy herself that every step along the way towards this peace solution will be verifiable, in view of what we have heard from Colonel North and others in the United States, when it seemed that even the President was not quite sure what was going on with regard to the supply of arms to Iran?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am not prepared to follow the hon. Gentleman in the long exploratory disquisition at the end of his last sentence. As for this conflict, our policy is well known. The guidelines were set out by me in the House on 29 October 1985. We refuse to sell to either side defence equipment which will significantly enhance the capability to prolong or exacerbate the conflict. Those rules are scrupulously implemented. They will remain in force whether or not there is a United Nations embargo. Our defence sales policy is a direct result of our impartiality in the conflict.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): My right hon. and learned Friend was talking about the possibility of an international conference on Arab-Israel relations. When does he see that taking place? Does Israel have a veto over it? If it does, what action does my right hon. and learned Friend envisage the international community taking to make sure that this gross injustice is rapidly brought to a conclusion?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend is straying rather far from the point of my original statement. We believe that an international conference represents the most practical way forward for negotiations between the parties concerned. We have been pressing the case for progress towards such a conference. We have been pressing our partners, and indeed everyone we can legitimately persuade, to press their case. We can do no more than that.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): Because of the appalling implications of an Iranian victory in terms of the spread of Islamic fundamentalism, about which some of us have been warning for many years, why was the right

[Mr. Andrew Faulds]

hon. and learned Gentleman not involved in launching such an initiative some years ago, particularly in view of the enormous boost that this conflict has given to the international arms trade? Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman assure the House that, if things get risky or go wrong in the Gulf, he will take the decision as to what Britain's reaction is and that it will not be taken by the Prime Minister under Reagan's instructions?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman, who often poses rather worthwhile questions, should have allowed himself to be led down the path of fantasy at the end of his question. Her Majesty's Government's policy will be determined by Her Majesty's Government in accordance with the ordinary conventions.

As for the hon. Gentleman's underlying question, he will be aware that we have supported a number of previous resolutions by the United Nations to try to bring the conflict to an end. It was our judgment, which is why we set the process in hand last autumn, that we needed to try to mobilise a resolution carrying in its initiation the support of all permanent members and carrying in its conclusion the support of all members of the Security council, just as we were able to secure it yesterday. That is an important addition to everything that has gone before.

Sir John Farr (Harborough): Although it is important that the Royal Navy should adopt a non-aggressive, low profile role in the Gulf, will my right hon. and learned Friend assure the House that should any Royal Navy vessels or any of the vessels that it is escorting be attacked they will in no way be inhibited in or prevented from deploying all their defensive weapons systems to the full?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend raises an important point. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has made it plain that the Royal naval ships there are provided with self-defence equipment relevant to the full range of threats in the region. We have every confidence in their being able to defend themselves on that basis.

Mr. A. E. P. Duffy (Sheffield, Attercliffe): If the Foreign Secretary ponders the bellicose remarks of his hon. Friend the Member for Harborough (Sir J. Farr), will he also bear in mind, and impress on our American friends, that the deployment of larger naval forces in the Gulf, with all the attendant risks that something will go wrong—as it sometimes has, even when adventurism has not been involved—will leave the Prime Minister and the President with little option but to deploy even bigger fleets, with no guarantee that the conflict will not become open-ended?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We start from the position that it is vital to uphold the principle of freedom of navigation. That is why, in addition to American, French and British ships, there are Soviet Union ships — three mine-sweepers, a frigate and some trawlers — present for exactly the same purpose: to defend shipping in the Gulf. Each country is making its own contribution to upholding that principle. The hazard arises from the continuation of attacks on shipping. For that reason, the Security Council resolution calls for a ceasefire, and we hope that it will lead to a cessation of such attacks. The best contribution to the reduction of tension would be a cessation of attacks on shipping by both sides.

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): Can my right hon. and learned Friend confirm reports that the Government of Kuwait have made a formal request to Britain to have some of their vessels reflagged under our flag? What will be our policy in response to such a request, and, if it is granted will my right hon. and learned Friend note that to honour it will almost certainly require an increased naval presence, which it will be difficult to see as de-escalatory?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: That would not be an inter-governmental matter. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor) informed the Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister of that this morning. If there were any question of registering or re-registering a Kuwaiti or any other ship, it would be a purely commercial and procedural arrangement, to be carried out in accordance with the existing law on the British shipping register. There is no need for a formal decision by the Government.

Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): Do not the carefully-worded phrases that the Secretary of State has used time and again mean that we would consider selling some sort of arms to Iran? What sort of arms are so innocuous that that would be allowable?

The right hon. and learned Gentleman spoke about the position of private arms dealers in the United Kingdom. Would the British Government at least stop the export of licences for arms bought or procured in this country to Iran or Iraq?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The answer to the second question is that the position is exactly as I have stated. Our law applies to prohibit any illegal transactions in connection with the import or export of arms to or from the United Kingdom. Any allegations of infringements of that kind would be immediately investigated.

I cannot emphasise too strongly that our defence sales policy in regard to both sides in the conflict has existed for a long time. It is absolutely plain and without qualification. We will refuse to sell defence equipment that will significantly enhance the capability of either side, to prolong or exacerbate the conflict. Those rules are scrupulously implemented. They are the result of total impartiality, and are well understood and widely appreciated by the wider international community. That is why our prospective support for an arms embargo is so widely respected. It is well understood and clearly founded.

Several Hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: I must have regard for the subsequent business on the Order Paper, which is heavy today. I shall call those hon. Gentlemen who have been standing regularly.

Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory (Wells): It must be the wish of the House to try to bring an end to the war, which has claimed over 1 million casualties. However, will my right hon. and learned Friend be cautious about endorsing a worldwide arms embargo without that embargo being watertight? It may be our definition of our neutrality to supply weapons to neither side, but other countries define theirs as providing both sides with weapons, and they may

continue to do so, in defiance of United Nations resolutions. If they supply weapons, including chemical weapons, in secrecy, it may make the position even worse.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend is entirely right to draw attention to the practical difficulties of any embargo, including an arms embargo. I have described the United Kingdom's policy, which proscribes arms sales to either side and has done so for a long time. The possibility of an arms embargo being imposed by the United Nations would have to be considered against whichever of the parties failed to respond to the resolution that we passed yesterday. It has not yet been decided; it is for consideration. It would be effective only if it were to be universally and effectively supported. Therefore, the matter has to be very carefully considered.

If the House wants us to play an effective part in trying to bring this conflict to a conclusion, a worldwide United Nations enforced arms embargo against the non-complying party must be a legitimate weapon of the international community.

Mr. Bruce George (Walsall, South): The Secretary of State assured the hon. Member for Harborough (Sir J. Farr) that our ships would be able to protect themselves. Is he prepared to give an assurance that the weapons mix on our ships will be sufficient for them to defend British merchant shipping, which I understand is the purpose of the Armilla patrol? Is he able to say what the Armilla patrol is up to? There are not enough ships to provide convoying. What will be the relationship between the three ships on patrol and British merchant shipping that is transiting the Gulf area?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am not prepared to give detailed material about that. The Armilla patrol provides cover for British shipping when it is in the relevant area. It has recently been the subject of some reinforcement and its resources are constantly reviewed. Inevitably some risk is involved in any operation of this kind. All I can say is what I have already said: I offer to the hon. Gentleman the assurance of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence that the ships are provided with self-defence equipment that is relevant to the full range of threats in the region.

Mr. Derek Conway (Shrewsbury and Atcham): Does my right hon. and learned Friend recall that a company that manufactures main battle tank and other personnel carrier engines in my Shrewsbury constituency has for the last three or four years been prevented from supplying the re-engining of both Soviet tanks for Iran and also tank transporters? That is positive evidence of the Government's determined stand. I support and endorse my right hon. and learned Friend's strong principle, but it is important for all hon. Members to appreciate the definite effects that this has on our economy and on jobs. Wise words have to be paid for by many of our constituents.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for pointing that out. Our even-handed and firm enforcement of our arms embargo, as I have described it, involves the probable loss to British industry of hundreds of millions of pounds worth of business. It brings us no thanks from either side in the conflict, but we have no doubt that it is appreciated — and rightly so — by the wider international community.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): I recognise that the major responsibility for the present crisis undoubtedly lies with the unsavoury regime in Iran, but, to return to an earlier theme, may I ask the Foreign Secretary whether there is absolute need for all the powers, particularly the United States, to exercise the greatest self-restraint, without which the crisis could escalate? That would play right into the hands of the leaders of Iran and break the international consensus that, fortunately, was achieved last night by the United Nations Security Council resolution.

Bearing in mind that we are about to enter a very long recess, if the crisis were to escalate, may we have a guarantee from the Foreign Secretary that the House would be recalled at the earliest possible opportunity?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: On the hon. Gentleman's last point, any question of that kind would undoubtedly fall for consideration through the usual channels, and by the Leader of the House. The United States, together with all the other nations that were represented yesterday, is well aware of the dangers of confrontation in the current situation. That is why the resolution

"calls upon all other states to exercise the utmost restraint and to refain from any act which may lead to further escalation and a widening of the conflict and thus to facilitate the implementation of the present resolution."

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury): Although I am aware of the difficulties that lie ahead, does not my right hon. and learned Friend think that the House may be in danger of losing sight of what has been achieved? With the help and leadership of the United Kingdom, the United Nations has at last come to the united and unanimous resolution to start to take a grip on what for a long time has been an area of international anarchy. At last, with Britain's leadership, the international community is now taking a firm lead and hold on trying to resolve this very difficult question.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. It is right to say that the resolution that we supported yesterday presents a unique opportunity to end this uniquely horrible war. It is the longest major conflict of the century. The most effective step that would unwind tension immediately would be for both Iran and Iraq to refrain from attacking shipping on either side.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): If I could nag back to the question that was put by my hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands), may I ask who makes the judgment — and on what criteria do they make it — as to what equipment should not be sold because it enhances the capability? I follow the Foreign Secretary's own wording. Are there contracts outstanding? What equipment is innocuous?

What is the position about the end-user certificate system when the most sophisticated weapons, we understand, can be bought in the bazaar at Peshawar? Has not the time come for an investigation into the end-user certificate system? What does the Foreign Secretary mean when he says that these exports can be investigated by "the appropriate authority"? Who is the appropriate authority?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The control of the export or import of arms is conducted by the Government through their normal agencies — the licensing procedure, as laid down

[Sir Geoffrey Howe]

by statute. The appropriate authority in the first instance for the enforcement of that legislation is Customs and Excise.

Mr. Andrew MacKay (Berkshire, East): Notwithstanding our good example, it seems to be abundantly clear that both combatants are finding it all too easy to obtain arms, presumably from those who supported the resolution yesterday. Does this not mean that there will be very little chance of an arms embargo? What can we do to ensure that that happens?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It is clear that arms supplies are still reaching the combatants because there is not yet in force an international arms embargo. I have been describing our policy on arms sales to either side. The prospect of a mandatory, worldwide arms embargo is something that would have to be considered at a later stage. Then it would be most important that it should be properly complied with.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): May I bring the Foreign Secretary back to the question of reflagging? In reply to a question from me on 17 July, the hon. and learned Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor) said that the reflagging of merchant shipping was a commercial and administrative matter. Surely the Foreign Secretary must understand that when there is any application for reflagging there are also very important political and military considerations that have to be taken into account.

Has there been an application from Kuwait or any of the other Gulf states for reflagging, using British flags? Secondly, will the Foreign Secretary assure the House that, if an application is received, it will be refused? If he cannot give that assurance, will he at least assure the House that in a matter of such military and political importance Government consideration will be given precedence over commercial and administrative considerations?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I can only repeat what my hon. and learned Friend the Minister said earlier: any registering or chartering of vessels would be a purely commercial, procedural or administrative arrangement which would not call for a formal decision by the British Government.

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): Do the Government believe that it is in the British national interest to assert the so-called principle of free navigation wherever a problem arises? Do we have a role as world policemen?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We have a role, in regard to the interests of Britain as a power with a substantial mercantile trade throughout the world, in upholding the principle and securing its application wherever we sensibly can for the benefit of the British merchant marine.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): What contracts are outstanding? Is there any evidence that the Iranians or Iraqis have developed or are developing a nuclear military capacity?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I do not know what contracts the hon. Gentleman is asking about. Even if I did, I would not be able to answer the question, nor should I do so.

Mr. Kaufman: In response to the hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) and my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks), the right hon. and learned Gentleman said that a reflagging operation involving Britain and Kuwait was purely commercial arrangement. However, there are defence implications. Therefore, is the right hon. and learned Gentleman saying, that, if there were a purely commercial reflagging arrangement between British and Kuwaiti interests, the Royal Navy and British foreign policy would be dragged along behind such a private commercial arrangement? If so, the consequences could be grave and incalculable.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The right hon. Gentleman is taking the matter too far. The question of re-registering or chartering a vessel in a different form is, as it has long been, a purely commercial and procedural arrangement in respect of which there is a wide range of legal and other implications that must be complied with.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman obviously was not here when I said that I would call hon. Members who had been rising regularly.

Channel Tunnel Bill

4.13 pm

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Paul Channon): I beg to move,

That, in respect of the Channel Tunnel Bill, notwithstanding the Resolution of the Standing Orders Committee of 16th July, the Standing Orders relating to Private Business, so far as not complied with, be dispensed with and the Bill be permitted to proceed.

This is the first time for many years that I have had an opportunity to take part in a Channel tunnel debate. When the Channel tunnel was last counselled by Mr. Anthony Crosland I took part in the debate and spoke for the Opposition, who were aghast at his decision. The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) may have shared my view, although I cannot remember whether he was here at that time.

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): I shall put the Secretary of State out of his misery. It is nothing to do with the debate, but on that occasion in 1974 I was a Teller for those who wished to continue with the scheme.

Mr. Channon: I was proud to be counted by the hon. Gentleman on that occasion.

The purpose of the motion is to give effect to the will of this House, which has been expressed on other occasions, and to enable the House to consider later today the Lords amendments to the Channel Tunnel Bill in respect of the road access arrangements to the Folkestone terminal area.

I shall set out the essential procedural background. As the House knows, the Channel Tunnel Bill is a hybrid Bill and, like any other hybrid Bill, it is expected to meet, insofar as it affects private rights, certain requirements of the House relating to private business, that are set out in the Standing Orders for Private Business. These cover important matters, such as giving notice to parties affected and placing advertisements in newspapers.

Deadlines are set which are based on an annual cycle for presentation and deposit of Private Bills. In particular, those who are seeking to promote a Private Bill must deposit the Bill in the Private Bill Office on or before 27 November in the Session concerned.

With regard to the Channel Tunnel Bill it will be within the memory of the House that it was quite impossible to introduce the Bill by November 1985, which was before the Eurotunnel project had been selected by the Government. Accordingly, after the Examiners had reported that being out of time was the only respect in which Standing Orders had not been complied with, the House, by a large majority, gave dispensation from Standing Orders in respect of the Bill on 3 June 1986.

Amendments affecting private rights, which are sometimes referred to as "rehybridising" amendments — that is not the most elegant word in the English language — are also, like a hybrid Bill, subject to certain of the Private Business Standing Orders. There is, therefore, a technical breach of such Standing Orders if the amendments are tabled out of time. Clearly, however, if the Bill is introduced out of time, the amendments must fall foul of Standing Orders in the same way. It is the Government's submission that the House should dispense with Standing Orders in respect of these amendments in exactly the same way as it did for the Bill. However, before inviting the House to approve the procedural motion, I shall refer to the substance of these amendments.

The purpose of the amendments is to alter the arrangements for the access roads to the Folkestone terminal site. This matter first came before the House on 17 July 1986, when my hon. Friend the Minister explained that a number of bodies and individuals had petitioned the Select Committee, under the chairmanship of Sir Alex Fletcher, in favour of revised arrangements which would take much less land and would not drive a new road between the villages of Newington and Peene.

The petitioners who were seeking the change included the Shepway district council and the Kent county council. All those who were speaking on that occasion were in favour of the change. Accordingly, the Select Committee was instructed to consider alternative arrangements.

For their part the Government, as promoters of the Bill, issued the necessary notices and made the necessary deposits to conform with Standing Orders, except for being out of time. A new deadline was set for petitioners who were adversely affected by the change, and the Select Committee considered the proposed amendments on 21 October.

The House will recall that in that event the Committee, on the basis of evidence not only from a small number of petitioners who would be adversely affected by the change but also from Eurotunnel about operational implications, decided against making the change. At a later date a new package was put together which was known as the "joint southern access", which made use of some, but not all, of the previously proposed amendments, and therefore raised no new requirements in relation to Standing Orders. Those revised arrangements received strong support in the Standing Committee and, subsequently, after the petitioners affected had had an opportunity to petition the other place, they found favour with the Select Committee and the Bill was amended accordingly.

The House will recall that last week the House decided to refer these amendments to the Examiners. Subsequently, the Examiners reported that the applicable Standing Orders had been complied with in all respects, except for being out of time. On Friday, however, the Standing Orders Committee decided not to give dispensation.

The Standing Orders Committee is not required to give reasons for its decision, and it is not for me to speculate on them. The Government and I believe that the issue is straightforward. The amendments have very widespread support, although the decision of substance as to whether or not they should be made is one for later today. The effect of the motion, if the House carries it, is simply to enable the House to make these changes. It was impossible for the amendments to be introduced without being given out of time, and I therefore submit that dispensation should accordingly be given.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is unusual, is it not, when a Committee of the House makes a recommendation to the House, for its Chairman not to catch Mr. Speaker's eye and report to the House the reasons why it came to the decision that it did? We are in a difficult position, because it is traditional for the Chairman of Ways and Means to be Chairman of the Committee. I understand, to use the old legal phrase, that he is neither mute of malice nor mute

[Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop]

of God, but one might say mute of office. That being the case, will you advise us who will speak on behalf of the Committee, which is chaired by your illustrious deputy, so that the House may know at first hand why the Committee gave the House the advice that it gave, which we are now being invited to reject?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman is correct. The Chairman of Ways and Means was the Chairman of the Committee, but this is by no means an unprecedented motion before the House. Although the Chairman may not be able to give his reasons, there are hon. Members who may wish to speak who were members of that Committee. Therefore, I do not think that that point will go by default.

4.20 pm

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): Two matters arise directly from the motion before the House. The first concerns the rights of the House and the second concerns the rights of individuals who are affected by the project. The Secretary of State, as is his right, did not spend much time on the former and did not mention the latter at all. I propose to spend a few minutes on the former and rather longer on the latter because, regardless of the fact that the debate is being held in what is regarded as prime time, the rights of an individual petitioner to this House or another place ought to be fully debated and discussed. Where those rights have not been upheld by this House or another place, they should be fully debated at this, the last opportunity to so debate them before the Bill receives the Royal Assent.

To listen to the Secretary of State one would think that the decision recommended by the Standing Orders Select Committee on 16 July that the Standing Order relating to private business should be not dispensed with was the same as the decision taken by the Standing Orders Select Committee on 3 June 1986. I submit that it is important——

Sir John Farr (Harborough): That is totally incorrect. In 1986 the Standing Orders Select Committee was locked, with equal numbers on both sides and the Chairman of Ways and Means, the right hon. Member for Doncaster, Central (Mr. Walker) declined to give a casting vote and asked the House to decide. It was quite different last Thursday. There was no question of equality of view. The Standing Orders Select Committee voted by five votes to three against the proposal.

Mr. Snape: That goes to show the danger of giving way before one has completed a sentence. If the hon. Gentleman had listened properly he would have heard that I said that the implication of what the Secretary of State said appeared to be that the decisions were similar. My next sentence, which the hon. Gentleman pre-empted and, which like the comments of his hon. Friend the Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) robbed me of half my speech, was to say that no such conclusion should be drawn from the decision of the Standing Orders Select Committee on 16 July. As the hon. Member for Harborough (Sir J. Farr) correctly points out, on 3 June 1986 the Standing Orders Select Committee declined to come to a decision, whereas on 16 July the Standing Orders Select Committee voted by five votes to three against the dispensation that the Secretary of State seeks in this debate.

I do not know whether this motion sets any great precedent for the House. I leave such matters to the hon. Member for Tiverton who is invariably correct in his interpretation of the rules. I have no doubt that if he succeeds in catching your eye, Mr. Speaker, he will enlighten both sides of the House on the custom, practice and precedent, particularly on recommendations from the Standing Orders Select Committee. That is all I wish to say about the rights of the House. We should not be misled into thinking that the two decisions that have been taken by the Standing Orders Select Committee are identical. The decision taken on 16 July this year is far more important and fundamental than that taken on 3 June 1986.

The second part of my remarks deals with the right of an individual petitioner, Mr. Barry Pattinson of Mill house, Ashford road, Newington. He owns one of a number of properties that will be affected more seriously by what the Secretary of State has correctly called the "joint southern access" rather than by the original scheme. Hon. Members on both sides who have taken an interest in the matter will be aware that the two proposed accesses to the Cheriton terminal were known respectively as WG1 and WG2. The Select Committee on the Channel tunnel, of which I was a Member, decided that the original proposal—WG1—was the proposal that the Committee would wish to see upheld. It was only subsequently that the alternative proposals were put forward for WG2 and were eventually accepted by the Select Committee in another place.

It is the Opposition's view that the rights of the petitioner to whom I have referred have not been fairly upheld or dealt with by reason of the fact that a decision taken by a Select Committee of this House has been overturned during a debate in the other place. I understand—I rely on Conservative Members who are more expert at procedural matters—that only the hybrid Bill procedure permits such an event to take place. On a private or public Bill, a decision arrived at in this House cannot be overturned in another place. I propose to spend a few moments detailing how and why the Opposition feel that Mr. Pattinson has been shabbily treated as a result of the decision in another place.

On 17 July 1986 the Government moved a motion in this House which had the effect of enabling the Select Committee to make the necessary amendments to the Channel Tunnel Bill in order to give effect to what were known then as the Shepway proposals. During the debate on the motion the Minister of State, Department of Transport said:

"Although the revised option would reduce the amount of land taken in the terminal, it would involve the acquisition of certain land not currently included in the Bill. For that reason, it is necessary to serve notice on land owners and tenants and to publish advertisements in the normal way so that those affected can petition against the amendments to the Bill." —[*Official Report*, 17 July 1986; Vol. 101, c. 1315.]

On 31 July 1986 the substituted plans in connection with the alternative access proposal were deposited in both Houses and at other offices as required by the Standing Orders. On 1 August 1986, notice to the landowners affected was served on the form required by the Standing Orders. I understand that notices were published in *The*

Times, *Dover Express*, *East Kent News*, *Deal Express*, *Folkestone Herald* and *London Gazette*, as required by the Standing Orders of the House.

The petitioner to whom I have referred lives at the Old Water Mill, Frogholt. He was formerly a tenant of the Department of the Environment but some years ago acquired the property from it and has expended considerable time and effort on restoring the mill, which dates from the 15th century.

As I said earlier, the original access proposals contained in the Bill — WG1 — did not involve the compulsory acquisition of Mr. Pattinson's property. However, the amendments that the Select Committee in this House were authorised to make would have necessitated the demolition of his home. Mr. Pattenson petitioned against the proposed alterations and was heard by the Select Committee on 21 October 1986. The Chairman of the Committee, Sir Alex Fletcher, told Mr. Pattinson that the Committee would be considering what view it might take of the alternative scheme within the next few weeks and told Mr. Pattinson that it was

"a 50/50 shot at the moment as far as your home is concerned."

On 18 November 1986 the Select Committee issued its special report. In discussing road access to the Folkestone terminal, the Committee considered that the suggested advantages proposed by Shepway did not justify choosing the alternative scheme, WG2. Accordingly, as was said in paragraph 123, the Committee favoured the "operationally preferred" original scheme.

One would assume that, having heard all the evidence and decided to reject the proposed amendment, the Select Committee conveyed not only that message but perhaps a sense of relief to Mr. Pattinson who was told that his home was to be spared and that he could continue restoring and repairing the property. However, following subsequent discussion held between Eurotunnel, Kent county council and the Shepway district council, an alternative to the proposal that the Select Committee had rejected was formulated and it was decided by the Government, in the way outlined by the Secretary of State, to empower the Select Committee in another place to make the necessary amendments to the Bill.

As I said, the alternative scheme—the joint southern access — involves the demolition of Mr. Pattinson's property. On the instructions of the Department of Transport, a letter was sent to him on 18 February 1987 notifying him of the amendments set out in Shepway district council's petition to the House of Lords. He was informed that he had until 27 February to deposit a petition against the proposed amendments — amendments which, it must be remembered, had previously been rejected by a Select Committee of this House.

The Minister for Local Government (Mr. Michael Howard): No.

Mr. Snape: The Minister says, "No." But most fair-minded people would agree that, once the WG2 decision had been rejected, Mr. Pattinson and his property had been reprieved and that was that. I concede that there are a few differences between the amended scheme and the WG2 scheme, not favoured by the Committee. I make no complaints about the Minister's work behind the scenes to change the original decision of the Select Committee, and I well understand the reasons for it. However, the fact that the decision was changed by the Select Committee in another place understandably leaves the petitioner with a sense of grievance.

I hope that we shall not have a detailed and convoluted argument about whether the scheme was identical to WG2; I accept that it was not. However, it had the same purpose, the reasons for which escaped the majority of us on the Select Committee. We took it that shuttle train passengers leaving Cheriton would have as their destination London or elsewhere. I shall choose my words carefully so as not to offend the Minister, because I understand the constraints of his office. We took it that those passengers would wish to head not for Folkestone but perhaps for more attractive parts of the country.

The alternative egress accepted by the Select Committee in the other place would head all the traffic leaving the terminal towards Folkestone initially. Passengers would have to change direction somewhere along the egress road if they wanted to head for London or other parts of the United Kingdom. That struck the Select Committee as somewhat illogical, which is why we made our original decision.

I hope that I have not strained your patience too much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I return to the question of the petitioner on whose behalf I am making my plea. A letter was sent to Mr. Pattinson on 18 February notifying him of the amendments as set out in the petition to another place — the petition of Shepway district council. I understand that Mr. Pattinson was not served a formal notice to landowners as prescribed under the Standing Orders. I understand, too, that no notices of the amendments were published in the national or local press or in the *London Gazette*. As the House will understand, the rehashing of proposals that Mr. Pattinson thought had been swept away by the decision of a Select Committee of this House inevitably caused him a degree of personal mental stress, and I understand that he was compelled to seek medical treatment.

The amendments relating to the joint southern access scheme were accepted by the Select Committee in the other place according to its special report of 6 May 1987, in paragraphs 16 to 27. We believe that, in deciding whether the admitted non-compliance with the Standing Order relating to the amendments should be the subject of a dispensation, all the relevant circumstances should be considered to determine whether it is just and equitable to dispense with the observance of safeguards that are, in large measure, designed to protect individual rights.

Opposition Members believe—it is to be hoped that this is also the view of one or two Conservative Members —that the rights of individual petitioners are worthy of being upheld. They should be upheld despite the wishes of multi-billion pound corporations, district councils or hon. Members of this House, whatever their party views and wishes and regardless of whether they support or oppose the scheme.

If the Opposition's view prevails and the motion is defeated, what can be done? We could of course reconvene what is left of the Select Committee of this House. I am conscious of the fact that we shall be short of a Chairman because Sir Alex Fletcher was not re-elected at the last general election.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): He was a victim of the poll tax.

Mr. Snape: My hon. Friend reminds me that he was a victim of the poll tax. However, perhaps we should not chuckle too loudly, because we are also short of Nick Raynsford, although I do not know whether he was a victim of the poll tax.

Mr. Howard: He was a victim of rates.

Mr. Snape: I do not think that we should argue any more about who was a victim of what. Let us all be grateful that we are back, anyway.

The Select Committee will be short of a couple of its distinguished members, but I do not think that that should stop us. We might have some difficulty in recruiting the hon. Member for Wantage (Mr. Jackson) because I understand that he has been elevated to higher things. However, the rest of us could get together as we did last September, although not necessarily in the opulent surroundings of the hotel in Hythe where we spent a few balmy summer evenings. I suppose that I will have to speak for myself: I am quite prepared to meet in the not so balmy surroundings of this House, in spite of the fact that we will not be right royally entertained during the Recess as everywhere will be locked, bolted and barred.

On my serious point, it is surely for a Select Committee of this House to make decisions and recommendations. Its decisions, in particular, should not be overturned by the decision of a Select Committee in another place. We wish to uphold both the rights of the House and the rights of an individual petitioner. Therefore, I invite those Conservative Members who say a great deal about individuals' rights and freedoms to join the Opposition in voting against the motion.

4.38 pm

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): Mr. Deputy Speaker, your appearance in the Chair reminds me of the number of times on which it has been averred that Mr. Speaker, and therefore his Deputies, are not prevented from exercising their rights as Members of the House to address the House on any issue in debate if they so choose. We are in a serious position because, whereas normally the Chairman of a Select Committee which has made recommendations which are the subject of debate in the House would explain the reasons why the Committee came to the conclusion that it did, it is just possible that, despite your presence in the Chair, the House will be without that guidance. Individual Members of the Standing Orders Committee, of which I am one, are not authorised on behalf of their colleagues to speak for the Committee as opposed to themselves.

It so happened that I was in the minority that voted in favour of dispensation, but I did so in the knowledge that Mr. Pattinson would not necessarily be without the redress of being heard by the House before it came to a conclusion on the amendment which would deprive him of his home, rather than merely having been heard in a somewhat peremptory and discourteous manner by a Committee in another place.

The vehicle by which Mr. Pattinson's case could have been put to the House first-hand would have been a Government resolution giving the parliamentary agent acting for him permission to appear at the Bar of the House and there to make a statement in Mr. Pattinson's cause. That is the course which I pressed upon the Government. In practical terms, I know from experience that when the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) was Leader of the House, he refused to allow such a motion to appear above the line on the Order Paper on the grounds that it was not his motion. In that case, it was my motion, but I take the same view on this occasion as I did then: a man should not be condemned unheard, as was the case then, or should not be deprived of his home, as in this case, without due process in this House.

Although I voted with the minority in the Standing Orders Committee for dispensation, in the knowledge that the Government could give that redress if such a motion was recommended to the House, I now discover that no such motion has been put down on the Order Paper. Therefore, my intention is to vote with the majority on that Committee, since the House is invited to dispense with the recommendation of that Committee, which never votes on party lines and which is a quasi-judicial Committee. That is why it is chaired by you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, rather than by a Back-Bench and non-office-holding Member of the House.

This is a serious issue. The only way in which Mr. Pattinson's case arrives before the Members of the House who will decide later in today's proceedings on the amendments recommended to us by another place is through a Member such as the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) — who put the case accurately, fairly and not at inordinate length — or through other Members of the House. On this issue, I do not admit to there being two sides of the House. This issue is one for the House of Commons, not for a number of political parties. If the House of Commons is not precious of the rights of individuals subjected to this heavy-handed process, the House is selling itself short.

Parliamentary agents and the right to petition exist in the case of hybrid Bills precisely because they are dealing with the rights of an individual in the same way as a private Bill would. But by what can only be described as an extraordinary aberration of procedure—certainly one of which I was unaware—the Standing Orders for private Bill legislation which would have prevented Mr. Pattinson from finding himself in this position, if the peril to which he was exposed was one of a private Bill, do not apply to what is termed a hybrid Bill, which was defined by Mr. Speaker Hylton Foster—I think it was on 10 December 1962, was it not — as a public Bill which has certain characteristics of a private Bill. That is why part of this procedure is the private Bill procedure.

I have sat on the Select Committees which have reviewed public business Standing Orders. A Joint Committee of both Houses is presently reviewing private Bill procedure. No Select Committee which has reviewed the operation of Standing Orders in the House has addressed itself to the anomaly whereby, when it is acknowledged that the protection of the private Bill procedure should apply to someone deprived of his home in this way, by that anomaly, which I had not previously observed, he is deprived of the protection of petitioning and being represented before a Select Committee of both Houses on the measure which this House is being invited to pass today.

I will not accept arguments that Mr. Pattinson has already petitioned once in this House about the value of his homestead, the fact that it was in the Domesday Book and matters of that sort. He is entitled to put before the House, either in person or by parliamentary agent, his case on the issue which the House will decide later today and

which has never been before a Select Committee of this House. It has only been before the Select Committee in another place, and I do not believe that anyone who reads the *Hansard* of that Committee's proceedings will come to the judgment that he was treated other than in a shoddy and discourteous way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. The hon. Gentleman, who is an expert in these matters, knows that he cannot say what he has just said, and I hope that he will withdraw it.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: I think I said that if anyone read the record, he would come to that view, not that anyone who has read the record has come to that view.

Mr. Snape: Perhaps I can assist the hon. Gentleman. He has the most amazing memory of anyone in the House since Lord Wilson of Rievaulx was standing at the Dispatch Box. I draw his attention to column 230 of the minutes of evidence taken before the Select Committee in another place.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will not compound what I regarded as the offence of the hon. Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop), who was reflecting adversely – as he must not do – on proceedings in another place. The hon. Member for Tiverton is as sharply aware as any Member in the House that he must not do that.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: I certainly would not claim that a Member who has read the transcript should express that view, but I am entitled to speculate that, in the hypothetical case, if a Member who has not yet read it wants to read it, he might come to that conclusion. I maintain that, by the thickness of something very thin indeed, I have just – only just – kept within the conventions of the House.

Mr. Snape: Perhaps I can emulate the hon. Gentleman in, I was about to say, the amount of thickness. However, I would be leading with my chin if I were to do so. Mr. Deputy Speaker, without in any way condoning the description that you thought the hon. Gentleman had made of the Chairman of the Select Committee in another place, perhaps I could ask the hon. Gentleman what he would think about somebody – I will not use their exact words – trying the patience of the Committee too far or saying: "We cannot deal with every detail of negotiation. A very handsome offer has been made by Eurotunnel. Accept that with good grace and get on with it." If somebody said that, I would not describe that as the height of politeness.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: A precedent that comes to mind that is an unhappy one is of the attempted compulsory purchase order served on Naboth on behalf of Ahab, his King. He was offered ample compensation. The point of principle was that he was not willing to accept it and do the deal. He came to rather a bad end. However, I do not want to be guilty of irrelevance, so I will return to the thrust of what I wish to say.

It is clear that Mr. Pattinson has not been heard in this House on the question that will be put from the Chair later in our proceedings, if the motion that we are now debating is carried. Members of the House are entitled to take a view about whether the proceedings in another place are an adequate substitute for the rights that Mr. Pattinson would have been at liberty to exercise to a Committee of this House in the normal exercise of private Bill Standing Orders. That is the issue. The issue is not the purely technical one about advertisements at certain dates. Mr. Pattinson knew his home was threatened notwithstanding the absence of those advertisements and the fact that it was impossible, as the amendment only appeared at the point in time that it did, for it to have been deposited by the due date last November. If those were the only issues, I would have no compunction in recommending that Standing Orders be dispensed with. However, the issue is one of substance and will not go away. If we allow it to, we will have done the House a disservice for the future.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): Is it not correct that Mr. Pattinson did present petitions, was represented before and gave evidence to Select Committees in both Houses of Parliament, and that, in giving evidence, the access to which he takes exception was discussed in great detail?

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: The point I made was not that he has not been able to petition against a different amendment that is not to be put before the House today. That is not in dispute. What I assert – it cannot be denied, because it is true – is that the amendment that will be put to the House later today was inserted into the Bill in another place by a Select Committee there and has never been before any Committee of the House. Therefore, it is undeniable that Mr. Pattinson has not been heard by any Committee of the House. He cannot have been heard by a Committee that has considered the amendment because, before later on today, that amendment will not have left another place and been transmitted for consideration to a Committee of the House. This is the issue. It is by fudging points of principle that dangerous precedents are created. It is immensely expensive and personally onerous to object even to a private Bill going through Parliament. To object to a hybrid Bill that has the whole majesty and financial status of the Government behind it is even more oppressive. If we abandon this point of principle, we will have done something that those who come after us will be ashamed of.

4.54 pm

Mr. Michael Foot (Blaenau Gwent): The hon. Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) has spoken with great fairness, persuasive power and knowledge on those matters, as all of us can testify, none so eagerly as myself because I can recall the advice that he has given to the House on a number of those occasions. It does not mean to say that I think that he is always right. However, I believe that any Government would be foolish not to listen to what he has to say on such matters, particularly when he has reconsidered his previous attitude. He is not altering the view that he took on the Standing Orders Committee, but he is prepared to come to the House and say that we should look afresh at the matter because we have fresh considerations before us. We owe him a debt of gratitude for the way in which he has put his case, and the Government and the rest of the House would be most unwise not to take account of what he has said, particularly because something special is happening here this afternoon.

The House of Commons never has to apologise for taking time, even at this stage in the Session, to discuss a conflict between individual rights and what the

[Mr. Michael Foot]

Government or other majorities may think are the rights of others. The most famous debates that have taken place in the House have been about individual rights, from ship money onwards. It is right that we should take up time, even when the Government have their own particular reasons for arranging the business for today in the way that they have.

I am also glad to be associated with my hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) in these matters. The Channel tunnel is about the only subject on which I do not happen to agree with him. The only good reason for the Channel tunnel is that it is supported by the National Union of Railwaymen. I differ from the whole project. The whole thing will come to a disastrous end anyhow. However, I am glad to be associated with my hon. Friend on the matter of principle that he, too, like the hon. Member for Tiverton, has insisted must take precedence over the other claims.

Mr. Snape: Does my right hon. Friend accept from me that it is not a question of the project being supported by the National Union of Railwaymen. I quite often disagree with the views of that union. I take the somewhat old-fashioned view, which I hope that he will accept, that if a project is good for the railways, it is good for Britain.

Mr. Foot: I know the high altitude on which my hon. friend always approaches these questions of principle. He never strays from it. Therefore, I can understand that he sees the two things as absolutely indistinguishable. It is a good way to operate. I am merely emphasising that I am especially glad to be supporting the claim that he is making. I believe that it is a very important one for the House to take note of. We are insisting that individual rights be protected and not be swept aside, and particularly not swept aside just for the convenience of the Government at a particular moment in the Session.

Would the motion have been brought forward in this form if the House had not been rising at the end of the week? We might have had a little longer to proceed. The triviality of the reason that the Government have had to bring it forward is emphasised all the more, The Session is not coming to an end. There is no great immediate crisis that demands that this change in procedure should be forced upon us at this time. It is just to suit the convenience of the Government in the management of their business.

There are few things less reputable than a Government managing their business towards the end of a Session. We can see what they are doing. We only have to look at what they are up to. A discussion about members' salaries is coming up. We are not quite sure which way the Prime Minister's mind has turned on that, but that may become more evident when Members vote later on. The Government have said to themselves, "Let us not have it too early on. Let us arrange the business on that Tuesday so that we can have this kind of discussion beforehand. It would suit us to get rid of this awkward case." This motion has been brought forward in this form today to suit the Government's convenience, even though it inflicts such injury on individual rights—as we have heard. That is a disreputable thing for the Government to do.

The Secretary of State has just taken over a new post. I feel sorry for him in this case as it is not his name on the motion — it is nothing to do with him. He has never heard of it before in his life. He would not have dreamt of coming before the House with such a proposition a few weeks ago. The motion is in the name of the Leader of the House, who has not been here at all from the beginning of the proceedings. We have the new Patronage Secretary, but he is a very poor substitute for the Leader of the House. Indeed, when I look at the whole business arranged for today and this motion, I see that it is a Chief Whip job forced on the House of Commons to suit the Government. The real Chief Whip who organised it — the Leader of the House — should have been here to move his own motion. Any previous Leader of the House would have done so. I once took the view that, once a Chief Whip, always a Chief Whip. I took that view about the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) but maybe I was wrong about him. The right hon. Gentleman does not act like a Chief Whip. When we see the casual camaraderie in which he greets everyone in the House he is no longer acting like a Chief Whip. The Leader of the House should try to escape from his old habits. He should not try to force through a motion of this major character at this time of the day. The Government probably thought that nobody would notice or perhaps that there would be only three or four hon. Members in the House.

The House should give full credit to the hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) who has fought on behalf of his constituents throughout the campaign so thoroughly and deliberately and who drew the attention of the House to this matter when the business was announced last Thursday. Not many others thought to do so, but even at that stage the Leader of the House thought that he might be able to get away without too much trouble.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: Will the right hon. Gentleman accept from me, as a member of the Select Committee on Standing Orders — I do not seek to disparage my colleagues on that Committee — that the decision was taken, not because of the civil rights of Mr. Pattinson, but because the majority of those on that Committee were pathologically anti-Common Market and anti-Channel tunnel. Mr. Pattinson's interests are, in my view, only peripheral to what occurred in that Committee.

Mr. Foot: We all know the state of cool, deliberate, uncalculated equanimity with which the hon. Gentleman approaches every issue. In the light of that, I would not accept immediately his judgment upon his fellow Committee members. I dare say that they were in fuller possession of their faculties than he was when the recommendations were going through.

The hon. Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) said that the normal procedures of the House should be accepted. If they are to be broken, they can be broken only on absolutely first-class grounds and when the case has been fully made by those responsible. The case has not been fully made by the Secretary of State. He is not responsible for it. We all know that he would not have dreamed of presenting a motion such as this only a few weeks ago. This motion has been devised by the new Leader of the House of Commons, who should have been here in order to present his case to the House. If individual rights are treated in such a scornful manner and are set aside, and the chief Minister responsible does not think that it is necessary for him to attend the House of Commons on the day that that happens, indeed it is not a good safeguard for the future and not a good augury for the way in which individual rights will be protected in years to come.

As my hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East said, I hope that the House of Commons will vote on the issue of whether individual rights are protected. That does not mean to say that we shall pass judgment on the Committee. Indeed, the Committee has not had the chance to present its case. In so far as it has had such a chance, we are overturning the decision that was presented to the House on 16 July – only a few days ago. We are asked to believe that, in the last few days of the Parliament – between 16 July and 18 July – a great crisis arose and that, somehow, if the matter does not go forward, the Government and the machinery of government will be put into great difficulty, so we must be prepared to accept it. The Government will get into further and further difficulties with the Channel tunnel project. That may be the reason they want to rush it through.

The people with money are the ones who are pushing. They are the people to whom the Government listen. Certainly they are most of the people who have the most money. Of course huge amounts of state money are now involved in the Channel tunnel project. Unfortunately, that money will not be spent in my constituency, elsewhere in Wales, in Scotland, or in most parts of the country that are crying out for it.

Mr. Keith Speed (Ashford): The right hon. Gentleman must know that the first two major contracts were placed in Glasgow and Leeds for the Channel Tunnel Group——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Perhaps I should check this matter before it goes any further. We are here to discuss not the merits or otherwise of the Channel tunnel, but the strict terms of the motion.

Mr. Foot: I was discussing the demerits of the Government's method of bringing it forward. In the proposition that they put before the House, they were persuaded by the pressures of getting the Channel Tunnel Bill through. Whatever we may think of its merits or demerits, I shall certainly be prepared at some other time, if I were in order, to argue how similar amounts of money could be much better invested in other projects that could bring many more jobs. That is not the matter that is to be discussed here. Why have the Government come forward and tried to rush through such a disreputable measure as this, at the fag end of a Session just before we depart for the summer recess? It is because money is at work. Money is saying to the Government, "If you do not get on with the Bill, we shall lose some of our money." That is not a proper reason for overriding individual rights or those of the House of Commons.

5.7 pm

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): The right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) has a great sense of the traditions and practices of the House. I am not at all surprised that he has described this miserable little motion as a disreputable proceeding. He is quite right in sensing that the power of money lies behind the motion. Perhaps the power of money is connected even with the timing of the motion. Indeed, it may not be unconnected with one aspect of money that various suggestions seemed to float around the House earlier today to the effect that it might be helpful – I must admit that it is the first time it has been said – if, in the course of the Bill's proceedings, I were to make a long speech. That might not be unconnected with the need to postpone the exquisite embarrassment of discussing our own pay in prime parliamentary time. I am sorry, not for the first time in the Channel Tunnel Bill proceedings, to have to disappoint the Treasury Bench. I shall make a short speech and, I hope, keep entirely in order and to the point.

Of course there are many good reasons for vigorously reiterating the arguments against the French benefit match, which the Channel tunnel project will be, but I know that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will not permit that. Therefore, I shall concentrate entirely on the motion. It is a purely procedural motion; it is all about an issue of principle and a thoroughly bad principle at that. Let us remember that the House has many Standing Orders. They are the rules that govern us and ensure fair play inside the House. Certain Standing Orders – the ones that are relevant to the motion – guarantee fair play for people outside the House. Those rules guarantee, for example, that an ordinary citizen, whose livelihood might be lost or whose home might be destroyed or purchased compulsorarily as a result of legislation such as this Bill, would have due and proper notice served on him within an acceptable and clearly defined timetable.

In plain language, Standing Orders are the rules that protect the rights of the small man against the abuses of the legislative power. We even have a Committee to interpret the Standing Orders because they are so important and because of the way in which they have developed over the years. I understand that it is normal for all three Deputy Speakers to sit on the Select Committee on Standing Orders, as do several senior hon. Members who have procedural expertise, despite the bizarre imputations that were cast by my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton).

That Committee has a reputation for being impartial and non-partisan. It goes without saying that its findings are respected and that, until today, they are invariably honoured by the House.

The Select Committee on Standing Orders ruled that the Government had broken the Standing Orders and that no dispensation should be given to them. What did the Government do? In a sudden flurry of expediency, they jettisoned all pretence of making the traditions and principles of the House stand up and instead tabled this disreputable little motion. Let us face it, this motion aims to shoot the ref, to sack the umpires and to move the goalposts. We are being asked to reject Parliament's own rules of fair play which, in the case of these Standing Orders, were designed to protect the rights of small home-owners who would be disadvantaged by Eurotunnel's mega-scheme.

We are seeing the first flexing of the muscle of the elected dictatorship that a Government with a big majority can so easily turn into. We are seeing that muscle used to do a favour for the big foreign business men of Eurotunnel and, in the process, to do down a few ordinary Kentish people by overthrowing our own parliamentary rules. That is not an attractive proposition and it is in sharp contrast to all the fine words that were spoken at the outset of the Bill about giving the people of Kent fair treatment and a fair hearing.

I could quote many words, but I remind the House that the then Secretary of State for Transport, my right hon. Friend the Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley) said when speaking to the Franco-British Council on 14 May last year:

[Mr. Jonathan Aitken]

"I firmly believe that it is necessary to allow the doubters and objectors the full panoply of Parliamentary opportunities and to respond to their objections whether they be personal, political or emotional with reasoned answers. Nor must we be seen to be stampeding the Bill through Parliament."

Surely those are words for eating.

Far from leaning over backwards to ensure fair play, this is the third major parliamentary occasion on which the Government have had to apologise, climb down or table a special motion to allow themselves to break their own rules and deny objectors their legitimate parliamentary rights.

The first occasion was on 3 June last year, after a tied vote in the Select Committee on Standing Orders. The issue then was whether Standing Orders had been broken, whether large numbers of petitioners had been denied their rights and whether many people had been stampeded by the Bill. The gut issue was that a number of notices had not been published by the due dates. One memorable example is that in a parliamentary answer a Minister from the Department of Transport said that the Department had placed a certain advertisement, on a certain date, in a newspaper called the *Canterbury Times*. The advertisement did not exist. It had not appeared on the stated date and the *Canterbury Times* had ceased publication in 1768. There were red faces all round. As a midnight compromise, the petitioning period was extended and as a result nearly 5,000 ordinary people put in petitions.

One would have thought that, after all that fuss and bother, the Department of Transport would have been careful not to deny petitioners their rights when the issue went to the other place. However, lo and behold, what did we find on the opening day of the hearings of the House of Lords Select Committee on the Channel Tunnel Bill? On 2 March 1987, virtually the opening words of Lord Ampthill, the Chairman of the Committee, were:

"The Committee have been most concerned to learn that despite public assurances to the contrary the Department of Transport did not intend to publicise the date 18 February, the day by which the Petitions had to be lodged, and that the Department was not induced to honour its undertaking until halfway through the Petitioning period . . . one is compelled to return to the leaflet which the Department put out before the proceedings in another place . . . there is a very clear undertaking made in that leaflet and the Department has reneged."

Mr. Fitzgerald, the Government's counsel, then said:

"My Lord, I take your Lordship's point completely and apologise . . . So far as Petitioners or potential Petitioners have been disadvantaged, obviously I unreservedly apologise to them."

The Chairman then said:

"Very well, Mr. Fitzgerald, we will not spend any more time on this one; we of course accept your apology but I think it is a matter which the Committee very greatly regrets."

One could not be much clearer than that. For the second time the Department of Transport was caught cheating in a particularly sneaky way, trying to deny petitioners their rights. It had to apologise and to grovel. After twice being caught out red-handed, one might have thought that the Department of Transport could not face another apology, another parliamentary debate or another "putting matters right" special motion.

However, they are procedural recidivists down there in Marsham street when it comes to denying people their rights and to breaking the rules. Here we are again, about to go into recess, about to discuss hon. Members' pay, and the Secretary of State comes along with a motion. I sympathise with the Secretary of State for having to move the motion because it is nothing to do with him—the message of which is, "Whoops, sorry chaps, we've been caught cheating again."

The Department has only three excuses. One is that the big guns want the road that lies behind these amendments. It is true that Eurotunnel, the French, the Government, all hon. Members representing Kent constituencies and even the noisy little pom-pom from Thanet, South want the road. However, the big guns are no excuse when the small man is denied his rights. For almost the first time in such proceedings I agree with every word spoken by the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) in his eloquent appeal in defence of the small man's rights.

The gentleman who was denied his rights—how good it is that we are spending so much time discussing them—was Mr. Barry Pattinson, whose house will be demolished as a result of the Bill. The history of Mr. Pattinson's experience is rather like that of a prisoner who is led to and from the scaffold so many times that in the end he does not know whether he will be reprieved or hanged. Under the original Bill, Mr. Pattinson's house was not to be demolished. Under the Government's proposals of July 1986, it was to be demolished. The Select Committee rejected those proposals by one vote. Mr. Pattinson was reprieved and told that his house was safe. The Standing Committee then heard a motion from my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe), who proposed a clause that would have caused Mr. Pattinson's house to be demolished. However, in circumstances of great nocturnal confusion, the Government persuaded my hon. Friend to withdraw his amendment. We then waited until the Lords' proposals were published in May 1987. Under them, Mr. Pattinson's house will be demolished.

Mr. Pattinson has been very badly treated. This time round, no notices were served on him about the new scheme telling him that he was again up for execution and that his house was again due for demolition. The spirit and letter of the Standing Orders were breached. No notices were served on him. Mr. Pattinson, poor man, has had a nervous breakdown or collapse of some kind. However, he was able to rush, virtually unprepared, to the House of Lords Select Committee, where he was given a hearing. I know that I am not allowed to comment on that hearing but perhaps I could develop a comment by simply quoting the words that were spoken. Mr. Pattinson was allowed to give evidence for about eight minutes. Then the Chairman came on rather strongly with these words:

"It is no comfort to you but it is to the Committee that only five houses have to be knocked down as a result of this vast project of the terminal at Cheriton. But that does not do much for you personally but do recognise as I said earlier that the effects of the previous scheme for access to the terminal site would have had really very upsetting effects, a much more enormous upsetting effect on other people".

At that point, Mr. Pattinson's agent intervened to ask whether Mr. Pattinson could be given the help of a house agent in approaching Eurotunnel. The Chairman replied:

"You must not try the patience of this Committee too far. We cannot deal with every detail of these negotiations. A very handsome offer has been made by Eurotunnel, accept that with good grace and get on with it."

Mr. Pattinson said:

"If this Channel Tunnel does not get built, which is quite possible, it will not get built, may I ask that I am allowed to stay in my property or re-gain . . ."

Mr. Pattinson was then interrupted again by the Chairman, who said:

"We really cannot enter that one. I think we really must not enter any more on this subject. I would not work on the assumption the Channel Tunnel is not going to be built, Mr. Pattinson, it is."

Poor Mr. Pattinson tried to get in edgeways, but the Chairman said:

"Go on, Mr. Pattinson, we really must move on to Mr. and Mrs. Fry now."

My hon. Friend the Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) speculated that the Chairman's attitude might have been peremptory and discourteous, and the House can judge that for itself. However, I do not like to see the small man bullied in such a way. I think that the bullying is continuing now. The House of Commons is being made to vote down its own Standing Order so that Mr. Pattinson can be bullied into oblivion and his house can be demolished. It is pretty shameful for an institution founded, as we were, to preserve individual liberties, to go along with this.

Of course I accept that my hon. Friends mean well, but they spelt out their intention clearly last Thursday. They have got to get the Bill through by the Summer recess. Why? The answer is so that Eurotunnel can send in its various money men around the world to the souks of Arabia, the geisha houses of Tokyo, the banking parlours of Libya and Africa and the Bourse of Paris to pass the hat round.

We should not let money rule this thing. Parliament should not go along with the steamroller money men. Parliament should stick to its traditions. Parliament should vote the motion down, which is rightly gravely embarrassing to the Government, and a good thing too.

5.20 pm

Mr. Stuart Holland (Vauxhall): I share the concern expressed on both sides of the House, especially that of my hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape), about the motion which proposes that Standing Orders relating to private business be dispensed with. I echo what he said about there being two main issues involved—first, the rights of this House and, secondly, the rights of individuals. It has been evident throughout the passage of the Bill that the powers of the House to scrutinise what is done in transport in relation to this project have been severely curtailed. I would like to give you, if I may, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some examples of that, as I am sure you would not wish me to come to the House with merely unsubstantiated allegations.

Ministers have claimed on key issues, to which the House and the Committee have the right to answers, that these are matters for British Rail. It is no surprise that I am especially concerned about the proposal for the overwhelming bulk of the traffic generated by the Channel fixed link to exit at the Waterloo station terminus.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Before the hon. Gentleman goes any further, I must tell him that what he is saying is not relevant to the motion and that he must not pursue that line of argument.

Mr. Holland: I am grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am aware that there are amendments concerning that matter which we shall consider later. I am glad that Mr. Speaker has been able to select amendments which I have tabled. I should like, however, to raise a procedural matter concerning the handling of questions put to Ministers by hon. Members.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am sorry, but the hon. Gentleman ought to address himself to the motion before the House, which is concerned with the decision of the Select Committee on Standing Orders, and whether the Standing Orders ought to be waived in respect of the Lords' amendments. He must address himself to that.

Mr. Holland: I am anxious that we should not suspend the Standing Orders, and that we should be able to give further consideration to the issues raised by the Lords amendments, because we do not have adequate answers to a range of questions concerning them. For example, time and again on the issues raised by the amendments, concerning the dispersal of traffic and other matters which we shall be considering later today, I have put questions to Ministers and have been palmed off because they said they were not prepared to answer them, as they are matters for British Rail.

An illustration that is relevant to the dispersal clause

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I would rather that the hon. Gentleman did not seek to give illustrations on matters that are not relevant to the motion before the House. We may consider the Lords amendments later today and the matters to which he is referring may be relevant then. However, they are certainly not relevant now.

Mr. Holland: The proposal before us is that, in effect, we should suspend Standing Orders and therefore the House would be unable to consider further the issues raised in Committee.

If you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, rule me out of order for raising some of those individual issues, it will be extremely difficult for me to make a case against the suspension of Standing Orders. If I may submit — of course I am subject to your guidance — there is a good deal of room for the expression of argument concerning individual cases. Such arguments have already been made by both sides of the House.

We should consider the issues that were raised in the Lords during the debate on the Lords amendments, on Report and on Third Reading. Columns 876 and 1160 of the Lords proceedings show that there is strong support for Customs inspection being undertaken on the trains.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am sorry, but I must tell the hon. Gentleman that his line of argument is not relevant to the motion before the House. Perhaps he might hold his arguments to see whether he will have the chance to deploy them when we reach the Lords amendments later in our proceedings.

Mr. Holland: I shall certainly do that, and I might not be as brief as some Conservative Members have been. However, that depends on whether or not I am able to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The rights of individuals to submit evidence to the Committee of this House and the Committee of the other place have been severely curtailed. That is true not just for the individual case concerning the person whose house may or may not be demolished, depending on what is agreed at a particular stage of this Bill, and therefore whose personal future is in jeopardy, but also in other respects. A range of questions have been put in Committee, but either they have been ruled out of order

[Mr. Holland]

by the Chairs of those Committees or, when it came to those relating to British Rail, they have received no adequate answer.

Let us consider the simple, basic question of how much traffic will be generated by the tunnel fixed link. It is intolerable that the answers given display utterly varying orders of magnitude. The Minister gave an answer to a question that I put down on Monday and estimated——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is disregarding the advice I have already given to him. If he persists I must ask him to resume his seat. Either the hon. Gentleman addresses the motion before the House, which he is not doing at the moment, or he resumes his seat.

Mr. Holland: There are a whole range of issues concerning this Bill and I make no apology to the House for raising those concerning my constituency. It has not been possible——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman, with or without apology, is out of order if he seeks to persist in raising the matters that concern his constituency, but do not concern the motion before the House. Unless the hon. Gentleman can confine his remarks to the motion before the House I must ask him to resume his seat.

Mr. Holland: With such active co-operation from you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I should like to raise one point if I may gain your tolerance. The Lords Committee has been unable to deal adequately with the range of issues in the Bill that affect both individuals and community groups. Certainly we shall be able to address some of those issues later today on some of the other amendments. However, we shall be unable to raise those matters in an adequate manner because some of the most basic figuring concerning the traffic to be generated by the Channel fixed link is still unclear. Widely varying estimates have been given.

I support what has been said by some Conservative Members with regard to the Eurotunnel figures. Those figures are high because it wants support for its flotation and therefore wants to get finance for the project. British Rail's estimated figure is much lower. The feasibility of the higher figure of traffic being sustained by a single terminus——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I must ask the hon. Gentleman to resume his seat. If I allowed the debate to continue along these lines, we would have a wide debate about the Channel tunnel in general.

5.30 pm

Mr. Julian Brazier (Canterbury): Hon. Members may be relieved to hear that I shall be brief. This is the first wedding anniversary that I have been able to spend in this country and I shall be in trouble with a higher authority if I speak for long.

Unlike the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) I have no objection to any of the amendments themselves but, as you have just reminded us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are not debating them. We are discussing a procedural motion that deals with the suspension of the statutory protections that the House affords to the people of this country. The motion is designed to enable a powerful, potentially monopolistic organisation to ease its way past the individual liberties that the House is here to protect.

This is an unseemly motion, papering over an unsound project. It is a feature of quasi-monopolistic, powerful bodies, of the sort that Eurotunnel will no doubt become, that, again and again, they have to come to the House and to other bodies to ask for the rules to be changed so that they can carry on with their business. I suspect that this will not be the last time that a special dispensation is requested. Many of us fought proudly under the Conservative banner, and continue to do so, because we believe that the Conservative party supremely stands for the protection of individual liberties in areas as far removed from the motion as the sale of council houses and the break-up of the monopoly of the trades unions. So it is sad to find that, in a matter such as this, the Government appear at both levels to be moving against individual rights. That is demonstrated by the measure before us and by the underlying fact that we shall be setting up this quango, for want of a better word.

During discussion of the last procedural motion on the Channel tunnel, I reported the deep unhappiness of many of my constituents about the lack of procedures that has obtained in these matters. I have noted the number of people who have told me that they would have liked to make their representations heard but could not do so for reasons that have already been outlined at length by previous speakers. Such people feel justified fears that if their normal rights, as upheld by the House, are suspended, more may follow. Their fears extend to things in the real world outside the Chamber—to the wave of ribbon development that is currently spreading across the garden of England, as it once was.

I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it would be out of order for me to comment on specific issues relating to the underlying effects that the Channel tunnel will have on the area, but it sets a frightening precedent for my constituents once again to see the rules being suspended.

Unlike previous speakers, I and my hon. Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) who, I believe, may be speaking in a little while, have not been privileged to take part in the various debates of the past 17 months on this issue.

Mr. Snape: Why not?

Mr. Brazier: We were not Members of the House, as the hon. Gentleman well knows. I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you in your wisdom will determine whether I am in order or not; however, I would not be able to forgive myself if I sheltered entirely behind my constituency interests in saying that I feel profoundly unhappy about this matter. As I said earlier, this is an unseemly motion, covering an unsound project. There is a feature of monopolistic bodies that come to the House from time to time to ask for the rules to be suspended; they tend to do so most often when they are in trouble and losing money. I firmly believe that Eurotunnel will come back to the House because it will get itself into problems which, if I were to describe them in too much detail, would take me beyond the rules of order.

I started my business career with what I believe is the world's largest mining consortium. Should the procedural motion be passed, and should the promoters find themselves this summer in the markets succeeding in raising money, they would rapidly discover that geologists only tell one the bad news after one has started to dig the hole. I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Dover

hopes to mention some other ways in which the project is fundamentally unsound, so I will not dwell on them in too much detail. If the procedural motion is passed – and, as a result, we rush through the legislation before it has been fully debated – and the money is raised in the markets this summer, we may find that we have done precisely the reverse of what the Conservative party tried to do and succeeded time and again in doing – namely, reducing the number of powerful and unnecessary bodies in the country. I refer to trade union barons and to some of the state monopolies that have been liberalised.

I am bringing my remarks to a close, as I see no great benefit in length. I fear that we shall find that we shall have built a fundamental frailty into our trading relationships with Europe, based around a sad, sick and unhappy monopoly the legal basis of which will have been pushed through against the rules of the House. It will survive making a miserable loss and competing in a price war against the ferries – ultimately achieving a position that will be bad for Britain's trading relationship with Europe.

You, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have allowed me to go a little beyond the bounds of the motion and I do not want to abuse your indulgence in this matter any further, except to say that I think the House may find that we shall wake up one day to discover that we have built an Achilles heel for Britannia.

Nevertheless, if the motion goes through this afternoon, and the money is raised in the markets, speaking as the hon. Member for Canterbury, for myself and, I believe, for some of my hon. Friends who represent constituencies in Kent, I may say that there will be no carping or sour grapes from us. Whatever our reservations, and whatever the feelings in our constituencies, we shall work with the organisation to make the best that we can of the project, provided that the Government and Eurotunnel respect the environmental considerations in east Kent.

5.38 pm

Mr. Keith Speed (Ashford): I am grateful to my hon. Friends the Members for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) and for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken), and to one or two other hon. Members who have spoken in the debate for making it clear that we are not discussing the motion but are engaged in Channel tunnel bashing yet again. I do not object to that, because I have heard similar speeches from my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South over the past 18 months. I do not think that they improve much with the keeping, and I expected the speech that he made today.

My hon. Friend the Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) made some important points. However, let us consider what we are discussing: changes that were designed to meet the overwhelming wish of the majority of people in the area concerned. They were supported by all parties – I stress, all parties – on the Shepway district council. Of course, Mr. Pattinson and, no doubt, one or two other individuals, are important people who are entitled to be heard, but the House must understand that hybrid Bills are hybrid Bills, not private or public Bills. They are special beasts.

Secondly, Parliament includes another place. We may not like to admit it, but there has been a certain element of schizophrenia here today. Hon. Members have said that Mr. Pattinson and others have been able to speak only to another place, and have not been able to get across their point of view about the changed access to this House – as if the Select Committee of another place were some inferior body. As a constitutionalist I do not accept that. The other point of view is that, if one accepts that a Select Committee in another place is part of the procedure, then Mr. Pattinson was given scant and bad treatment. I would be out of order if I commented upon that, but I do not accept that he was given such treatment.

It would be unwise for the House in a frenzy of anti-tunnel, and in one or two cases a frenzy of anti-European, activity to attack a procedural motion designed to try to help local people. The right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) was certainly anti-European in his speech. The motion is designed to help Eurotunnel, the Government and the local authorities to act in a sensible way to meet what is clearly the overwhelming wish of local people, of the local elected authority and my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard). He has been working on this with great sensitivity on behalf of individuals and his constituents and also working with all the parties in the Shepway district council. I pay tribute to my hon. and learned Friend for his work in trying to get the best answer to a very difficult problem.

It is, perhaps, sometimes forgotten that the original scheme would have taken an additional 40 acres of very beautiful countryside and was overwhelmingly unpopular with local people. Those points have to be made because they have not been made before. The House always faces this kind of dilemma when one embarks upon great public enterprises. That applies whether the enterprise is a road, an airport scheme or a tunnel. At the end of the day, some people inevitably lose their property. Sometimes it is not a case of people losing property but of unfortunate people who will be adversely affected by a scheme and will have to live with it. They cannot sell the property and have to live with the traffic or the aeroplanes rushing past. Wherever possible we should take every step to ensure that such people, who are important, are treated properly, sensitively and generously.

Parliament has to decide whether one, two or three individuals can be allowed to hold up major schemes. I do not have to remind the House of the delays to the completion of the M25. Two or three people, quite properly and within the law, delayed the completion of that great motorway. Some people, quite properly, delayed the completion of the M3 past Winchester. One wonders how many people were killed on the existing substandard roads as a result of those delays. People are entitled to object to schemes and a balance must always be struck. I do not know this area as well as does my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Folkestone and Hythe, but I know it very well and I know the views of all the parties on the district council. Given those factors and the way that my hon. and learned Friend has acted, I am convinced that the House would not be wise if it did not pass the motion. My hon. and learned Friend clearly outlined the proposition to the House.

There is no point at the end of this Session in involving ourselves in great furore against the tunnel. My hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) mentioned that. My hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitkin) conjured up visions of Libyan banks and geisha houses in Japan and all sorts of other things. They are good emotive terms, but he knows that the House has been discussing this matter for a long time, as has another place. In a way that is unique, not only in the West

[Mr. Keith Speed]

but in the world as a whole, Parliament has taken a great deal of time, care and expertise to try to solve all the legitimate problems of individuals.

I certainly hope that people such as Mr. Pattinson can be properly, sensitively and generously compensated for the undoubted loss or disadvantage that they will suffer. There is no question that in a scheme of this kind individuals will suffer. That is inevitable. When the first railway was built individuals suffered, and when the first road was built, whether by the Romans or even before their time, individuals suffered. The argument is for the greater good of all. Of course we must be careful that the greater-good-of-all argument is not used as an excuse to crush individuals.

Our procedures in another place have not operated against individuals. I support the motion. Let us get on with the motion and with the amendments moved in another place. In a period of buoyant optimism, as opposed to the pathetic, negative depression with which some of my hon. Friends seem to regard this project, we can turn into reality what we have been talking about for far too long.

5.45 pm

Sir John Farr (Harborough): Some hon. Members who spoke were not at the meeting of the Select Committee on Standing Orders last Thursday. It would help the House, and clear up genuine misunderstanding, if I said something about how this quite ancient Select Committee works. It is not a pressure group for or against the Common Market. It consists of 11 hon. Members, and the Chairman is the Chairman of Ways and Means. We meet from time to time to decide whether Standing Orders should be dispensed with.

I am sure that the Minister has not grasped the reason why I feel so incensed about being asked to approve this Government motion. It is that on the Select Committee on Standing Orders we send for witnesses. We listen to experts and have given to us a point of view that, rightly or wrongly, enables the members of the Committee to make the right decision. The Government machinery is asking the House to steamroller aside a decision taken on a five to three free vote in Committee. My hon. Friend the Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) who is not in the Chamber, admits that the vote would be six to two if he had to vote again after what he has learned.

The Committee heard the witnesses giving evidence. It is not possible for all hon. Members to have the benefit of hearing the evidence that we heard. It is a tragedy that, within four or five days of the Committee meeting on Thursday morning, the Minister and the Government machine are asking the House to sweep aside the Committee's decision. We may have taken a wrong decision, but I and the other members of the Committee were in a far better position to judge the matter. That is because we heard the evidence from the witnesses and the experts and read the papers that other hon. Members in all parts of the House did not see because they did not have time.

If I may say so without punishment, we are seeing all that is bad in the party whipping system. An awkward little Select Committee has taken an awkward little decision because it thinks that the decision should be taken. That is inconvenient for the Government machine and for that reason the House is being asked to push aside the decision of the Select Committee. I urge my hon. Friends to bear in mind before overruling the decision of the Committee that we took the decision after hearing all the witnesses that we had time to hear.

I have been on the Select Committee long enough with you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to know that you attend to your duties in a punctilious manner. In the course of a year we could have 10 to 20 meetings and a whole range of private or hybrid Bills to consider. After hearing the witnesses we are advised by learned counsel whether it is right that Standing Orders should be dispensed with, and we generally accept learned counsel's recommendation.

On Thursday, the Committee decision was taken quite clearly and openly. We feel that an injustice is established in this motion that the House is being asked to approve. By a vote of five to three—which, as I say, would have been six to two—we felt that Standing Orders should not be dispensed with and that Mr. Pattinson had not had a chance to have his case heard by the House. It had been heard before the other place. Over the years, we have established the fact that the ordinary people should have an opportunity to be heard before both Houses of Parliament. Tonight my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is asking us to sweep aside that traditional practice. This is a sad and sorry day for democracy in Britain.

I shall be voting against the motion tonight and I hope that a number of my hon. Friends will join me. I feel most strongly that we took the best decision in the Select Committee as we knew far more than hon. Members on both sides of the House can know because we had experts to advise us. We are now being asked to cast the decision aside. That is intolerable.

5.50 pm

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): When Sir Alex Fletcher was temporarily absent from the Select Committee on the Channel Tunnel Bill last year, I had the privilege to chair that Committee. As Sir Alex Fletcher is temporarily—we hope—absent from the House tonight, I want to say a word about the motion from the vantage point of the Select Committee.

The motion is unusual. Every previous speaker has recognised that. However, I believe that those who have spoken against the motion have ignored the three reasons upon which it is based. We are dealing with a very unusual Bill. It is complex and controversial and, above all, it embraces a number of very important interests which cannot always be easily reconciled one with another. Secondly, the motion arises because the House has been determined from the start of the proceedings on the Bill more than a year ago—I stress that to my hon. Friends who have suggested that we are being stampeded—to ensure that the interests were fully protected and fairly handled throughout the Bill's passage. Thirdly, the motion is worthy of support because the amendments before the Select Committee on Standing Orders arose during the Bill's passage and because of the exceptional trouble that the House took to safeguard the private interests and to reconcile them wherever possible.

I bear some witness to that exceptional trouble because I was a member of the Select Committee of this House which last year sat for 36 days from 10 am to 8 pm during four weeks of the recess. It sat for 220 hours and heard nearly 5,000 petitions against the Bill.

The steps that were taken to safeguard the interests with regard to the access to the Cheriton terminal were the most exceptional. That was due in no small part to the determination of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard) to protect and advance the interests of his constituents. My hon. and learned Friend and his friends, his local authority and other interested parties came back to persuade the House on 17 July to empower the Select Committee to consider alternative access proposals because the original scheme, inelegantly entitled WG1, did not protect or advance the interests of his constituents. The original version of the alternative access proposals was called WG2.

In the event, the Select Committee was not persuaded in favour of the proposals. However, my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Folkestone and Hythe is very determined — just how determined we shall probably find out as this legislative Session unfolds—and he went on to work with his constituents, the district council and other bodies involved to formulate a different version of alternative access arrangements which were then submitted to a Select Committee of another place and were agreed by that Committee to be the joint southern access arrangements.

It should be no surprise therefore to the House to learn that the Select Committee on Standing Orders a week or so ago ruled that the Standing Orders have not been complied with. We predicted that in the debate a few days ago. It was obvious from the start that the various Standing Orders relevant to the deposition and sending out of notices and publication of notices could not possibly have been complied with because the arrangements to which they related were devised long after the Bill had been published and formulated. Having ruled that the Standing Orders had not been complied with, the Select Committee had to decide whether they should be dispensed with.

We cannot satisfactorily answer that question because we have not had the benefit of reading the proceedings of the Select Committee on Standing Orders. We have not had the advice of the Chairman, although we have heard the advice of some of the Select Committee members this afternoon. We are bound to observe that, in moving from the question whether the Standing Orders have been complied with to the further question whether the Standing Orders should be dispensed with, the Select Committee on Standing Orders has moved from an area in which its advice might be useful to the House to an area of decision making where it is beginning to impose itself on the House.

My hon. Friend the Member for Harborough (Sir J. Farr) constantly referred to a decision that had been taken by the Select Committee. The Select Committee on Standing Orders cannot take a decision on whether the Standing Orders should be dispensed with. Only the House can take that decision. Having agreed that the Standing Orders have not been complied with, the Select Committee on Standing Orders can offer us advice on whether the Standing Orders should be dispensed with. However, the Select Committee on Standing Orders cannot decide that matter for the House. It is for the House this afternoon to decide whether the Standing Orders should be dispensed with.

Sir John Farr: Of course the proceedings of every Select Committee are governed by this House. There were two items of business on the agenda when the Committee met on Thursday. The first was to approve the normal Sessional resolutions and the other was to consider whether the Standing Orders should be dispensed with. We came to a decision about the second. I would say that every Committee decision is a recommendation to the House. Only in most unusual and exceptional circumstances do the Government choose to overturn a decision in this way.

Mr. Fallon: I do not think that we are too far apart. In the second topic of business on the agenda — the consideration the Committee came to a resolution. It is up to the House to decide very shortly whether to uphold that resolution or to reject it. We would be justified in upholding that resolution of the Select Committee on Standing Orders only if there were private interests affected by the new joint southern access arrangements which were unaware of the arrangements, were taken unawares by them or did not have sufficient or ample opportunity to put their views to Parliament.

The first test cannot be met. No one on either side of the argument is suggesting that Mr. Pattinson or indeed one or two others who are now adversely affected by the joint southern access arrangements could possibly have been unaware of the promoters' proposals. The second test — whether Mr. Pattinson and others had ample and sufficient opportunity to be heard by this House — is crucial for the House. I understand that Mr. Pattinson appeared before the Standing Orders Select Committee. He wanted the various Lords amendments, which we shall consider later, to be considered by a fresh Select Committee.

There are three points to be made about that. First, Mr. Pattinson appeared before the Commons Select Committee on 22 October last year. Secondly, he appeared before the House of Lords Select Committee on 12 March this year. Thirdly, if a third Select Committee were established to consider the matter all over again — Mr. Pattinson has recognised that there would be petitioners for and against the new joint southern access arrangements — it is highly likely that there would be more petitions in favour of those arrangements than against. No useful purpose would be served by setting up a further Select Committee to hear these arguments again.

In the absence of any further reasoning from the Standing Orders Committee — I think that one Committee member has still to speak to us — I submit that the House should not uphold the Standing Orders Committee's resolution, not decision, but should support the motion.

6.1 pm

Mr. David Shaw (Dover): At the start of the debate, I was somewhat pleased that the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) had spoken up. It seems that he will lead the first official Labour party vote against the Government on the Channel tunnel issue.

Mr. Snape: I know that the hon. Gentleman is new here, but it is important that he gets matters right. The Labour party voted against the Bill on Second Reading on the grounds that the issue demanded a public inquiry. If the hon. Gentleman is implying that, because of my support for the Channel tunnel, I have acted in any way against my party's policy, he is wrong on that, too.

Mr. Shaw: I would not in any way suggest that the hon. Gentleman was behaving improperly and I withdraw any

[Mr. Shaw]

such allegation. But it was of note during the election campaign that Labour party members made many national speeches in favour of the building of the Channel tunnel, although they endeavoured, wherever possible locally in Dover, to deny that the Labour party was in favour of that project. I totally accept that the hon. Gentleman's principles for or against the rights of the individual and for or against political convenience may be called into question occasionally, but, of course, in all instances I would apply the most noble considerations to his motives.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): I served on the Channel tunnel Select Committee, as did the hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon). My hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) behaved in a most proper way during the Select Committee's hearings.

Mr. Fallon: Yes.

Mr. Rogers: I am glad that the hon. Gentleman agrees. Although I disagreed with the Labour party's policy on the Channel tunnel, I was happy to sit in an investigative capacity and to do my duty properly on the Select Committee. It ill becomes an hon. Member, new or old, to impugn motives that are less than honourable. The hon. Gentleman should withdraw his remark.

Mr. Shaw: If I may correct the hon. Gentleman, I said that at all times I would apply the most noble of motives to the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East. I would in no way imply that he was being hypocritical in the House, although some hypocrisy was noted in Dover when comparing the various manifestos and literature.

I should like to concentrate on the motion before the House. It is important that we are not sidetracked into considering overall political matters. The House of Commons is a House of political judgment where behaviour should be of the highest standards, as I implied.

Mr. Rogers: It is a pity that the hon. Gentleman does not conform to that idea and apologise.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order.

Mr. Shaw: Not only should hon. Members behave according to the highest standards but the House and its Members should comply with the procedures that are published and available to the public. It is the public who have to bear the brunt of our deliberations and decisions.

The procedures on the Channel Tunnel Bill, and this procedure in particular, have been rushed. The constituents of Dover and I are concerned that, if the Channel tunnel is built — there are still many grave doubts about that — it will exist for some 50 or more years. The House should get matters right when considering such a long period.

My hon. Friend the Minister of Public Transport made a slight error last time we discussed this measure. He seemed to be under the impression that I had referred to the Commons Select Committee hearings not being properly advertised in terms of inviting people to petition. In fact, I was referring to the House of Lords Select Committee. It was apparent from Lord Ampthill's comments that the Department of Transport had not given enough notice. He felt obliged to criticise that Department. That has been a source of continual regret to me and many of my constituents who were not able to submit petitions within the deadline, some seven days after advertising.

During the limited time in which I have been a Member I have endeavoured to come to grips with that large volume called "Erskine May". It appears from a number of examples that the procedures followed have been wrong and that advertising did not occur as it should have. Many of those examples referred to that modern means of transport some 100 years after the Channel tunnel was first thought of—the tramway—and to improper advertising. It seems from the various deliberations that, wherever possible, the House required the correction of the procedures that had gone wrong. The problem with this error is that it cannot be corrected. It is not possible to re-advertise and go through all the procedures. There is no time to do so and Mr. Pattinson has already spent an immense amount of money and a whole year on improving his property. The House must search its conscience hard and consider whether it should pass this motion, which rides roughshod over previous decisions. I believe that it should not be passed. This would reveal, not only to Mr. Pattinson but to all the people of Dover, that the House feels strongly that the Channel Tunnel Bill should have gone through the proper procedures and that they should have been enabled to take part in the petitioning process as much as they wished.

6.7 pm

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): I shall endeavour to be brief. Like some of my hon. Friends, I have sat for a number of years on the Select Committee on Standing Orders. I believe that I am right in saying — I always bow to my hon. Friend the Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop), whose knowledge of these matters is profound and much respected—that the Standing Orders Committee met more frequently and sat longer on the Channel tunnel issue than on any other issue in living memory.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop *indicated assent.*

Mr. Winterton: My hon. Friend nods, so clearly I am right.

To pick up the points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Harborough (Sir J. Farr), members of that Select Committee, which you chaired with great distinction, Mr. Deputy Speaker, had the opportunity to read statements and evidence which perhaps has not been read or appreciated by many hon. Members. I include, for instance, the statement on behalf of Barry Pattinson opposing the application for dispensation with the Standing Orders, Mr. Pattinson's memorial complaining of non-compliance with the Standing Orders, the statement on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State in support of the application for dispensation with the Standing Orders and extracts — some long, some short—of proceedings in another place dealing with Mr. Barry Pattinson's evidence.

We have heard some very colourful and emotional speeches this afternoon. I respect the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot), and I always come into the Chamber when he speaks because of the entertainment that he provides. He is flamboyant and he is forthright. He feels deeply what he says. However, detail and specifics are

not the strength of his speeches. I say that with respect, because I know that he is held in immense respect both inside and outside the House.

My hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) gave us a well-mustered series of arguments in support of his case, which he has put extremely well time and again, both in the House and to the Select Committee on Standing Orders. However, some of the examples that he quoted were very specific and very limited, and I only wish that he had advanced some of the other matters involved in dealing with this extremely complicated and important issue.

Let me make it perfectly clear that I am going to support the Government when we vote. Along with my hon. Friends the Members for Tiverton and for Rugby and Kenilworth, I was one of the three who voted in the Select Committee to dispense with Standing Orders. In a moment, I shall endeavour to explain why I did that, and why I believe that the House should vote for the motion.

Let me pick up a point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Ashford (Mr. Speed), who in my estimation made the best contribution to today's debate. He spoke factually and from knowledge, which I think will help the House to take its difficult decision. He accurately pointed out that the joint southern access had been agreed by all the local authorities in the area. It has been agreed by amenity societies, and by hundreds of people who are concerned about the Channel tunnel. I therefore believe that the proposal that is the root cause of the debate should be fully understood by the House. It is not simply a matter of Eurotunnel seeking to stampede the House and the Government into a hasty decision. The joint southern access has been agreed between Eurotunnel, Kent county council, Shepway district council, the amenity interests and the other people whom I mentioned a moment ago.

Let me deal specifically with Barry Pattinson. The debate in the Select Committee on Standing Orders and the debate this afternoon have occurred because of that individual, and we respect what he stands for. However, we should take other matters into consideration. Mr. Pattinson petitioned against the amendments in both Houses, and gave evidence in support of his petitions to both Select Committees—in the House of Commons on 22 October 1986 and in the House of Lords on 12 March 1987. He appeared as a memorialist before the Examiners and, as was said by my hon. Friend the Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon)—who also made a valuable contribution to the debate—he appeared with his agent before the Select Committee on Standing Orders when it met last week.

If we are to deal with the matter properly, we must understand on what grounds the Committee and the House can dispense with compliance with Standing Orders and allow a Bill to proceed. Again, I am referring to papers with which the Committee was provided last week. I understand that a number of factors must be taken into account: delay on the part of sponsors, and the reason for that delay; the public interest; the urgency of the matter; and the extent to which other parties are affected. We have been advised by you and by your Counsel, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and all those matters have been discussed at some length in the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

I think that I am right in saying—in regard to delay—that within two weeks of the House's instruction empowering its Select Committee to consider alternative proposals for access, and to make amendments if it thought fit, the documents relating to the amendments in question had been prepared and deposited. The necessary notices were immediately served, and publication of the public notices began.

The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East has been consistent and honourable throughout the debates on the Bill, and I support him in many of the reasons for which he supports the Bill. It will be good for British Rail, and therefore good for the country, because it will help communication. I say that to show that there is quite a lot of common ground between us. But, on grounds of public interest and urgency, there is clearly a case for Standing Orders to be waived.

Mr. Pattinson is the linchpin in this matter. I say this with every respect for the forceful case made by my hon. Friend the Member for Tiverton, but I have reached a different conclusion from him. I believe that Mr. Pattinson has had every opportunity to present his case.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: So that my hon. Friend does not unwittingly place untrue statements on the record, may I ask whether he agrees that the actual proposal on which we are to vote, and which will take away Mr. Pattinson's house, has never been before a Committee of the House? He referred to different proposals and different amendments from those on which we shall vote.

Mr. Winterton: I understand that, while the specific matter relating to an amendment that could demolish Mr. Pattinson's house has, indeed, not been before the House, the access route which will demolish his house has been considered at length in both Houses by Select Committees, and—as the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East has said—has been rejected.

Let me return to a point made earlier in the debate by the hon. Member for Ashford. In any major civil engineering project—and this is perhaps one of the largest such project in the history of the world—it is inevitable that some people's interests cannot be fully safeguarded. However, I can say from knowledge of what occurred in the Select Committee of Standing Orders that Eurotunnel, local authorities and others are doing their utmost to assist Mr. Pattinson. He has been introduced to some 20 properties, but he has found it necessary to reject them. He would have liked to buy one of them, but the lady who owned it ultimately decided not to sell. Everyone is going out of their way to assist him, to ensure that he receives the maximum possible compensation and to give him all the advice and support that they can.

The crux of the matter is that I do not believe that those wishing to oppose the amendments have been prevented or handicapped by the lack of earlier notice. That is what this debate is about. Let me repeat for the benefit of the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East that Mr. Pattinson presented his petitions in time, and was represented before, and gave evidence to, Select Committees in both Houses.

Mr. Fallon: Has my hon. Friend considered the logical extension of the points made to him by our hon. Friend the Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop): that if every petitioner who was affected by an amendment made to a hybrid Bill in another place were to be afforded a second opportunity to petition against the detail, not the substance, of that amendment, an entirely separate Committee stage would be required in this place to consider the Lords amendments?

Mr. Winterton: I do not need to respond to my hon. Friend, because he has developed his own argument. It would be nonsense; we should indeed need to develop a new Committee stage system. The promotion of any major civil engineering or other project would take so long that it could never be financed, so we should make absolutely no progress.

I have great reservations about the European Community. However, having made an active study recently of British Rail and of the Channel tunnel project, I believe that it will be of immense benefit to this country. The overwhelming majority of the people of Kent will benefit from the tunnel. It would be very unfortunate, therefore, if their future were to remain uncertain. The House would be doing them no service. For that reason, I shall support the Government tonight. It is the only reasonable and rational course to take.

6.21 pm

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): I have listened carefully to the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) and to those of my hon. Friends. I wonder where else in the world and in which other national legislature Mr. Pattinson would have had such a fair and square deal and such a fair and thorough consideration of his circumstances.

Mr. Aitken: My hon. Friend is quite right, and we should take pride in that. But the opposite is also true. What other legislature in the world would allow its Government to put through, on a three-line Whip, a motion to do down Mr. Pattinson?

Mr. Adley: My hon. Friend tempts me. Does he seriously suggest that in the Kremlin there would be an airing for Mr. Pattinson? My hon. Friend has not made a very good point. However, he enables me to move quickly to my second point, which has already been referred to by my hon. Friends the Members for Darlington (Mr. Fallon) and for Harborough (Sir J. Farr). It is that not only members of the Select Committee but all hon. Members have an interest in this motion. Many of my hon. Friends will accept my proposition that I am not the most slavish follower of the advice that is given by the Whips. However, I am perfectly happy to accept the Government motion. I make the point to my new hon. Friends the Members for Dover (Mr. Shaw) and for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) that many of us listened to Sir Peter Rees and to Sir David Crouch making a quite different case on behalf of the constituents my hon. Friends now represent. I am bound to say that I listened briefly to their comments but that I listened at length to those of their predecessors.

Mr. Brazier: In his last speech to the House, Sir David Crouch distinguished clearly and correctly his own views from those of his constituents and made it clear that, though he supported these proposals, the vast majority of the people in his constituency did not do so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will not be tempted into going into the merits of the Bill. We are dealing with the procedural motion that is before the House.

Mr. David Shaw: Perhaps you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will allow me to speak briefly on that point. In my maiden speech I paid tribute to the way in which Sir Peter Rees looked after his constituency interests. After he had left the Cabinet he felt that it was appropriate to disavow the collective responsibility that he had accepted in Cabinet. Consequently, after that date he opposed very strongly at all stages the Channel Tunnel Bill.

Mr. Adley: My hon. Friend the Member for Dover rose on a point of order, and it is not for me to answer it. All I would say to my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury is that he has confirmed that Sir David Crouch put what he believed to be the national interest ahead of what he knew was popular in his constituency. Many hon. Members applaud him for doing so.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has been a Member of this House for longer than I have, and tonight he will have heard familiar voices attached to familiar faces making familiar points. The Government are absolutely right to bring forward this motion. The House has had plenty of time to make its collective view known. I shall refer to a speech that was made in my constituency by my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes), because it sums up the opposition to the Bill. One of his constituents said to him recently, "I don't want this tunnel because I don't want all this rabies brought into Britain." My hon. Friend made the point that France is by no means full of rabid dogs, to which my hon. Friend's constituent replied, "Oh, it's not the dogs I'm concerned about; it's the Frenchmen." This is a last-ditch attempt to stop the Bill. I need no encouragement whatsoever to follow my right hon. Friend into the Lobby and vote in favour of the motion.

6.26 pm

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North): I apologise to the House for the fact that I missed the earlier part of the debate. I was detained by some rather sombre business in my constituency.

I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) that this is a last-ditch attempt to frustrate the will of the House. I hope and believe that I have fought as hard as any on behalf of my constituents in my corner of Kent, but the will of the House has been clearly expressed. Therefore it is not for the Standing Orders Committee to seek to undermine the will of the House.

Throughout these deliberations my hon. Friend the Minister of State has listened courteously to our arguments and he has responded to them. We are grateful to him for doing so. We have most certainly benefited from that. The will of the investors has still to be tested. If the Channel tunnel project goes ahead, I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) that we shall fight tooth and nail to ensure that the benefits of the tunnel come to north-east Kent and that they do not go to the Pas de Calais. As it is not the business of the Standing Orders Committee to seek to frustrate the will of the House and as the will of the House has already been expressed, I shall support the Government.

6.27 pm

The Minister of Public Transport (Mr. David Mitchell): The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) referred to the principle involved and to the specific case of Mr. Pattinson. I agree that it is right that this House should be concerned about the rights of an individual. Therefore I shall seek to refer fully to the points that he has raised.

My hon. Friend the Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) regrets that the Government have proceeded in the way that they have instead of by invoking an ancient procedure of this House, which I understand was last invoked in 1829 in the case of Sir Jonah Barrington. I shall deal in detail with that point, but in his preliminary skirmish I must say to my hon. Friend—and he is a friend as well as an hon. Friend—that had I followed his advice Mr. Durkin, parliamentary counsel for Mr. Pattinson, would have been heard at the Bar of the House. However, the amendment would destroy four houses on one side of the road. If Mr. Pattinson had won the argument after his counsel had been heard at the Bar of the House, those whose property would have been severely damaged by the alternative proposals should surely have had an equal right to be heard at the Bar of the House. How long, then, would these proceedings have continued and how far and how wide should they have been?

My hon. Friend claims that Mr. Pattinson was never heard in this House, but he was. I hope that I can show the House that he was heard. If my hon. Friends look at page 1605 of Vol. 4 of the meetings of the Select Committee on Channel tunnel, Session 1985-86, Minutes of Evidence, they will find reference to the petition being made. On page 1605 there is the introduction of the Shepway proposal and on page 1606 we have Mr. Pattinson making his points. He was heard in respect of a proposal that the Select Committee did not recommend to the House. That was not on the grounds of the demolition of Mr. Pattinson's house, but that on operational grounds the proposal would not be effective. Therefore, I shall refer to the report of the Select Committee where it deals with this matter. It says:

"Euro Tunnel found WG2 workable but regarded it as 'a second best and very much a second best'. There was no substantial difference in cost. . ."

It goes on to say that there was not sufficient length of road for people to be able to weave from one side of the road to the other or to adjust their mirrors. On safety grounds it was unattractive.

It ends:

"We believe that there will be less confusion and a better arrangement for frontier checks if the original scheme is retained in the Bill. We decided that the suggested advantages proposed by Shepway did not justify choosing their scheme. We favoured the operationally preferred scheme."

It was on operational grounds and not on the grounds of the four houses concerned, including that of Mr. Pattinson, that the Committee of the House, having heard Mr. Pattinson—I draw that specifically to the attention of the House—decided otherwise.

A compromise solution was found which was agreeable to all parties. It was agreeable to Shepway district council and Kent county council. Initially, it was not met with great enthusiasm by Eurotunnel, but eventually it agreed. It was agreeable to the joint consultation committee that I chaired, which met in Kent and examined the matter in considerable detail.

When the matter was raised in the Standing Committee of the House I was pressed by, among others, my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) to make this amendment to the Bill. With some considerable difficulty I persuaded the Committee not to accept that amendment to ensure that Mr. Pattinson had a better opportunity to present his case in the House of Lords, where he would have the opportunity of appearing as a petitioner in front of the Lords Committee. That duly happened; the Lords Committee was made aware of the effect that the amendment would have on this house, but it found in favour of the joint southern access. If hon. Members turn to the Lords evidence they will see that there was considerable discussion and understanding of these points.

My hon. Friend the Member for Harborough (Sir J. Farr) helpfully served on the Standing Orders Committee and explained the broader issues that were involved. The amendment must be considered in the context of the widespread support in Kent of those who were involved with it. I hope that we shall be allowed to discuss it later this evening.

My hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) helpfully explained why, as a member of the Standing Committee, he voted for the dispensation. That leads me on to the points that were made by my hon. Friends the Members for Ashford (Mr. Speed) and Darlington (Mr. Fallon) with regard to the area of Folkestone. The godfather of this proposal was my hon. and learned Friend the Minister for Local Government. He has attended all of our proceedings but, for reasons of which we are all aware, he is unable to participate now. This amendment affects his constituency, but his constituents have demonstrated considerable support for it.

As a hybrid Bill the Channel Tunnel Bill should have been introduced on or before 27 November. Since it was not, and could not be so introduced, Standing Orders have not been complied with, but the House, by a large majority, gave dispensation from the Standing Orders. Since the Bill was introduced out of time, the amendments must inevitably fall foul of Standing Orders in the same way. The amendment with which we are now concerned has received the widespread support in Kent that I referred to, as it has in the Standing Committee of the House and in the upper House, which inserted the amendments.

The effect of this motion will not be to insert the amendment into the Bill, but it will enable the House to consider the amendment later today. It is on that basis that I commend the motion to the House.

6.16 pm

Mr. Snape: With the leave of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The motion has found few friends from either side of the House. I concede that four Conservative Members have spoken in favour of it, but the majority of Conservative and Opposition Members have spoken against its terms because of a cross-party desire to uphold the rights of an individual above those of the House.

The hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon) and I served on the Standing Committee. I think that since I was elected in 1974, I have served on every committee appertaining to the Channel tunnel. I find the view that Mr. Pattinson's case has been adequately considered by a Committee of the House less than attractive. It is possible to argue, as the Minister understandably and justifiably did, that an amendment could have been tabled in the Standing Committee which would have set aside the original decision of the Select Committee and opted for the access and egress scheme. For the sake of brevity I shall refer to it as WG2, as amended. Such an amendment could have been tabled in the Standing Committee, but it would have caused an enormous row, although it would have

[Mr. Snape]

been accepted because the Government have a majority in the Standing Committee. Their whip would go round — I speak as a former and failed whip — and drum up support for this amendment, had it been tabled in the Standing Committee. However, that excuse will not wash.

We have been continually told that all the local authorities in the area are in favour of WG2 as amended. They may have been knocked into line recently, but we all know——

Mr. David Mitchell *rose——*

Mr. Snape: —that the Minister for Local Government staked his reputation on getting the original proposals, as accepted by the Select Committee, changed. He was successful in the long term, but that success has been at the expense of the individual petitioner.

Mr. Mitchell: There was no question of local authorities in Kent being knocked into line; it was a case of the Government being persuaded by pressure from people in the locality, Shepway district council, Kent county council, representatives who served on the joint consultative committee and all the local authorities in the immediate vicinity. They wanted this proposal carried through. The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East will remember that when he was serving on the Standing Committee we had to suspend it while we looked at whether it was possible to deal with an acceptance of this amendment. I persuaded the committee not to do so to enable people in Kent to have their views accepted. The hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) proposed this amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The Front Benches must observe the rules. We must not deal with the merits of the Bill or any amendments.

Mr. Snape: I am trying to deal with the rights of the individual. I shall not attempt to rehash the debates that we have had.

We maintain that the petitioner, about whom this debate has largely been concerned, has not had a fair deal. He came to give evidence to the Select Committee; we listened to his evidence and the Select Committee made a decision, across party lines — the hon. Member for Darlington and I voted the same way with regard to that decision — to uphold the original scheme, as placed before us—the access-egress known as WG1.

An alternative was brought forward — whether to save the face of the hon. and learned Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard) or for any other reason, is immaterial—and it was never considered by the Select Committee in the House. It could have been considered by the Standing Committee, as we have said, but it has been considered only by the Select Committee in another place.

The crucial question is, are we to uphold the rights of an individual petitioner as well as the rights of the House? There is no greater supporter of the Channel tunnel project than myself. I have been an officer on the all-party Channel tunnel group for 12 of the 13 years during which I have been a Member of the House. However, I cannot bring myself to vote for the Government motion. The debate has been about what we think about upholding the rights of individuals who are not Members of the House.

I was interested to hear the hon. Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) described my hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) by saying that detail and specifics are not his strong points. We all know the strong point of the hon. Member for Macclesfield. Good heavens, not for nothing was he known as rent-a-quote in his early years in the House. However, he is a reformed character now and, alas, it has not yet brought him the preferment to which I believe he is entitled. Regardless of his view of my right hon. Friend, regardless of the fact that, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent said, this is probably the only issue on which we have disagreed in my comparatively few years in the House and his many years and regardless of personal feelings about the project, it is the duty and responsibility of hon. Members to uphold the right not only of the House against the views of another place but the views of individuals, who may not happen to be our constituents, but who have no other recourse but to ask hon. Members to support them. I ask hon. Members on both sides of the House to support that individual petitioner tonight by voting against this motion.

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 276, Noes 196.

Division No. 23] **[6.42 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'ts)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil

Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Grist, Ian
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle

NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Aitken, Jonathan
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brazier, Julian
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Farr, Sir John
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galloway, George
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haynes, Frank
Henderson, Douglas
Hinchliffe, David
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kilfedder, James
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin

Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Mrs Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, John
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Salmond, Alex
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Sheerman, Barry
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Llin Golding and
Mr. Robert N. Wareing.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That, in respect of the Channel Tunnel Bill, notwithstanding the Resolution of the Standing Orders Committee of 16th July, the Standing Orders relating to Private Business, so far as not complied with, be dispensed with and the Bill be permitted to proceed.

Channel Tunnel Bill

Lords amendments considered

Clause 1

CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A TUNNEL RAIL LINK BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND FRANCE

Lords amendment: No. 1, in page 2, line 5, leave out "and its supplementary protocols and arrangements"

6.50 pm

The Minister of Public Transport (Mr. David Mitchell): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 2 to 5 and 86 and 87.

Mr. Mitchell: These are purely drafting improvements.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 2 to 5 agreed to.

Mr. David Shaw (Dover): May I say on Lords amendment No. 2——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The amendments have now been agreed to by the House. I am afraid that the hon. Gentleman is too late. I have put the Question on the amendments. I appreciate that the hon. Gentleman is probably dealing with Lords amendments for the first time. If he uses his ingenuity, I am sure that he will be able to make on subsequent amendments the points that he wished to make on the first group. If the hon. Gentleman has not yet obtained a copy of the groupings of Lords amendments, he should find one in the No Lobby, and I am sure that he will find it helpful.

Clause 2

NO GOVERNMENT FUNDS OR GUARANTEES FOR THE TUNNEL SYSTEM

Lords amendments: No. 6, in page 3, line 17, at beginning insert

"Subject to subsection (2A) below,".

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this we shall take Lords amendments Nos. 7 and 78.

Mr. Mitchell: These amendments were made by the Select Committee in another place in response to the petition of the British Ports Association. The BPA accepted clause 2(2), which provides that the concessionaires should not be barred from eligibility for the funds equally available to others. However, it was concerned about the Government's power to grant-aid transport projects under section 56(1) of the Transport Act 1968. The Government did not intend that that power should be used to grant-aid the Channel tunnel. We were therefore able to accept the amendment to clause 2 and a similar amendment to clause 40 to prevent the payment of grant aid under the 1968 Act in respect of British Rail's international services.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I should inform the House that the amendment involves privilege.

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): I appreciate that any grant aid under section 56 of the Transport Act 1968 is forbidden under the terms of the amendment. Will the Minister tell me whether that would also preclude any financial assistance to British Rail under any other Act with regard to the provision of adequate railway facilities both passenger and freight — prior to the opening of the Channel tunnel in 1993?

I understand that the amendment is narrow and deals specifically with section 56 of the 1968 Act. I hope that the acceptance of the amendment will not preclude British Rail from making proper and full provision for passenger and freight traffic expected and projected in the run-up to the opening of the Channel tunnel. I do not expect the Minister to comment on this, but it is somewhat ironic that the British Ports Association should be so anxious for statutes to be written into law when it was the first to demand that the roads to the ports be improved at each and every opportunity — not at their expense but at public expense.

There appears to be a little inconsistency here, although I do not expect the Minister to follow me down this controversial road.

Mr. Mitchell: I can understand the hon. Gentleman's anxiety about British Rail being able to carry out the investment that it requires to enable it to finance the marshalling yards and other provisions. The Bill as amended makes it explicit that there can be no Government grants to British Rail in respect of Eurotunnel's services, but British Rail is perfectly able to use its borrowing powers and commercial money to make the investments that it requires to carry through what is, for it, a commercial project.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendment agreed to. [Special entry.]

Lords amendment No. 7 agreed to. [Special entry.]

Clause 8

ACQUISITION OF LAND FOR THE SCHEDULED WORKS AND OTHER AUTHORISED WORKS

Lords amendment: No. 8, in page 6, line 47, at end insert—

"(1A) The Secretary of State is authorised by this section to acquire by agreement any land which he is not otherwise authorised to acquire and which is required for the construction and maintenance of the Concessionaires' scheduled works and other works in connection with those works or otherwise for any purposes of the construction or operation by the Concessionaires of the tunnel system."

7 pm

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I remind the House that this amendment involves privilege.

Mr. Mitchell: The amendment clarifies an area of legal uncertainty. Some detailed changes have been made to the tunnel scheme, notably at Ashford. Eurotunnel has already purchased additional land by agreement. It will need to seek planning permission in the normal way. If it uses additional land as part of the tunnel system, it is important that it is covered by the same ground rules. The Secretary of State must hold the freehold and grant Eurotunnel a lease. The amendment establishes the Secretary of State's ability to acquire the freehold of the land.

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North): The clause would allow the Secretary of State to make available land for the construction of, or for purposes connected with, the construction of the tunnel. I have paid tribute to the courtesy and sympathy with which my hon. Friend has responded to the needs of north-east Kent. I wish that I could pay a similar tribute to Transmanche Ltd. but I cannot.

When the project was mooted, one of the blandishments that was offered out to Members representing north-east Kent was the prospect of increased employment, not least in the hotels in the area. At one stage, it was suggested that Transmanche Ltd. might need 1,000 bed nights a week for its construction workers and that those beds could be provided in some of the emptier during the winter — hotels and guest houses in Thanet. British Rail said that it might be willing to lay on special trains from Thanet to Cheriton to convey such workers from our hotels to the construction site.

As a result of that proposal, the chief executive of Thanet district council wrote to Transmanche Ltd. and made some semi-formal propositions. Transmanche Ltd. replied, effectively saying that it was unwilling to transport workers from the Thanet area. It has said that it is more than willing to bus construction workers from London, from the Medway towns, from Ashford and from pretty well anywhere except Thanet.

I make the point now because I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will respond and that he will take great care before granting further land to Transmanche Ltd. until it honours some of the undertakings that it appeared at one stage to have given to use the facilities that are already available in north-east Kent.

Mr. David Mitchell: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for drawing my attention to that matter. He may be aware that it was discussed by the joint consultation committee which meets in Kent. In the light of what he said, I shall ensure that the matter is raised again at the committee's next meeting, when I expect that Transmanche Ltd. will be represented. I hope that, with that assurance, my hon. Friend will support the amendment.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendment agreed to. [Special entry.]

Clause 9

PLANNING PERMISSION, ETC

Lords amendment: No. 9, in page 7, line 29, leave out ", vehicles or" and insert "or of vehicles or other".

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

This is a minor drafting improvement.

Mr. David Shaw: The amendment relates to vehicle movements, and I am worried about the fact that, in Dover, we have a road which is a national disgrace. That is the part of the A2 known as Jubilee way between Lydden and Dover port. Recently, that road has been dug up regularly — I can confirm that it has happened during the past six months — and despite that, it has unfortunately been impossible to add another lane. Traffic

[Mr. David Shaw]

delays are horrendous when it is being dug up and when it has been in single-lane use. I hope that the Government will consider the full dualling of the carriageway on the final seven miles from Lydden into the port in the not-too-distant future. After all, the road is the main export route into Europe.

I was pleased when the House of Lords Select Committee realised that the road was needed. But the Department of Transport has said that the requests from Kent county council are "under review" and are receiving "active consideration". As we know, that can be bureaucratic wording meaning that the matter is sitting on a desk somewhere. I hope that the road proposals will soon come to the fore among the papers on that desk and that it will be improved. The accident rate and the traffic rate justify the upgrading to a dual carriageway. The East Kent coroner, who has had to deal with several deaths on the road, will support my words.

Mr. Mitchell: I have listened carefully to what my hon. Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) said about the A2. Traffic on the M2-A2 corridor will undoubtedly decrease when the final secton of the M20 from Maidstone to Ashford and the A20 from Folkestone to Dover are complete. For several years, it has been the Department's policy that the M20-A20 should be the principal route between London and both the ports and the Channel tunnel. The planning of improvements to the network has taken place on that basis.

As my hon. Friend said, the stretch of road which causes the greatest anxiety is the section between Lydden and Dover. Our traffic forecasts for the narrowest sections of that road assume that, by the time the Channel tunnel opens in 1993, the M20 will be complete, the new stretch of A20 from Folkestone to Dover will be open and most of the long-distance traffic to Dover as well as to the Channel tunnel will have transferred to the M20-A20 corridor. On that basis, the narrowest section of the A2 will be running well within the appropriate departmental recommended standards. Even by the year 2008, and taking an assumption of high economic growth, the road is still expected to be operating well within the recommended flow levels for a single carriageway.

There is then the question of what will happen if the A20 improvements, especially to the eastern half, which will be done under Highways Act procedures, are delayed despite the Government's best efforts. It is highly questionable whether improvements to the A2 could be carried out any sooner than delayed improvements to the A20, if our timetable on that is not met. But in the light of my hon. Friend's comments, I fully accept that in the event of a major delay to the A20 improvements, we should be prepared to consider the option of improvements to the A2. I hope that that assurance at least partially satisfies my hon. Friend.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Clause 11

REGULATION OF THE TUNNEL SYSTEM: APPLICATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF LAW, ETC.

Lords amendment: No. 10, in page 9, line 36, at end insert—

"*(aa)* for the transfer to, and the vesting by virtue of the order in, any person or persons specified in the order (referred to below in this section as the transferee), on such terms (if any) as may be provided by the order—

(i) on any substitution of Concessionaires under the Concession or on the expiry or termination of the Concession, of the interest of the former Concessionaires in all movable property and intellectual property rights necessary for the construction or operation of the tunnel system;

(ii) on any such substitution, of all rights and liabilities of the former Concessionaires under the Concession or any Concession lease; and

(iii) on any such substitution which takes place in such circumstances as may be specified in the order, of liabilities of the former Concessionaires (other than liabilities within sub-paragraph (ii) above) of such description as may be so specified;

and for securing effective possession or control by the transferee of any movable property or rights in which any interest transferred by the order subsists;"

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments Nos. 11 to 19, 20, amendment (a) and 21 to 28.

Mr. Mitchell: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I understood that the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) had tabled an amendment to Lords amendment No. 20. Am I wrong?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The position is that that is not an amendment to the amendment that we are discussing. It is taken with a series of other Lords amendments. The hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) will be perfectly free to speak to his amendment, but he will not be called to move it at this stage. The debate will take place on Lords amendment No. 10, but it will be appropriate to discuss the other amendments which I read out. They were Lords amendments Nos. 11 to 19, 20 plus amendment (a) in the name of the hon. Member for Vauxhall, and amendments 21 to 28. That is the group that we are now discussing.

Mr. Mitchell: All the amendments are related to the Secretary of State's order-making powers under clause 11. The amendments may appear formidable but they involve only one significant policy change. The majority are essentially technical and drafting improvements.

Mr. Stuart Holland (Vauxhall): I would like the House to consider the amendment that is in my name, namely:

Line 5, leave out from 'Britain' to 'or' in line 7.

The amendment will make it possible for there to be controls on board trains engaged in international services. It is important that we should consider the amendment and that the Minister should respond to it. There will be considerable restraints on the use of Waterloo as a Channel tunnel terminus. In the answer to a parliamentary question that I put to the Minister on 19 January, he stated:

"British Rail estimates that about 70 per cent. of the passengers using its through Channel tunnel rail services will pass through the proposed Waterloo terminal." [*Official Report*, 19 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 381.]

The Minister has indicated in other answers that he has given to me that there would be Customs and Excise facilities at Waterloo and not on the trains. I strongly recommend that he reconsiders that for a range of reasons.

One reason is the capacity constraints on Waterloo station. In the publicity that British Rail uses concerning the capacity and ability of Waterloo to absorb additional traffic, publicity that it has displayed for passengers at Waterloo—and the Minister knows of my interest—it was implied that the current number of weekday passengers using Waterloo was 180,000. That is well below the fullest capacity of the station at any previous date since the war. The highest was between 1970 and 1971 when it was just over 200,000. In a parliamentary answer that the Minister gave me on Monday, he said:

"Eurotunnel's estimates of Channel tunnel traffic through rail passenger traffic do not distinguish between Waterloo and other UK locations."

Such United Kingdom locations are the subject of the Lords amendment that we are considering. He further stated:

"British Rail's consultants, who concluded that the road and underground systems would be able to accommodate the Channel tunnel traffic at Waterloo, based their assessment on 50,000 extra day-time passengers in 1993 rising to 59,000 in 2003."—[*Official Report*, 20 July 1987].

However, information given to me by a Mr. Nick Alexander of British Rail, who is responsible for evaluating the feasible traffic that will be generated, gives different results. British Rail has estimated that the weekday passengers—which term I have learnt from Mr. Nick Alexander means peak August Saturday—in the year 2003 will be some 241,000. However, Eurotunnel, which is concerned to support its flotation and give the impression that the Channel tunnel project will be a great commercial success and will carry a great many passengers, gives a higher figure of 262,000 passengers in the year 2003.

The additional traffic generated is way over the figures that the Minister has suggested in a parliamentary answer that he has just given me. It will be an extra 61,000 passengers per day instead of the 50,000 in the answer he gave on Monday, according to Mr. Nick Alexander's figures. It will be another 82,000 passengers rather than the 59,000 in the year 2003. This has considerable implications for the exclusive use of Waterloo as a Channel tunnel terminal and for Customs and Excise being located there. The addition of 59,000 passengers would give a total weekday flow in August of 239,000, or 20 per cent. above the previous peak use of Waterloo station at any time since the war. It will be up to 40 per cent. higher if 30 trains per day were used rather than 20 trains per day. This relates to signalling, because if the lines are resignalled, as was maintained by Mr. Southgate of British Rail, there could be 30 trains per day rather than 20 trains per day.

7.15 pm

I will not labour the point on those figures as I appreciate that they are not that easy to grasp when stated in abstract. However, when modifying the diagram that British Rail has provided on weekday passengers at Waterloo it is quite clear that the previous peak use on this line is around some 200,000 passengers. It simply shoots off the diagram when we take the higher figures estimated by British Rail and Eurotunnel.

This very much strengthens the case for not having a unique Customs and Excise terminal in London for passengers arriving in London. It strengthens the case for on-train Customs and Excise inspection. That is what we understand will be the case in France and Belgium. I asked the Minister earlier why we should have a flagship terminal at Waterloo if the French do not have one at Gare du Nord. What is the point of having such a terminal when it will constitute a bottleneck for traffic if there is not on-train inspection?

I ask the Minister to think again, because the real advantage of a rail link versus an air link arises if there is on-train inspection. That is what will make travel time by rail competitive overall with travel by air, when passengers can avoid the inconvenience of having to travel to Heathrow or to Gatwick to go through a Customs check there and so forth.

Many of us have probably taken a train from Brussels to Paris or to some similar point in our time and know that it is a much more convenient way to travel. Although the overall rail length of the trip from London to Paris or Brussels might be longer than the total travel time by going to an airport and catching a plane, the commercial viability of the project could depend on there being on-train inspection for Customs and Excise. Lords amendment 20 says:

"passengers carried on a train engaged on an international service on a journey beginning or intended to end at a place in Great Britain other than London or Cheriton, Folkestone or any place between those places"

The whole substance of the clause and of subsections (2) and (3) is to provide facilities for such on-train inspection. It strengthens the case for having on-train inspection rather than a flagship facility at Waterloo.

We have come a long way with the Bill. When we first started to argue the case for dispersal, it was hardly admitted at all. Since then, the Minister has taken the case on board, and British Rail, to a lesser extent, has also taken it on board. They have made some evaluation—however half-hearted—of the case for dispersal of traffic which, therefore, will not have to go through London. If I catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall make a point or two on social and traffic congestion costs from increased traffic generated at Waterloo. The congestion caused by a single terminal facility for Channel tunnel traffic at Waterloo will be considerable.

However disputed British Rail's figures may have been at various times, we are talking about traffic going through Waterloo that will be equivalent to the total traffic of Gatwick airport. If the scheme succeeds, we shall be talking about traffic that is equivalent to a jumbo jet arriving or leaving Waterloo every three and a half minutes. It clearly is evident that if people can leave trains—

Mr. Mitchell *indicated dissent*

Mr. Holland: The Minister shakes his head, but it is precisely the type of point on which we still need clarification. There is a vast disparity between the figures that have been given by Eurotunnel and British Rail about how many people will use Waterloo. The matter is not at all clear. For example, if lines are resignalled, as has been made plain by Mr. Southgate of British Rail, the number of trains will increase by 50 per cent.

[Mr. Holland]

I urge the Minster to reconsider the matter and consider accepting my amendment. It will facilitate the viability of the project, reduce travelling time for those who use the Channel fixed-link facility and therefore reduce the potential bottleneck at Waterloo. That will be to the Minister's and Eurotunnel's advantage.

Mr. David Shaw (Dover): As has been said, the clause and the amendment to it affect the clearance of customs procedures on trains. I am particularly concerned about the matter because, last December, I had a meeting with trade unions at the port of Dover. It was apparent to me that many trade unionists felt that the delays that are caused in Dover are related to Customs and Excise and that it clearly is not the men who work for Customs and Escise who are at fault but, perhaps, the systems and procedures that they are required to follow. The systems and procedures are somewhat traditional and, dare I suggest, as old as the original commissioners would be if they were alive today. Therefore, I pay tribute to the way in which many Customs officers have to wrestle with procedures in Dover and the fact that so many drug smugglers are caught.

What will happen to the tunnel if the amendment is carried? On-board clearances will give undue preference to the tunnel if such speedy facilities are not available to the port and ferries. The Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act 1987 seems considerably to handicap ferries. I recently had reports that, in France and Belgium, ferry operators are unable to check passports and are unable to check that proper visas for entry to the United Kingdom exist. Consequently, there have been massive fines. In the past couple of months, there have been fines amounting to about £200,000 since the Act has been in operation.

I question the effect of the clause and whether Eurotunnel or concessionaires will enjoy any benefits as a result of the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will cover that point in his closing remarks. Certainly, it will be wrong and unfair to the port and ferries for special immigration and Customs clearances to be conducted unless the port of Dover has similar procedures. Surely that is only fair to ferries.

Mr. Snape: The amendment is significant, and I hope that the Minister will be able to reply in detail. There is confusion about the number of people who will use the terminal at Waterloo once the Channel tunnel scheme is completed. Of course, part of the confusion arose from British Rail's self-inflicted wounds. It originally published an estimate of the number of passengers who will use the terminal in 2003. It said that the estimate will not reach the number of passengers who used Waterloo in the 1960s. My hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) will tell me if I have that date wrong. The figures were widely publicised and appeared in the exhibition.

Mr. Holland: It was 1993 and 1971.

Mr. Snape: My hon. Friend reminds me that it was 1993 and 1971, for which I am grateful.

The figures appeared in the exhibition that British Rail management subsequently staged at Waterloo station. They had to take them away and confess that, somehow, they managed to count Windsor line passengers twice. It is not for me to defend some of the more eccentric decisions that British Rail managment makes. Indeed, I pride myself on my ability to criticise such decisions. Such confusion does not help its case, or the amendments. I shall be grateful if the Minister will clear up the matter by giving some accurate estimates of the likely number of passengers who will pass through the terminal once the project gets under way.

My hon. Friend talked about the proposed resignalling of the area. He will be aware — no doubt the Minister will tell us — that approval for such a proposal has already been granted. I think I am right in saying that a new signal box will be erected near Surbiton to control the Waterloo station area and a considerable number of route miles also. That, plus the provision of the flyovers and the extra tracks within Waterloo station — the new terminal — will take care of any projected increase in traffic resulting from the scheme. Again, the Minister is the man who has such material at his fingertips and a whole battery of experts to tell him when he has not, so I have no doubt that he will be able to clarify that point.

I was intrigued by the words of the hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier). He paid tribute to the Customs officers at Dover. It is remarkable listening to hon. Members pay tribute to trade unionists. *[Interruption.]* I am sorry, I am advised that it was the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw). It is remarkable that Conservative Members are paying public tribute to trade unionists. A couple of weeks ago, when there was an industrial dispute at Dover, they were treading on each other's heads to get into the Table Office to table early-day motions deploring those disputes and attacking the unions for being involved in them.

It just goes to show that there is nothing like a fairly marginal seat to make the advantages of trade unionism even more apparent to Conservative Members than they are to us. *[Interruption.]* It is a temporary phase. It illustrates the point even better. Regardless of one's majority, if they are one's constituents, one seeks to defend their right to industrial action, although, presumably, being a Conservative Member, he will vote to restrict everybody else's rights in due course when the latest bout of anti-union legislation appears.

Mr. Holland *rose*——

Mr. Snape: I hope that my hon. Friend will not take me down that track, if I may use the industrial metaphor. We might be in trouble with you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if he does.

Mr. Holland: I wish to take up a point regarding signalling and the amount of traffic that may be generated. From Mr. Southgate I have gleaned that resignalling might go ahead. I am not sure whether that refers to what has already been done or to more extensive resignalling. Traffic estimates have not publicly been modified by British Rail. After all, senior management concerned with the project says that, because of resignalling, there could be up to a 50 per cent. increase in the number of trains. I am sure that my hon. Friend agrees that it is incumbent on the Minister to take that fact into account and to make plain to the House what the implications will be.

Mr. Snape: I can tell my hon. Friend, because I take an interest in such matters, that the present signalling technology in and around Waterloo dates from the 1930s.

I can assure him that it is much more interesting than the future, modernistic push-button stuff, but nevertheless, it is soon to be removed. I have no doubt that the Minister will give the figures on the modernistic push-button stuff to which I have referred to the nearest tail lamp or to the nearest electrical multiple unit. Any resignalling scheme would considerably increase capacity in or around Waterloo. I am sure that we shall hear the exact figures from the Minister.

7.30 pm

I return to the point made by the hon. Member for Dover — I have got his constituency right on this occasion. He made a constituency plea with a vengeance in saying that if trains are to have on-board customs, ships must have them also. I advise the hon. Gentleman that there is a slight difference between those modes of transport. Of course it is permissible for hon. Members of all parties to make pleas of special constituency interest — we all do it — but it is fascinating to hear a Conservative Member argue against a more effective deployment of staff. Although on-train customs clearance is vital in the opinion of many of us, it cashes in on the inherent flexibility and advantage of the through trains between, for example, Paris and Brussels, and Manchester or even Birmingham. To say that because ships cannot have such clearance, trains should not either, is the type of restrictive practice that might have been greeted by applause from Peter Sellers in his parody of a shop steward, Fred Kite, in the 1950s.

Again it is surprising, although understandable because it is a specific constituency plea, to hear a Conservative Member argue for such an equally inefficient use of resources simply because his own constituency might somehow be disadvantaged as the through trains from Paris to Birmingham thunder underneath Dover, rather than everybody, buckets, spades, suitcases and mothers-in-law, being tipped out, so that those of his constituents who happen to be trade unionists can rifle through their baggage.

Mr. David Shaw *rose*——

Mr. Snape: The hon. Gentleman will have to wait a minute; I have not finished with him yet. I am not quite sure how he will explain to his own divisional association his deviation from the habits and customs of the Conservative party. However, I shall give him the opportunity now.

Mr. Shaw: With deference and respect to the hon. Gentleman, I advise him that my trade unionists in Dover are concerned about the sound Conservative principle of fair competition.

Mr. Snape: I do not see anything especially fair or competitive in denying a new mode of transport the flexibility that would be to its advantage. The Conservative party used to stand for competition but those days are now gone. To deny that flexibility to the new mode of travel does not seem an inherently Conservative virtue. However, I have always found virtue to be considerably lacking in the Conservative party. I hope that the Minister will give us more details about the two issues that have already been raised.

Lords amendment No. 20 is welcome so far as it goes. We are extremely grateful because it at least amplifies and illustrates the amount of concern that is felt in both Houses and across party lines that on-train customs facilities should be provided. Like my hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland), I cannot see any good reason why on-train customs facilities should not be provided on trains travelling to and from London on certain trains, perhaps at specific times of the day or night. I was not aware of the position in France and am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall, who is much better travelled than I, for pointing out the position on the other side of the Channel. Perhaps I may appeal to the hon. Member for Dover on grounds of pure British chauvinism, which normally appeals enormously to Conservative Members. I hope that the Minister will not tell the House that the French can do it but that we cannot.

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): This amendment is to be welcomed, although I seek clarification on the issue which the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East, (Mr. Snape) cavalierly brushed over, which is whether equal rights on customs clearance will apply to all cross-channel operators. The Minister needs to be asked some questions about that. It is highly welcome that we have now introduced into this country the principle of on-train customs clearance, which will make for a faster and better service. However, it should not be welcomed if it is to be an exclusive privilege for Eurotunnel. As I understand it, clause 11 envisages that operators other than Eurotunnel will be able to organise on-train customs clearance. However, we should probe the Minister's thinking and I should like to ask him some specific questions.

First, and in general terms, to what extent has he already sought the co-operation of and had consultations with Her Majesty's Customs and Excise about the drafting of the clauses, and their consenting arrangements for them? My experience of the customs service is that one can often get a customs officer down to the water, but one cannot necessarily make him clear the baggage at the speed at which most people would like to see it cleared. Customs officers are sometimes a reluctant service when it comes to innovation. Therefore, I press the Minister to tell us how far he has got in ensuring that customs officers are not only willing but enthusiastic about the new arrangements.

Secondly, I ask the Minister for guidance as to what is likely to happen should, for example, the Sally Line, which operates from Ramsgate in my constituency, wish to seek boat trains with on-train controls under clause 11. To a large extent the decision on that seems to be left to the Minister. On what criteria will the Minister decide? Under the clause he clearly has it in mind to give his permission for Eurotunnel trains. Indeed, that is why this clause is included in the Bill. However, ordinary boat trains, using ordinary British Rail rolling stock, travel to the ports every day. Is there any physical or engineering reason why those trains cannot have on-train customs control?

Mr. Snape: It is not for me to answer the Minister's question for him. However, I have a pretty good idea that he may give a similar reply, except that his will be more lucid than mine. Would it not be a little stupid to have on-train customs on boat trains going to Ramsgate when, to requote my own words, husbands, fathers, mothers, kids, buckets, spades, suitcases and mothers-in-law will be detrained at Ramsgate and embark on a boat prior to sailing across the Channel? Would that not make more sense in the case of a through journey from Paris to Birmingham, than for a comparatively small journey,

[Mr. Snape]

which must be broken, from London to Paris, via Ramsgate, to wherever the Sally Line decamps its passengers on the other side of the Channel?

Mr. Aitken: It is not for the first time that I feel that the hon. Gentleman has something against Ramsgate.

Mr. Snape: It is the hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken).

Mr. Aitken: There is no need to be personal. I do my best for Ramsgate and for its future customs controls.

I simply want to know the criteria on which the Minister will decide when a request comes in for an international service on ordinary trains. Will he be willing to grant his permission in principle? Is it a question of the physical arrangements? What are the general criteria?

I notice that individual customs officers seem to have a wide power of decision-making. If I have understood it correctly, a customs officer may suddenly decide that he will not allow a particular train to be cleared on an on-train basis. The discretion of the customs officer seems to be quite wide. Under subsection (3)(a), if the train is very crowded, for example, can a customs officer say, "Sorry, I am not clearing that one today"? I seek clarification as to how extensive the individual decision-making powers of customs officers are. If I have read the clause correctly, a customs officer can simply say, "Things are difficult on this train. I will not clear it." That would be somewhat disadvantageous to those who got on the train believing that they would have a thorough immigration customs clearance during their journey.

I note that clause 11(4) states that an order under section 11 of the proposed Act can impose charges on the operator. I find that rather worrying because Eurotunnel is paying for its own policing arrangements. I think there is something unsatisfactory about a private company paying for the police and therefore deciding how many police will be around at the Channel tunnel terminal. I also believe it unsatisfactory that Eurotunnel or any other cross-channel operator can decide on how many customs officers there will be on offer on a train because they are paying the bill. We should have a national service, whether the police or customs, operating according to national criteria and standards. In that case the Government should lay down those standards and pay for them. However, if standards can be varied because the man who pays the piper chooses the tune, an extremely different quality of customs service could be provided on the trains.

With those reservations—which I am sure my hon. Friend the Minister will ease with his answers—I give this clause a general welcome, providing, of course, that we stick to the line that there is fair competition for all cross-channel operators and not a special provision for Eurotunnel.

Mr. David Mitchell: The amendment moved by the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) would require the Government to provide Customs and immigration controls on board any train passing through the tunnel if that was wanted by the operator. That would affect shuttle trains as well as through trains.

Clearly, controls on board the shuttle trains are not a practical proposition. In any case, Eurotunnel does not want such controls because the controls are to be juxtaposed at the point of departure at the tunnel terminals.

Presumably the hon. Member for Vauxhall is concerned about the trains at Waterloo. However, if that is the purpose of the hon. Gentleman's amendment I must say that it is defective. In effect, the hon. Member for Vauxhall has asked why controls cannot be provided on trains to Waterloo if Customs and immigration controls can be provided on trains beyond London. The two situations are different.

The Government accept that on-train controls are probably essential to the commercial viability of services bound for places beyond London. Therefore, although on-train controls are estimated to require half as many customs officers again as are required for conventional static controls, the Government are prepared to accept the extra call on the manpower resources implicit in clause 12. However, the Government reserve the right to charge British Rail for those extra resources. The conditions in subsection (2) of clause 12 must also be satisfied. In part that answers my hon. Friend the member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken), to whose case I shall return.

When considering trains to Waterloo, the circumstances are considerably different. If the hon. Member for Vauxhall reflects for a moment he will realise that what we need to do is to ensure that people have as agreeable, fast and efficient a means of getting from one capital city to another as possible. The best way to achieve that is to ensure that people have an agreeable journey.

The hon. Member for Vauxhall should envisage the likely effect of on-train controls. Suppose the hon. Member for Vauxhall goes to Paris for a business meeting. He gets into the train at Waterloo, which is much less inconvenient than charging out to Heathrow, humping baggage around and all that palaver. The hon. Gentleman has the window seat and is comfortably ensconced. The sherry is brought round before his meal and the soup has just been brought to the table when along comes a Customs officer who says, "Excuse me, sir. Would you be kind enough to identify your baggage?" The hon. Gentleman must get up and in so doing disturbs the gentleman sitting next to him. Indeed, he probably slops his soup. He must go down the carriage, identify his baggage to the Customs officer and then return to his seat. The same thing will happen to everyone else down the train. It might well be that before such an exercise is over people will be wishing that they had airport-type controls whereby those who have nothing to declare can simply walk through the hall carrying their baggage as they have to do when they leave the train and the platform.

Mr. Holland: The scenario is very touching. On the extremely rare occasions when I have travelled by train on the continent and had lunch the Customs inspector has said, "May I see your passport? Have you anything to declare? No? Well, have a good meal." There is an alternative scenario to the Minister's point.

The Minister must appreciate that the trains in question are one and a half times the length of the standard inter-city train and will carry up to 770 passengers at a time. Therefore, it is not just a matter of getting off the train with the luggage and strolling through Customs. Individuals will stroll through Customs with 770 other people. There will not be the same filtering effect as there is at an airport. Whatever we think of the carousel luggage

arrangement at an airport indeed, if we get the tunnel, lack of a carousel is one of the things that will make Channel tunnel traffic extremely competitive the fact that people wait for individual luggage means that passengers are filtered as they approach Customs. But at Waterloo the lack of on-train services may leave 540 people swearing their heads off at the Government's failure to consider that passengers must pass other passengers to get out.

I believe that the Minister has shown us precisely that we need more public scrutiny and evaluation of this issue. We are having an interesting exchange on a substantive matter. However, we are not given any opportunity to consider this issue save for one further amendment concerning a report that British Rail may have to make by 1989. This discussion strengthens the case for that amendment.

7.45 pm

Mr. Mitchell: It should not be automatically assumed that, for travellers from Paris to London, it is more attractive to have on-train controls than to have off-train controls.

I accept that, when travelling between one continental city and another, there are few on-train controls. The hon. Gentleman is correct about that. However, that state of affairs derives from the fact that there has been a great deal of standardisation of duties and a whole variety of other things between one continental country and another. However, there is no such standardisation between us and continental countries. Therefore, the benefits of smuggling are much greater for people travelling into this country than they are for those travelling between one continental country and another.

We must also consider the problems regarding checks on rabies. I am aware that the hon. Member for Vauxhall is anxious to ensure that there is a whole series of ways in which we will be more strict about this matter than they are on the continent. It is right and proper that that strictness should continue. I am sure that Labour Members would be the first to demand that it should continue. Therefore, it is not as easy to make on-train controls without some degree of disturbance. That disturbance is worth making on longer distance journeys, but on the shorter journey from Paris to London such disturbance may not be worth while.

Mr. Holland: We are members of the Common Market. I appreciate that, a quarter of a century on, we do not have an integrated system within the Market and we do not have an "internal market". Indeed, people wonder whether we are in the Common Market when they are faced with border controls, passport control and so forth. With regard to variations in duty and VAT variations, whether there is 5p, 15p, 50p of £1 duty on a bottle of wine is not the point. We appreciate that rabies and drugs are of serious concern. Customs officers are not looking for someone who happens to bring back half a bottle of Scotch, but who has forgotten that they have left it in their luggage. Customs officers are searching for drugs or for people committing serious offences. Such offences must be dealt with.

I believe that we need more consideration of these issues if the Bill is to go through the House today. I hope that the Minister will take on board my remarks so that we can obtain a proper evaluation of what will otherwise cause considerable congestion at Waterloo.

Mr. Mitchell: The hon. Member for Vauxhall interrupted before I said that there are requirements for Customs and Excise to seach carefully for drugs. That means that we must have the facilities on a train to carry out a certain degree of searching. That is an added problem.

On a shorter journey from London to Paris, such searches may well involve further disturbance to passengers who have been identified as those who require further searching. All that problem evaporates when people going through the green channel make a declaration of nothing to declare. X per cent. of them are then pulled out by Customs at its discretion for further searching. That can all be easily done in the facilities at Waterloo with the minimum of disturbance and distraction to the other passengers who are not involved in such checks. The advantage is that it is a matter for the railway companies and Eurotunnel to take that into account.

Mr. Holland: When someone is suspected of having concealed drugs internally and so on, one does not need a passenger terminal at Waterloo to be able to deal with that. One needs offices and facilities to which persons who have been restrained on the train can be taken and where they can be searched.

The other point that did not emerge from the exchanges on signalling is that signalling improvements could increase the number of trains — my hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) is quite right about that. However, they will also increase the number of passengers using Waterloo. I seriously suggest to the Minister that by building in the assumption that there will not be on-train passenger inspection for Brussels —London or Paris—one is likely to create a bottleneck at Waterloo that will mean a deterioration of the service.

Mr. Mitchell: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for drawing my attention to his concerns in that area. I shall bear them in mind and discuss them with British Rail in due course. There is nothing in the Government's proposals that prevents on-train controls to Waterloo if requested by British Rail, if the Customs and Excise can be satisfied on the availability of adequate facilities for its purposes. It is for British Rail to judge which is the most appropriate way.

I was trying to tell the hon. Gentleman earlier that it is not automatically—game, set and match—true that it is beneficial to have on-train controls between Paris and Waterloo. A judgment must be made, and we shall be better able to form one as time passes and as we gain more information about use, type of passengers and so on.

Of course, the hon. Gentleman is quite right—if he were not, he would have been corrected by the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East — about the advantages of resignalling, the improvement in train times that that would enable one to have, the increase in capacity and so on. I do not dissent from that.

My hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) said that equal rights should apply to all operators and questioned the extent of Customs and Excise co-operation. We have had some initial discussions with Customs and Excise, which has been helpful in explaining its requirements, and these matters must be taken further before a final conclusion can be reached.

My hon. Friend asked about the boat trains for Sally Line and said that it has ordinary British Rail stock. He

[Mr. Mitchell]

will realise from previous discussions the problem that that poses, as one must have some special facilities for the trains to be able to carry out Customs controls on them. In principle, there is no reason why an approach made by Sally Line for special facilities on the trains should not be considered on its merits. I am not sure whether the chamber of commerce of Ramsgate will thank my hon. Friend for such a proposition, as it would mean that all those uncles, aunts, ladies and various friends of the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East would not be able to go on to the beach and spend their money in the shops, because they would be in bond going through from ship to London. I should have thought that my hon. Friend would be anxious that they should get out of the train and spend their money in his constituency.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) raised the issue of equal treatment for the ports. The Government have given explicit assurances that, in the area of frontier controls, the tunnel and ports will be treated even-handedly. That is set out in detail in the Department of Transport's letter to the British Ports Association, reproduced in appendix 32 to the special report of the Commons Select Committee. I do not think that my hon. Friend would want me to quote the whole of that, but if he looks it up he will find it a cause of considerable satisfaction in the matter on which he is pressing me.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 11 to 19 agreed to, [One with Special Entry.]

Lords amendment No. 20 agreed to. [Special Entry.]

Lords amendments Nos. 21 to 28 agreed to.

Clause 14

CONTRACT LAW AND ARBITRATION LAW

Lords amendment: No. 29, in page 12, line 47, after first "notice" insert

"and

(b) any Concession agreement other than one so specified shall be taken to be valid and effective at any time on or after the date on which it is expressed to take effect;"

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 30 to 38.

Mr. Mitchell: These are tidying-up amendments. They remove references to concession leases from the clause, and that takes them out of the jurisdiction of the international arbitral tribunal; they will, instead, be subject to English law and the English courts. There is also one technical amendment providing for agreement supplementing a concessionary agreement to the value.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

Clause 16

SUPERVISION BY INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMISSION AND SAFETY AUTHORITY

Lords amendment: No. 39, in page 14, line 35, after "time" insert

"(or, in a situation which in his opinion is or may be dangerous, at any time)"

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 40 to 43 and 88.

Mr. Mitchell: Subsection (3) of clause 16 confers on duly authorised agents of the intergovernmental commission and the safety authority various powers to enter the tunnel system for the purpose of carrying out inspections, examinations and investigations and to obtain information. These powers are similar to certain of the powers of inspectors acting under section 20 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. However, there are some useful provisions of section 20 of the 1974 Act—namely, power to take samples, to dismantle, to test and detain articles and substances—which are not included at present in subsection (3) of clause 16. These amendments fill that gap.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

Clause 17

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMISSION AND SAFETY AUTHORITY: SUPPLEMENTARY

Lords amendment: No. 44, in page 15, leave out lines 39 and 40.

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 46 to 48, 50 to 52, 56, 58, 62, 65, 66 and 73.

Mr. Mitchell: These are technical amendments concerned with clarifying the way in which the legal status of regulations of the intergovernmental commission is reflected in the Bill. As a result of this clarification it becomes possible to delete certain provisions as superfluous.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

8 pm

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We now come to Lords amendment No. 45, together with the other Lords amendments and amendments to the Lords amendments.

Mr. David Mitchell: May I seek your guidance, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I thought that the right hon. Member for——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am sorry. I should explain to the House that we are in the same situation as we were in on an earlier amendment. In other words, the debate takes place on amendment No. 45 and it will be appropriate to discuss the Lords amendments on the Amendment Paper, together with amendments (a), (b) and (c).

Lords amendment: No. 45, in page 15, line 41, leave out "or direction" and insert "direction or certificate".

Mr. Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider amendments Nos. 49, 53 to 55, 57, 59 to 60. No. 61, in clause 18, in page 16, line 38, at end insert—

"(4) The Concessionaires shall not convey any passengers by means of shuttle trains at any time when there is not in force a certificate issued by the Intergovernmental Commission stating—

(a) that the Commission are satisfied with a code of practice relating to the conveyance by means of shuttle trains of persons who are disabled which has for the time being been adopted by the Concessionaires; and

(b) that the code of practice has been published in a manner approved by the Commission.

(5) Such a code of practice must contain—

(a) a statement of any description of such persons not intended to be conveyed by means of shuttle trains, with reasons;

(b) details of provision for ensuring the safety of such persons in the tunnel system, in particular the safety in the event of an emergency of such persons being conveyed by means of shuttle trains; and

(c) information relating to such other matters affecting the conveyance by means of shuttle trains of persons who are disabled as the Commission may specify.

(6) Contravention of the restriction imposed by subsection (4) above may be restrained by an order of the High Court made on an application by the Intergovernmental Commission."

Amendment (a) to the Lords amendment, in line 10, at end insert

'and after consultation with the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee'.

Amendment (b) to the Lords amendment, leave out lines 11 to 13 and insert—

'(5) Such a code of practice shall be drawn up in consultation with organisations of disabled people and shall require:

(a) Provisions for the conveyance of all categories of disabled persons; and include;'.

Amendment (c) to the Lords amendment, line 12, after 'persons,' insert

'who in exceptional circumstances are'.

Mr. Mitchell: I hope that I shall have the leave of the House to speak again following the speech by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris).

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): I rise to speak to the amendments (a), (b) and (c) in my name and those of my right hon. and hon. Friends, which are deeply important to Britain's 5·5 million disabled people and their families.

On 6 July, I tabled a question to the Secretary of State for Transport asking if he would

"make provision in the Channel Tunnel Bill for adequate facilities to ensure the safety, comfort and convenience of people with disabilities travelling on trains through the proposed Channel tunnel."

In reply, the Minister of State said that Eurotunnel's original submission to the Governments showed that it realised the need to make provision on their shuttle services for people with disabilities. He said it was now working closely with representatives of disabled people's organisations to establish their requirements and to see how they could best be met. British Rail, he said, had a firm commitment to providing for the needs of passengers with disabilities on all its major services; and the safety authority would need to be satisfied by the arrangements proposed. He concluded:

"Provision in the Channel Tunnel Bill is therefore unnecessary."—[*Official Report*, 6 July 1987; Vol. 119, c. *17*.]

Shortly afterwards the Minister of State wrote to me to say that the Government had changed their mind and that the Bill would be amended. The Bill was then amended in another place and I spoke urgently to the organisations representing disabled people about the adequacy of the Government's amendment. I found that they were anything but satisfied with the amendment, leaving me in some doubt about that part of the Minister's reply to me of 6 July which said that Eurotunnel was

"working closely with representatives of disabled people's organisations to establish their requirements".

That ministerial statement, made to this House, very soon proved to be highly questionable. Let me quote, for example, a letter I received yesterday from the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation. It says:

"We think the Government's new Clause could result in disabled people being refused access to the shuttle trains. We doubt that this is what the government intended but it is crucial that the clause is amended when the Bill returns to the Commons on . . . 21 July."

The letter went on:

"The first thing we need to ensure is that the code of practice is drawn up in consultation with disabled people and their organisations."

The amendments on the Order Paper in my name and those of my right hon. and hon. Friends were drafted in full consultation with the organisations concerned with disabled people and represent their view of what the House should now decide. My amendments will mean deleting a provision that could be used to prohibit people from travelling on the shuttle trains. That is a very serious matter in the view of the organisations I have consulted, and the Minister must now know that to be incontrovertibly true. At the very least the Minister must agree with the first of my amendments, which provides for consultation with the disabled persons transport advisory committee. It was the Department that set up the committee and it should be at once inconceivable and indefensible for it not to be consulted.

[Mr. Alfred Morris]

The House needs to know whether the Minister can assure us that the code of practice will not be agreed by the Government unless the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, which represents both transport operators and disabled people, is satisfied that it meets the needs of disabled passengers. I urge the Minister to give that assurance in the terms in which I have put it to him.

As the House knows, people with disabilities want to be a part of and not apart from society. To make that possible was the principal purpose of my own legislation for disabled people, which was so widely supported on both sides of both Houses of Parliament. For new laws to disadvantage disabled people would be unforgiveable and I most strongly urge the Minister to respond positively to amendments which, as I have made clear, have the total support of their organisations.

Mr. Aitken: I rise at this quiet moment to tell the House and my hon. Friend the Minister that the amendments so ably moved by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) have cross-party support and would be welcome. The right hon. Gentleman's work for disabled people and his tenure of office as Minister for the Disabled are well known and respected throughout the House.

The right hon. Gentleman may be a little surprised to know that he has run into one of the hurdles in his own field that many of us who have been studying the Channel Tunnel Bill for a long time have encountered before. That hurdle is an announcement by Eurotunnel that it is carrying out consultations. However, when we look closely we see that no such consultations, at least in any meaningful sense, have taken place. The right hon. Gentleman spoke about the apparent lack of effective consultation with disabled groups despite an announcement that such consultations were taking place. I am sorry to say that is characteristic of the unfortunate management style and tactics of Eurotunnel in the past and they still prevail.

If the Bill went through without the right hon. Gentleman's amendment it would be a most unacceptable piece of anti-disabled people discrimination. In certain circumstances disabled people could conceivably be denied access to the trains. The very least that we can do is accept the right hon. Gentleman's first amendment. I have a further point, but as the right hon. Gentleman is not as familiar with the subject as those of us who have been on the Committee he may not appreciate it. If we look closely at the safety measures on these trains we see that one of the most outstanding and worrying features is the apparent lack of exit space for passengers who might have to get out of their cars in a hurry in the event of a fire or explosion or some such disaster on the train. This has troubled people who have studied the matter, and we have always been fobbed off with the announcement that a body called, I think, the Inter governmental Safety Commission or some such elaborately-named quango will get it all right on the night.

When one looks at the plans one sees problems that are real enough for ordinary people getting out of their cars and entering very narrow corridors and shoving and pushing against one another in an emergency. Those problems are real enough for healthy people, but for disabled people in wheelchairs the safety measures and the exits could make matters even more difficult and restrictive and perhaps positively dangerous. I should like to flag this anxiety in conjunction with the right hon. Gentleman's amendments. If Eurotunnel and the safety commission have to consult the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, there is some hope that the sort of fears that I have expressed can be overcome. If the amendment is rejected, there is no hope of that worry being buried. This is a very reasonable amendment and it was expertly moved. I support it and I believe that many of my hon. Friends, if they had been present, would have supported it also. I hope that my hon. Friend and the House will accept the amendment.

Mr. David Mitchell: It may help the House if, before I address the amendment in the name of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris), I explain the purpose and background of Lords amendment No. 45. The amendment was tabled by the Government on Third Reading in another place in response to a proposal on Report by the noble Baroness Lady Stedman. Its purpose is to require Eurotunnel to draw up and have approved by the Inter-governmental Commission before it begins to operate shuttle trains a code of practice relating to the carriage of disabled people. Once the code has been drawn up, it must be published in a manner which the commission must also approve. Certain requirements as to what the code of practice may contain are included in subsection (5) of the amendment.

Whereas the Government proposed the amendment in response to proposals by a Back Bencher in another place, the principle of including a provision of this type in the Bill was accepted by the Government from the time that it was proposed. Equally, we had no difficulty in obtaining the agreement of Eurotunnel or the French Government. It is entirely common ground that it is right that Eurotunnel should provide for the carriage of disabled people and that that should be written into the Bill.

I now come to the substance of the amendments proposed by the right hon. Member for Wythenshawe. Amendment (a) and the first part of the amendment (b) deal with the need to consult representative organisations of disabled people about the drawing up of the code and the manner of its publication. The Government do not believe it is necessary to write these provisions into the Bill. However, I can tell the House that Eurotunnel has undertaken, in drawing up the code, to consult thoroughly representatives of disabled people through the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee as to the content and manner of its publication before submitting the code and the publication arrangements to the Inter governmental Commission for approval.

Mr. Alfred Morris: The assurance that I have asked for, after very close consultation with the organisations of and for disabled people, is that the code of practice will not be agreed by the Government unless the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee is satisfied that it meets the needs of disabled passengers. Can the Minister give that assurance? Is the answer yes or no?

Mr. Mitchell: There will be thorough consultation with representatives of disabled people through the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee. The proposals which flow from that have to be approved by the Inter-governmental Commission. That should reassure the right hon. Gentleman. I hope that the assurances that have been

given and which I have conveyed to the House and the right hon. Gentleman today, will be sufficient to satisfy the right hon. Gentleman that we have taken the matter very seriously. I hope that that shows that we have taken the spirit of what the right hon. Gentleman is seeking and can satisfy him of the reasonable extent that we can move in terms of legislation.

8.15 pm

The remaining amendments — the second part of amendment (b) and amendment (c) — concern the question of which categories of disabled people Eurotunnel should carry and which categories it will be permitted not to carry. To put this question in its context, I should remind the House that Eurotunnel's shuttle service is a vehicle-carrying service. It does not carry lone passengers, whether disabled or not, so when we consider the carriage of disabled people, we are talking of disabled people who are drivers or passengers in cars, coaches or minibuses. Subsection (5) of Lords amendment No. 61 then permits the concessionaires to exclude from the code of practice certain categories of disabled people, but if so, they must indicate why.

Let me make it quite clear that this does not mean Eurotunnel will be permitted to exclude wheelchair users or any other major group of people with disabilities. On the contrary, our intention is that disabled people should be carried on a full and equal basis with other passengers and I am sure that the right hon. Member for Wythenshawe would agree with that. The purpose of subsection (5) is to permit Eurotunnel not to carry those categories of people whose needs in terms of facilities and equipment are so complex that the concessionaires could not reasonably be expected to carry them on shuttle trains, and they must give details of how they will ensure the safety of disabled persons in the tunnel system.

This indeed is the heart of the question. Throughout the proceedings of this Bill, the need to achieve the safe operation of the shuttle trains and their passengers has been a recurring theme. I do not think it would be consistent with the will of Parliament, expressed so often in debate and in Select Committee, for Eurotunnel to be required to carry passengers who could not be safely evacuated in case of emergency. That is the key point that the Inter-governmental Commission will want to consider. It is only in that narrow area that the question arises of Eurotunnel not carrying disabled persons.

I have not the slightest reason to doubt Eurotunnel's good intentions in this matter. Subsection (5)(a) is not intended to be a wide-open loophole to frustrate the purpose of this amendment. However, in any case, the matter is not left to Eurotunnel alone. As I explained, it has undertaken to consult representative bodies, including the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, in drawing up the code, and this statutory committee, whose membership comprises people who are expert in both disability and transport, will be able to ensure that a fair and proper balance is struck. When the code is submitted to the Inter-governmental Commission, it will be for the commission to ensure that no disabled people are unreasonably excluded from using the tunnel, and to take the advice of the safety authority as to whether the arrangements for ensuring the safety of those who are to be carried are satisfactory.

I hope that, on the basis of what I have said and the undertakings that I have been able to give the House, the right hon. Member for Wythenshawe will feel able not to press his amendments.

Mr. Aitken *rose*

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. The hon. Gentleman has addressed the House once. He cannot do so a second time.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords Amendment No. 45 agreed to.

Lords Amendments Nos. 46 to 62 agreed to.

Clause 19

BYELAWS OF THE CONCESSIONAIRES

Lords Amendment: No. 63, in page 17, line 37, leave out "3" and insert "4".

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendment No. 64.

Mr. Mitchell: The amendments are aimed at facilitating the enforcement of the concessionaires bylaws particularly those bearing on safety.

Mr. Snape: I shall put two points to the Minister. Will he confirm that the amendment will have no adverse impact on clause 19(1)*(f)* which states:

"regulating the use or conveyance of vehicles and prohibiting or regulating the conveyance of goods other than vehicles, in particular dangerous goods;"?

The Minister will be aware that in clause 18 the concessionaires are not common carriers.

I have two reasons for making these points. The Minister will be aware of the strong concern felt by all of us including those who support the project about safety in the tunnel system. He will be aware of the concern, much of which was inspired by competitors in the cross-Channel business, and concern expressed by many witnesses before the Select Committee about safety and the suggested conveyance of dangerous goods through the tunnel system.

The Minister will confirm that dangerous goods are prohibited. Will he comment on the fact that, despite the fact such conveyance is prohibited under the terms of clause 19 and the amendment, at the moment one cross-Channel ferry company persists in showing a video of a train fire that took place in the Summit tunnel on the former Lancashire and Yorkshire railway system a few years ago. Will the Minister confirm that the showing of such a video is a deliberate distortion of the fact that the fire in that tunnel was caused by the collapse of the wheel system on a petrol tanker? Will the hon. Gentleman confirm that neither that type of tanker nor any other will be permitted to travel through the tunnel system?

I am sure that the Minister is aware that this propaganda is still being shown on cross-Channel ferries, supposedly on safety grounds. I should have thought that, given that later this week we are to hear about the report on the Herald of Free Enterprise disaster, on good taste grounds alone such a video would not be shown to passengers crossing the Channel. I do not know whether the Minister agrees that to expect good taste from Sealink would be the equivalent of expecting culture from

[Mr. Snape]

Hollywood. We shall not get any good taste. For the benefit of those using cross-channel ferries, will the hon. Gentleman confirm that, under the terms of these amendments, that video is deliberately misleading and is a scurrilous attempt to play unreasonably on people's fears and that these amendments and this clause specifically preclude the carriage of dangerous goods through the tunnel system?

Mr. David Mitchell: These amendments are aimed at facilitating the enforcement of the concessionaires byelaws, particularly bearing in mind safety. They do not impinge directly on the question of goods to be carried. It is for the concessionaire to propose appropriate measures for the prohibition or control of dangerous goods in the tunnel system. Their proposals will be considered by the Inter-governmental Commission. The commission will be advised by the safety authority which has recently established the dangerous goods working group to prepare its position on the transport of dangerous goods through the tunnel in the light of existing national and international requirement and practice. We must wait for that report before we have a definitive list of prohibited goods. I assure the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) that the circumstances which he has described —displaying a film of what happened in the Summit tunnel—have no relevance to the position in terms of the Channel tunnel. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for having taken this opportunity to expose what I imagine is a deliberate attempt to mislead people.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 64 to 66 agreed to.

Clause 28

RESTORATION OF LAND ON ABANDONMENT OF CONSTRUCTION OR OPERATION

Lords amendment: No. 67, in page 22, line 14, leave out from "make" to end of line 25 and insert

"in relation to any land on which work has been done under this Act a scheme for putting it into such a condition as the scheme may provide and shall put it into a condition in accordance with the scheme.".

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider Lords amendments Nos. 152 and 153.

Mr. Mitchell: These amendments tidy up provisions dealing with the restoration of construction sites and land and restoration in the event of abandonment of a project. They were accepted by the relevant petitioners before the Select Committee of another place.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 32

COMPETITION, ETC.

Lords amendment: No. 68, in page 23, line 34, leave out from "shall" to "and" in line 36 and insert

"be deemed to be interconnected bodies corporate for the purposes of the Act of 1976 in relation to any specified channel tunnel agreement, any specified class of channel tunnel agreements, or all such agreements;".

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider Lords amendents Nos. 69 to 72.

Mr. Mitchell: These amendments are essentially technical. They facilitate the application of competition legislation to the concessionaires and will ensure that the procedures to which they will be subject will be closely aligned with those applicable to their competitors.

Mr. David Shaw: I tried to catch your predecessor's eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but just failed to do so. I wanted to speak on the amendments to clause 2, but I think that I may represent my constituency well by speaking about some of the aspects which could be related to clause 2 on this clause, which deals with competition.

In as much as competition concerns consumers and taxpayers, it is of immense concern to my constituents that no public money should go into this project. They are concerned that not only this Government but successive Governments should continue to protect the taxpayers and consumers. There would be unfair competition between the tunnel and the ferries if the tunnel were bailed out by some form of subsidy or sold if it could not meet its financial obligations.

There are many financial weaknesses in the present project. They stem from high fixed costs and, as the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) said, the unrealistic and unreliable passenger and revenue projections for this project. Referring to the original Channel tunnel project, Coopers and Lybrand Associates, in its 31 May 1973 report, forecast on page 21 that, without a tunnel, there would be some 29,778,000 passengers using airlines in 1980 to go to and from the United Kingdom and Europe. The actual number was closer to 20 million passengers. There was a massive over-forecast by the traffic consultants who supplied the figures to Coopers and Lybrand.

Coopers and Lybrand's original forecast suggested that 14 per cent. of airline passengers would transfer to a Channel tunnel if it were built. Because the airline passenger rate was not as high as it should have been, Eurotunnel was forced to put in its 1987 prospectus a figure of 18 per cent. transferring. One wonders whether it was necessary to tweak the financial projections to achieve the right result. I was informed only at the weekend that the latest freight revenue projections show that, far from increasing, there has been a small downturn this year of some 3 per cent. in the freight revenue from ferries. Rail passengers——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The fault may be mine, but I am finding it difficult to relate what the hon. Member is saying to the contents of the Lords amendments. He should relate his remarks more closely to them, or resume his seat.

Mr. Shaw: I shall try to relate my remarks more closely, as you suggest, Sir. My lack of experience of the House is to blame. I suggest that fair competition is essential. We need fair competition in terms not only of revenue, but, dare I suggest, money raised in the City of London and other such places. Without such fair competition between——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I have to say again to the hon. Member that I find little connection between his remarks and the Lords amendments.

Mr. Shaw: The Lords amendments mention the Consumer Protection Advisory Committee and the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Having made many representations to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission during my former merchant banking career, I suggest that the MMC, when considering competition, looks to very wide and varied aspects of information. Eurotunnel's prospectus refers to a number of exemptions under various stock exchange requirements and others. This means that information on the shuttle's engineering feasibility and its practicability is not provided. If the Monopolies and Mergers Commission were considering the tunnel on lines equivalent to the ferries or ports, it would surely be extremely worried about that lack of information.

In 1974, in a report on the Channel tunnel, *Accountancy Age* said that, although the tunnel was expected to carry 14 million passengers by 1990, the big expansion in journeys to and from the continent would be in air traffic, increasing from 16 million in 1971 to 41 million by 1990. All the 1974 forecast figures about passengers were wrong. Even in 1987, the ferries were carrying only 14 million passengers. I am concerned that, if the tunnel gets into financial difficulties, it will not be able to compete on fair grounds with the ferries. There may be some adjustment to the normal competition rules, which the Monopolies and Mergers Commission would consider.

8.30 pm

I feel that I should conclude on a matter that you may feel stretches the imagination somewhat, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of whether I am speaking to the amendment. The British Rail contract recently signed by Eurotunnel should be examined closely by the public. Certainly, many people in my constituency of Dover will be extremely concerned to ensure that that contract is fair vis-a-vis the ferries, and vis-a-vis Eurotunnel and British Rail. We hope that that can be examined, and will be published very shortly, before the publication of the prospectus in October.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for your tolerance in enabling me to raise a number of matters of concern to the port and ferry people of Dover.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have noted my hon. Friend's points carefully. I can reassure him that no public money will go into the Eurotunnel project.

Eurotunnel traffic forecasts are a matter for Eurotunnel, which must justify its project to the investors in the financial markets of the world. They are not underwritten or audited in any way by the Government; they are a matter for Eurotunnel, as a private sector operator.

As for competition, there are certain intrinsic advantages in each method of transport. They will appeal to different groups of people. That is the free working of the market, and I do not believe that we should interfere with it.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 74, 75, 76, 96 to 100 and 102 agreed to.

New Clause

RAILWAYS BOARD'S PLAN FOR INTERNATIONAL THROUGH SERVICES

Insert the following new Clause after clause 38—

"38A.—(1) It shall be the duty of the Railways Board to prepare a plan stating measures which the Board propose to take, and any proposals as to measures which the Board consider ought to be taken by any person in the United Kingdom or France, with the aim of securing—

(*a*) the provision or improvement of international through services serving various parts of the United Kingdom; and

(*b*) an increase in the proportion of the passengers and goods carried between places in the United Kingdom and places outside the United Kingdom that is carried by international through services.

(2) The measures referred to in subsection (1) above are—

(*a*) measures relating to the operation of international through services;

(*b*) measures relating to the carrying out of works or other developments connected with international through services (including collection and distribution centres for goods and inland clearance depots); and

(*c*) measures relating to the provision or improvement of facilities or other services connected with international through services.

(3) The Railways Board—

(*a*) shall prepare the plan under this section not later than 31st December 1989;

(*b*) shall keep the plan under review and from time to time revise it; and

(*c*) shall cause the plan and any revisions of it to be published in such manner as they think fit.

(4) In preparing the plan and any revisions of it the Railways Board shall have regard to the financial resources likely to be available to them and to any restrictions likely to be imposed on them with respect to the application of such resources.

(5) The duties imposed by this section shall not apply at any time when the original Concession, as defined by section 1(4) of this Act, has expired or terminated and no new Concession is in operation.

[Mr. David Mitchell]

(6) In this section "international through services" means services for the carriage of passengers or goods by rail by way of the tunnel system, other than shuttle services."

Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this we shall consider the following amendments to the Lords amendment: (a), in line 23, at end insert—

'*(aa)* shall take account of the social and congestion costs arising from excess use of Waterloo as a terminal;

(b), in line 26, leave out 'in such manner as they think fit' and insert

'and laid before both Houses of Parliament.'.

Mr. Holland: I trust that the Minister will seriously consider the amendments. I appreciate that clause 38A(9) is concerned with provision for the improvement of international through services serving various parts of the United Kingdom. The amendment is clearly related to that, inasmuch as improvement of the international through services would, I believe, be very likely, given the degree of congestion which will probably occur at Waterloo. I also feel that the plan required by the new clause, which the British Railways Board should prepare not later than 31 December 1989, should not be published simply in such a manner "as they think fit", but should be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

I shall not detain the House for long, because I know that other pressing matters command the attention of those hon. Members who are not in the Chamber to consider congestion at Waterloo. However, this is a serious issue. We debated earlier the question of traffic flows, and what kind of traffic is likely to be generated. I have raised the point that the Gibbs report was based on a past assumption of passenger use at Waterloo, and that several of the projections now given involve a considerably increased traffic flow. Therefore, while the Gibbs report declared itself satisfied that there would not be undue congestion around Waterloo, it is clear that, if we have anything like the projections given by the higher Eurotunnel figures — and, indeed, the 50 per cent. increase made possible by resignalling of track, there could be considerable congestion. One estimate is of at least an additional 4 million vehicles a year in or around Waterloo.

I said earlier that already some hon. Members crossing Westminster bridge have to negotiate their way past tourist buses which are parked there — not simply to obtain a better view of this place, but because there is nowhere else in the immediate vicinity in which to park such a vehicle. It is not entirely a facetious remark when I say that hon. Members may find the congestion around Waterloo caused by several million additional vehicles a year to be considerable. Attention should also be given to the social costs of undue congestion. The Waterloo area contains an inner-city community struggling to resist commercial development pressures and to safeguard and restore community services and facilities. There is a considerable, if not acute, threat to that from the imposition of a single terminal, rather than dispersal of a higher degree of traffic than the 30 per cent. now estimated by British Rail.

I appreciate — as I said earlier — that the Minister came to see the position for himself. I know that he is concerned, and realises that there is a viable local community in the Waterloo area. However, I submit that the assessment should take account of railway operational matters as well as traffic generation, pollution and other environmental effects, the benefits to international and domestic public transport passengers, including commuter passengers, and the integration of transport facilities.

British Rail has brought out a conveniently designed cross flow system for escalators designed to separate commuter traffic from international traffic. While the principle is no doubt a good one, in practice the strain on the service is likely to be considerable. It is clear to those of us who are familiar with Waterloo station that the idea of converting what is now a one-way road system, in which taxis have access to the station, to a two-way system will lead to considerable congestion. Those of us who use Waterloo know that if one taxi pulls out the traffic pile-up can involve up to 15 vehicles. On a random representative occasion, I found 15 cabs waiting because one was unloading and the others were piled up behind it.

The environmental consequences will be considerable. British Rail's original proposal was for the terminal to be at the other end of the station, because it was recognised that increased space might well be needed to avoid congestion. Use of the other side of the station would involve building over areas which at present have housing, and a street market of the kind that the Minister has seen.

As it has not been possible in the fullest feasible detail to examine these proposals in a Committee of this House, or in the other place, I submit that little would be lost if the amendment were accepted. I cannot anticipate the advice that the Minister may have taken from officials, but I know that he is a man with an independent mind. Were I an official, I might even advise him that the definition of "excess" provides room for manoeuvre over what British Rail might or might not have to consider.

The Minister has expressed his concern for the community at Waterloo. Earlier he referred to the unwillingness of representatives of the local community groups to take part in the committee that he offered them. I appreciate his disappointment about that, but that issue is now in the past. The Minister has expressed concern and has permitted himself to be better informed about the possible congestion of Waterloo as a flagship terminal. That would imperil the economic viability of the fixed link traffic, if there were not consequential expenditure to facilitate the dispersal of traffic. That might lead to legislation having to be considered on the Floor of the House. Therefore, I urge him to accept both my amendments.

Mr. David Mitchell: British Rail's choice of Waterloo as an international terminal has been debated exhaustively at all stages of the Bill's passage through both Houses. The misgivings of the Waterloo community about the effect of this development on them are understandable. If, however, the council that they elected to represent them had been prepared to respond to British Rail's repeated offers of consultation, or if they had not made the futile gesture of walking out of the meeting that I had convened to bring them and British Rail together, it might have been possible to put some of these misgivings at rest.

Critics of the Waterloo proposal have now had every opportunity to put their views before Select Committees of both Houses of Parliament. After considering their views carefully, both Select Committees considered that there was no reason to question British Rail's decision, or to remove the Waterloo provisions from the Bill.

The hon. Gentleman's first amendment would require British Rail to take account of the social and congestion costs arising from the excess use of Waterloo as a terminal. It would not require British Rail to do this when drawing up its plans for dispersal under the new clause, but I assume that that is the hon. Gentleman's intention. The plan would provide a basis on which local authorities and other interested parties in the regions could discuss with British Rail its plans for the dispersal of services. I do not think that it would be helpful for the plan to be cluttered with discussions about the adequacy or otherwise of Waterloo. That is a separate issue.

The hon. Gentleman's second amendment would require British Rail's plans to be laid before both Houses of Parliament. The approach to publication that we have adopted is once again inspired by the approach of the original Opposition clause. That clause required the board to publish its plan in such a manner as it considered best calculated to bring it to the attention of those who would be affected by its implementation. This clause uses different words to achieve the same purpose.

There is no question of the board publishing the plan in a surreptitious manner so that nobody knows about it. The board would have every interest in letting its potential customers know what sort of services it was planning to provide. I have no doubt, therefore, that it will publish its plan widely. However, in response to the hon. Gentleman's request, I am happy to undertake that when the plan is published copies will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

8.45 pm

Mr. Holland: I am most grateful to the Minister, and I know that the local community will also be grateful to him for what he has said. Nevertheless, it is important to have an opportunity to discuss the issues. Public display boards at Waterloo gave information that proved to be misinformation. It had to be withdrawn. Consultation chats with British Rail management and members of the local community have not addressed detailed questions such as the mix of private car, taxi and coach use and the congestion during holiday periods and in the week. However, I say again that I am grateful for the Minister's assurance that copies will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses of Parliament.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 40

NO GOVERNMENT GRANTS TO RAILWAYS BOARD IN RESPECT OF INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY SERVICES

Lords amendment No. 78 agreed to. [Special Entry.]

Clause 42

MODIFICATION OF ENACTMENTS RELATING TO COAST PROTECTION, SAFETY OF NAVIGATION AND THE POWERS OF HARBOUR AUTHORITIES

Lords amendment: No. 79, in page 30, line 12, at beginning insert

"Subject to subsection (6) below".

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments Nos. 80, 81 and 85.

Mr. David Mitchell: These amendments give the Dover harbour board greater freedom to carry out blasting operations in or near the harbour without the prior approval of the concessionaires and were negotiated and agreed between the parties at the same time as they agreed the revised protective provisions in part IV of schedule 7. The amendments were submitted to and endorsed by the Select Committee in another place.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

Clause 47

INTERPRETATION

Lords amendment: No. 82, in page 32, line 13, after "sections" insert

"shown on Sheets Nos. 1 to 15 and 21 to 34 of the plans and sections".

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments Nos 83, 84, 89, 91 to 94, 101, 114 to 132 and 172.

Mr. Mitchell: These amendments give effect to the decision of the Select Committee in another place to replace the access provisions contained in the Bill on introduction with the joint southern access arrangements that were worked out between the local authorities and Eurotunnel after the original alternative access proposals were rejected by the Select Committee of this House. As the House knows, these revised access arrangements were widely welcomed by many petitioners and by many of the constituents of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard), who may be regarded as the godfather of these proposals.

Mr. Aitken: Having had the not very agreeable duty of quarrelling with the Government about the procedural arrangements for the access road, it gives me pleasure to be able to say how strongly I am in favour of this change in the Bill, which I believe to be of environmental benefit, because it will save many acres of the countryside. It will also bring more trade and business to the beleaguered economies of many east Kent towns, including the Thanet towns in my constituency.

[Mr. Aitken]

I ask the Minister for an assurance, however, that signposting will be given proper priority. This road, curling towards east Kent, will nevertheless fail in one of its purposes if it is inadequately signposted and if the various tourist and business attractions of east Kent are not clearly marked.

I join in paying tribute to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard) who is indeed the godfather of this group of amendments. They are most welcome. If the Channel tunnel is built, I hope that they will bring some benefit to the economies of those communities who will lose jobs.

Mr. Mitchell: My hon. Friend has asked me about signposting. I have taken a personal interest in that subject. It will not have escaped his attention that it was specifically mentioned by the House of Commons Select Committee when it considered the alternative access. It will be on the agenda of the next meeting of the joint consultative committee when it meets in Kent. I shall ensure that my hon. Friend's points are taken into account on that occasion.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 90, in page 35, line 27, leave out "the".

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 95, 111 and 113.

Mr. Mitchell: These are drafting amendments.

Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith): These are slightly more than drafting amendments. I shall not delay the House long, but this is an important matter that affects my constituency with regard to compensation that is paid for land damage. I shall address my remarks in particular to amendment No. 111.

The land that I shall refer to is Scrubs wood in my constituency, which will be used for sidings and the toilet-emptying facilities of trains when they are parked overnight. It is a surprising area in inner-city terms. It is a wildlife area and British Rail accepts—the Minister will know this from the debate that we had in Committee—that a large part of it will be destroyed.

This matter was brought to my attention by a young man who is aged 15 years. Lester Holloway has already received a considerable amount of publicity with regard to the matter. As a result of his work, he has been nominated for the Youth of the Year award in a BBC programme. His work is impressive, and over the years he has collated the wildlife that lives in the area, including his main interest of birds. He has the support of the London Wildlife Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and other such groups.

The relevant part of amendment No. 111 is the requirement for British Rail to pay compensation. The compensation that is being mentioned is about £36,000. The costing of the amount that will be required to protect the area is about £260,000. Amendment No. 111 refers to damage done, and its effect is to remove those words from the Bill, which should not happen.

I shall now explain the background to the matter and explain the importance and relevance of it. Lester Holloway produced his report and has received a wide degree of support. When he came to see me at the House I drew the matter to the attention of my friend, Nick Raynsford, who was the Member for Fulham and who was on the Committee. The Government accepted an amendment that was tabled by him which called for consultations with the London Wildlife Trust and the London boroughs of Hammersmith, Fulham and Ealing because of the damage that would be done to this unique area.

It is a unique area because it has evolved over many years, partly as a result of industrial use as a railway siding and partly as a result of having allotments there in the past. According to a number of experts, not just Lester Holloway, it has produced an amazingly wide variety of plant life in a small area, which in turn supports a wide variety of insects, animals and bird life. The area contains semi-mature woodland of several different types, dry heathland, grassland and gorse near the wetter habitats of the canal.

I have a petition which has been signed by some 4,000 people. It expresses opposition to the development and calls for British Rail to make compensation in the amount that I have mentioned. I shall not go into detail, but in this area an extraordinarily wide variety of birds, animals and insects have been identified, many of which have been unknown to other areas of London. One of the matters that I want to stress to the Minister—I am seeking his support to urge British Rail to increase the compensation for the damage done—is that the Secretary of State for Education and Science has passed regulations that in the new GCSE curriculum all biology students need to do field work and ecological studies. All inner-London and inner-city areas have difficulties in identifying areas for such work. This is such an area, yet it will be destroyed.

If the worst comes to the worst British Rail must take over this area, but we are asking that it restructures the area to the south. It has offered some £36,000 to do that, but reading between the lines British Rail seems to take the view that it is just a matter of moving the fence back a few hundred yards. It is not; it is a matter of restructuring the environment.

I shall quote from the House of Lords with regard to this matter. Lord Belstead said:

"During the proceedings of the Select Committee, the London Wildlife Trust raised the question of extending the consultation requirement to clearance of the land and asked British Rail to give an undertaking that it would not at any time alter the site in any way without adequate prior consultation. The Noble Baroness"—

Baroness Nicol—

"said that she thought that British Rail was sympathetic to that course. Indeed, British Rail was able to give an assurance that if the London Wildlife Trust wished to identify a particular species or habitat that it wanted to preserve or remove, that opportunity would be given. I believe that we ought to accept that assurance in good faith."

Baroness Nicol said:

"The Minister seems to base his case on the need to trust the undertaking given by British Rail. I am sorry to say that the damage that has been done to the site as a preliminary to survey work has been done within the last two weeks, which is after the undertaking was given. Noble Lords can scarcely be surprised therefore if the London Wildlife Trust and the other local groups feel a little diffident about accepting the rest of British Rail's undertakings. I am sorry to have to undermine the Minister's argument but this is a fact, and somewhere I have photographs of the damage"—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 6 July 1987; Vol. 488, c. 587 and 589.]

An excellent report has been made by Land Use Consultants, which is an expert in this sector. It argued that the site can be moved but it must be done well in advance of the work that will destroy the existing area and that the cost will be about £260,000. We must bear in mind that the depot in this area is estimated to cost £41·9 million. British Rail has offered £36,000.

I ask the Minister to recognise that the amendment that the Lords have inserted has reduced the pressure on British Rail to pay compensation for the damage that everybody acknowledges will be done to a unique inner-city area. If we regard it as important to protect areas such as Kent, which I support and understand, we must consider it exceptionally important to do so in inner city areas, where everyone acknowledges that there are species of animals, bird life and insects that have not been seen not only in the inner city areas but the surrounding areas of London. It is that rare wildlife that is in danger of being wiped out.

I do not know whether the Minister has seen the report from Lester Holloway, but I am happy to let him have a copy. It details different and rare things that he has spotted, including a swallowtail butterfly, which has not been seen in that area for many years. There is a moth, of which I had no knowledge, called the wormwood shark, which also inhabits that area and is regarded as very rare. I urge the Minister to look again at the amendment or to use his good offices with British Rail to ensure that it makes a more realistic offer to compensate for the damage that everyone acknowledges will be done.

Mr. David Mitchell: I am sorry to disappoint the hon. Gentleman but amendment No. 111 has nothing to do with Scrubs wood. It is a drafting amendment to the provisions concerning temporary occupation of land. There is no temporary occupation of land at Scrubs wood. British Rail's offer of £36,000 was accepted by the Select Committee as a reasonable offer.

Mr. Soley: Obviously, the Minister is right about the terms of temporary occupation. I spotted that years ago. however, the words removed by the Lord's amendment are:

"in respect of damage arising from the execution of any works, other than damage for which".

Mr. Mitchell: As I was saying, the sum of £36,000 was accepted by the Select Committee as being reasonable and proper. It is not for me to interfere. I am aware of the work that has been done by the hon. Gentleman's young constituent, Lester Holloway. I was impressed with what I saw of his work. I have written to him to congratulate him on his work and to thank him for having drawn attention to the important ecological aspects to which the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) has drawn the attention of the House.

I hope that with those sympathetic comments, the hon. Gentleman may feel that it is right that we should agree with the Lords in the amendment.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 91 to 102 agreed to.

Schedule 2

SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS AS TO THE SCHEDULED WORKS AND OTHER AUTHORISED WORKS

Lords amendment: No. 103, in page 43, line 25, leave out, ", water or" and insert "or water pipes,".

9 pm

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider Lords amendments Nos. 104 to 108 and No. 112.

Mr. Mitchell: These amendments are protective arrangements agreed between the parties during the Select Committee of another place over the drainage lagoon works in the Bill and the discharges from it. Because of further amendments to schedule 7 made in another place, it is unlikely that the lagoon will be built, but the protection is needed should it be necessary, after all, to build one. The question of the sewer alternative arises under amendment No. 197.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 104 to 108 agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 109, in page 46, line 21, leave out from "vehicles" to end of line 22 and insert

"provided in accordance with sub-paragraph (2) below;"

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendment No. 110.

Mr. Mitchell: These are agreed amendments to a private schedule accepted by the Select Committee of another place.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 110 to 132 agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 133, in page 57, line 22, leave out sub-paragraph (5) and insert—

"(5) Where the construction of any part of the road forming Work No. 17 has been completed the Secretary of State may, if the part concerned was not a highway at the passing of this Act, certify a date on which it is to be transferred to that Council.".

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments Nos. 134 to 142.

Mr. Mitchell: These are technical amendments.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 134 to 142 agreed to.

Schedule 3

PLANNING PERMISSION

Lords amendment: No. 143, in page 59, line 43, at end insert—

""spoil" means spoil from tunnelling works; and

"surplus spoil" means spoil which is not used for the purposes of any of the works authorised by this Act.".

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this we may take the following Lords amendments: Nos. 144 to 148, 151, 154, 155 and 183.

Mr. Mitchell: These amendments are technical. They will bring together in a more logical order the provisions relating to spoil disposal.

Mr. David Shaw: Having been negative about some of the amendments, I am glad to say that-I welcome certain aspects of amendment No. 184. There is no question but that some of the provisions relating to the control of the way in which spoil is dealt with will benefit the constituency of Dover.

Nevertheless, I feel that it is appropriate to sound a note of concern. The Government's 1973 paper on the Channel tunnel suggested that only 2 million cubic metres of spoil would have to be dealt with, and that would certainly not need to be dumped at the base of Shakespeare cliff, just out to sea from my constituency. The excess of over 2 million cubic metres is unacceptable. I am also concerned at the impact on the environment of the spoil being moved around near to the council estate of Aycliffe. There could be considerable problems from noise as well as from dust.

I am concerned, too, about the visual impact on the environment. My wife and I very much enjoy walking on Shakespeare cliff, and clearly the walk will not be as attractive as it has been in the past. Many people from Dover enjoy that walk——

Mr. Snape: The hon. Gentleman should not get too close to the edge.

Mr. Shaw: I assure the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) that if he likes to come with me, I shall take him close to the edge.

As I feel certain that the Minister will get the proposal through the House and as this is probably the last time that I shall say anything on the Bill or the amendment— [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] I know that Opposition Members will be pleased when I sit down; they will be less pleased when I stand up on more political matters at a later date.

No doubt the Minister will earn his due rewards after the Bill has been passed. Although I have given him many brickbats, I hope that I may also pay tribute and thanks to him for the provisions that he has inserted for the benefit of Dover. Into this thoroughly unacceptable Bill he has managed to insert at least a modicum of provisions to protect the interests of the ports and ferries.

If the workings are started and the finance is raised —which I doubt—I hope that if there are any problems relating to spoil in the years ahead the Minister will agree to receive delegations of residents perhaps represented by me to discuss them. I refer to problems of excessive noise and visual problems, or restricted walking or anything that may impair the benefits that my constituents are used to enjoying.

Mr. David Mitchell: I agree with my hon. Friend about the agreeable nature of the walk along the top of Shakespeare cliff. However, unless he walks very close to the edge he will have difficulty in seeing the land reclaimed with the spoil from the Channel tunnel.

The amendments ensure that the planning authority when considering requests for planning approval for the sea wall may take into account the requirement for other consents in relation to the sea wall contained in schedule 7. Conversely, when approving the sea wall for navigation purposes, they permit the Secretary of State to have regard to the requirements for planning approval. They also provide for consultation on the deposit of spoil with the Government's statutory advisers on environmental matters.

Lords Amendment No. 148 also writes into the Bill the more southerly alignment of the cut-and-cover rail tunnel through Holywell Coombe agreed by Eurotunnel, the Nature Conservancy Council and other environmental bodies, strongly supported by the Select Committee in the other place. It defines a protected area south of which all the construction must take place. This will safeguard the northern of the two most important geological deposits in the Coombe area, which would have been destroyed under the original alignment proposals. I am sure that any noise or visual problems will be raised at the meetings of the joint consultation committee by the Dover representatives, and they will certainly be sympathetically heard.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 144 to 148 agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 149, in page 62, line 31, leave out sub-paragraph (1) and insert—

"6.—(1) The land associated with any building, facility or work comprised in any authorised development shall be landscaped in accordance with a scheme approved, at the request of the Concessionaires, by the district planning authority.

(1A) No building, facility or work so comprised shall be brought into use unless—

(a) a scheme for the landscaping of the land associated with it has been so approved; and

(b) any landscaping operations required by the scheme to have been completed before the building, facility or work is brought into use have been completed in accordance with the scheme."

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this house doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendment No. 150.

Mr. Mitchell: These amendents ensure that provisions of the landscape scheme prepared by the concessionaires and approved by the local planning authority are enforceable by providing a more flexible from of planning condition.

Mr. Snape: As these are the last two amendments, and this may be the last debate on the Bill——

Mr. Alan Howarth (Stratford-on Avon): No, they are not.

Mr. Snape: They are the last ones formally set down. I am grateful to the Whip, but the vow of silence that he has taken should be thoroughly enforced.

Mr. Howarth: Look over the page.

Mr. Snape: I am sorry that I got involved in this. The Whip is right to say that there are half a dozen more groups of amendments over the page. I apologise to him and to the House for intervening at this point.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 150 to 156 agreed to.

Schedule 4

THE A20 IMPROVEMENT WORKS

Lords amendment: No. 157, in page 67, line 29, after "with" insert "the"

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments Nos. 158 and 159.

Mr. David Mitchell: These amendments simply correct some very small drafting slips.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 158 and 159 agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 160, in page 70, leave out lines 25 to 27.

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendment No. 161.

Mr. Mitchell: These are simply rearrangements of the footpath and bridleway network affected by the A20 to meet petitioning points made by the Ramblers Association to the Select Committee of this House.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendment No. 161 agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 162, in page 71, line 28, leave out from beginning to "the" in line 31 and insert—

"6.—(1) On the date on which this Act is passed".

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 163 to 171.

Mr. Mitchell: These are simply technical amendments concerned with the status of the A20 improvement works.

Question put and agreed ot.

Lords amendments Nos. 163 to 172 agreed to.

Schedule 5

Supplementary Provisions as to Acquisition of Land

Lords amendment: No. 173, in page 77, line 46, leave out from beginning to "the" in line 1 on page 78.

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendment No. 174.

Mr. Mitchell: The first amendment deletes superfluous words and in doing so creates an inconsistency in the drafting. The second amendment is consequential upon the first.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendment No. 174 agreed to.

Schedule 7

Protective Provisions

Lords amendment: No. 175, in page 85, line 41, leave out

"constructing or carrying out works of maintenance on"

and insert

"carrying out any work for the construction or maintenance of"

Mr. Mitchell: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this we shall take Lords amendments Nos. 176 to 182 and 184 to 204.

Mr. Mitchell: Those amendments deal with a variety o matters relating to protective provisions agreed before the Select Committee of another place. They concern water, sewerage, drainage and workings at sea and provide additional protection to the statutory undertakings involved.

Mr. Snape: I have been assured by Conservative Members that there are no more pages of amendments. Therefore, I take the opportunity on this last group of amendments, on what I hope is the last day of debate on the Bill, to thank the Minister of State for his courtesy and attention to detail over the past year. It has been much appreciated. Sometimes the content of his answers has not been appreciated by Labour Members of by members of the two Committees on which I have served but, despite our political differences, at all times he has tried to meet the various, sometimes conflicting amendments and advice, for which we are all grateful.

9.15 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): I want to briefly comment on the water, sewerage and drainage aspects of the amendments. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you will appreciate, the Bill wended its way through the House while I was not present. Therefore, I want to place on record my complete opposition to this wretched Channel tunnel venture. It has nothing whatever to do with transport. It is designed to pour huge sums of public money——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Member cannot seek to make now the speech that he might have made had he been a Member of the House when the Bill was debated. I hope that he will address his remarks to the amendments before the House.

Mr. Cryer: I am concerned with the cost of the water, sewerage and drainage facilities that will arise as part of the huge amount of public expenditure for a tunnel that is designed only to link us closer to the Common Market and which is not of advantage to the country.

Mr. Mitchell: If the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) had been a Member of the House at the time he would have heard those comments made by a number of other hon. Members. I thank the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) for his kind remarks. The Bill has been considerably improved in its passage through the various processes of the House and of the other place, the Standing Committee and the Select Committee, and hon. Members on both sides of the House have played a significant part in achieving that improvement.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

Members' Salaries and Allowances

9.19 pm

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): I beg to move,

That, in the opinion of this House, the following provision should be made with respect to the salaries of Members of this House—

(a) the salaries of Members not falling within paragraph *(b)* shall, in respect of service in 1988 or any subsequent year, be at a yearly rate equal to 89 per cent. of the rate which on 1st January in that year represents the maximum point on the main national pay scale for Grade 6 officers in the Home Civil Service, or if that scale ceases to exist, on the scale which for the time being replaces it (disregarding, in either case, any discretionary pay point on that scale); and

(b) the Salaries of Officers of this House and Members receiving a salary under the Ministerial and other Salaries Act 1975 or a pension under section 26 of the Parliamentary and other Pensions Act 1972 shall, in respect of service in 1988 or any subsequent year, be at a yearly rate equal to 67 per cent. of the rate which on 1st January in that year represents the maximum point referred to in paragraph *(a)*.

I hope that it will be for the convenience of the House if we take together the other motions in my name:

That, in the opinion of this House—

(a) the allowance payable to a Member of this House in respect of the aggregate expenses incurred by him for his Parliamentary duties—

(i) as general office expenses (including expenses incurred in the purchase of office equipment).

(ii) on secretarial assistance, and

(iii) on research assistance for work undertaken in the proper performance of such duties,

should be known as the office costs allowance;

(b) the limit on the office costs allowance should be determined as follows—

(i) for the year ending with 31st March 1988, the limit should be £20,140,

(ii) for the year ending with 31st March 1989, the limit should be the greater of the following amounts, namely the amount obtained by increasing £19,500 by the relevant percentage and £20,140,

(iii) for any subsequent year, the limit should be the amount obtained by increasing the limit applicable to the immediately preceding year by the relevant percentage (so that, if the relevant percentage for any year is nil, the limit remains the same for that year);

(c) the arrangements approved by Mr. Speaker pursuant to paragraph *(b)* of the second Resolution of 19th July 1983 (payments by Fees Office in respect of secretarial and research assistance) should include arrangements for securing that, before any salary or fee is paid to any person in respect of his employment by the Member concerned, the Member—

(i) in the case of a person by law entitled to receive a written statement of the main terms and conditions of that employment, has furnished the Fees Office with a copy of any such statement and has furnished the Fees Office and that person with a statement containing a job description relating to that employment, or

(ii) in the case of any other person, has furnished the Fees Office and that person with a statement containing a job description relating to that employment and has either included in that statement details of that persons's pay and hours of work or furnished the Fees Office with a copy of a written contract relating to that employment,

together with arrangements for securing that, before any other payment is made in respect of services provided by any person, the Member concerned has furnished the Fees Office with invoices specifying the services in question;

(d) the limit applicable to the sum referred to in paragraph *(b)* of the third Resolution of 5th June 1981 (pension contributions for Members' secretaries and research assistants) should, for the year ending with 31st March 1988 and any subsequent year, be equal to—

(i) 10 per cent. of the salary, or (as the case may be) of the aggregate amount of the salaries, payable for that year to the person or persons in respect of whom any such sums are paid, or

(ii) 10 per cent. of the amount which is the limit for that year on the office costs allowance,

whichever is less.

In this Resolution "year" means a year ending with 31st March, and for the purposes of this Resolution—

(i) the relevant percentage for any year is the percentage by which the amount of salary (exclusive of allowances and overtime) payable for that year to a person in the Home Civil service at the maximum point on the scale for Senior Personal Secretaries and in receipt of Inner London weighting exceeds the corresponding amount for the immediately preceding year;

(ii) any fraction of a pound in the amount obtained as mentioned in paragraph *(b)*(ii) or (iii) above for any year shall be treated as a whole pound if it is not less than 50 pence, but shall otherwise be disregarded.

That the following provision should be made with respect to the salaries of Members of this House—

(a) the salaries of Members not falling within paragraph *(b)* shall, in respect of service in 1988 or any subsequent year, be at a yearly rate equal to 89 per cent. of the rate which on 1st January in that year represents the maximum point on the main national pay scale for Grade 6 officers in the Home Civil Service or, if that scale ceases to exist, on the scale which for the time being replaces it (disregarding, in either case, any discretionary pay point on that scale); and

(b) the salaries of Officers of this House and Members receiving a salary under the Ministerial and other Salaries Act 1975 or a pension under section 26 of the Parliamentary and other Pensions Act 1972 shall, in respect of service in 1988 or any subsequent year, be at a yearly rate equal to 67 per cent. of the rate which on 1st January in that year represents the maximum point referred to in paragraph *(a)*.

I hope also to cover in my remarks the Ministerial and other Salaries Order 1987 for which we are seeking the House's approval.

The discussion of our salaries is always a peculiarly intimate and sensitive debate. The last time we debated these matters the common theme running through the speeches from both sides of the House was how invidious and embarrassing it was that, year after year, we had to debate and then determine our own pay. The motions in my name would, if approved, lead to automatic adjustments in our salaries for future years without the need for annual debates. I shall deal first with Members' and then Ministers' pay before turning to the motion on the secretarial allowance.

The House last debated Members' salaries in July 1983. On 19 July, while accepting a phased increase in salary up to £18,500 on 1 January 1987, the House voted that, from 1 January 1988, a Member's salary would be linked to that paid to the Civil Service grade which was earning £18,500 in July 1983. That was equivalent to 89 per cent. of the basic maximum of the grade 6 or senior principal pay scale. To become effective, the resolution required confirmation within three months of a new Parliament.

That linkage would give Members a rise of £4,048, from £18,500 to £22,548, to be paid from 1 January 1988. It would also mean that future annual increases from 1 January 1989 and beyond for Members' pay would be linked to the increase for this Civil Service pay point. As some hon. and right hon. Members will recall, the Government did not originally support either the principle of linkage or this particular linkage. We were prepared, as a compromise, to support a different linkage that would have produced a much more modest increase. But the House voted for the increase that I described earlier, and traditionally it is the House which decides the issue. Today it is for the House to decide whether to confirm the linkage in the 1983 resolution. The motions in my name give the House that chance.

Despite our original reservations about the linkage, I now support it. I believe that the Government have a responsibility to listen to the House on such matters and, sometimes, to defer to its judgment. The House has voted for the principle of linkage on three separate occasions —in 1975, 1980 and 1983—and its will is clear. As a workable and, I believe, generally acceptable proposal, the linkage has virtues other than necessity. I am sure that the whole House will be relieved if we can agree upon it tonight.

There are two further points that I should make. First, we believe that it is in accordance with the will of the House to make this linkage with the basic maximum pay scale for this grade, and not to take account of any discretionary pay points that might be added to the scale, but which will not be awarded to the grade as a whole.

Second, I should explain why there are two similar motions on Members' pay. The first motion is framed as an expression of opinion, and can be amended. The second bears the Queen's Recommendation, and cannot be amended. This is required in order to provide for an increase in Exchequer contributions to the pension fund, following an increase in Members' pay. These two motions are the normal way of dealing with the issue. If the first finds favour in the House in an unamended form, the second effective motion will be moved. If, however, the House rejects or amends the first motion, we will not move the second motion today, but I shall undertake to return to the House in the near future with an effective motion that reflects the House's view.

I hope, however, that the House will accept the motion in its present form, as the amendment which the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) has tabled is not one which I could recommend — although I shall, of course, listen attentively to the hon. Gentleman's arguments. I believe that the amendment would bar Members from occupations outside the House, after the next election. I do not think that there is a consensus about this, and I am sure that many Members believe that it can be beneficial to the work of the House if some Members have current experience of outside employment.

The motions deal also with the reduced parliamentary salary payable to my colleagues on the Front Bench, and certain other officeholders. The arrangement proposed is that their reduced parliamentary salary should be linked to a lower percentage of the same maximum on the senior principal pay scale, as was envisaged in 1983. That will give my colleagues an increase in this element of their salary from £13,875 to £16,911.

As far as ministerial salaries themselves are concerned, the Government's proposals are contained in the draft Ministerial and Other Salaries Order 1987, which I laid before the House on 16 July and which I hope the House will approve today. I refer the House also to my written answer of Thursday 16 July in response to my hon. Friend the Member for Sherwood (Mr. Stewart) when I set out in some detail the changes that we envisage. The Government's proposals are simple. We do not believe that percentage increases similar to that proposed for Members would be appropriate for Ministers or other officeholders. At the same time, we do not believe that it would be right for junior Ministers in particular to be worse off than if they had remained Back-Bench Members.

[Mr. John Wakeham]

We propose, therefore, that all Ministers and officeholders in this House, and in another place, should receive in total the same cash increase of £4,048 as Members of Parliament are due to receive from 1 January 1988.

I turn now to our consideration of the Members' office, secretarial and research allowance. On 16 July last year, my predecessor, my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North, (Mr. Biffen), moved a motion which was designed to overcome the anomalous increase that would have occurred in the allowance because of a quirk in the linkage. He accompanied this motion with the assurance that the allowance would be referred to the TSRB for a fundamental overhaul. On that occasion, the House did not accept the wise advice of my right hon. Friend to limit the percentage increase in the allowance for that year to 6 per cent., but accepted the amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) that the allowance should be paid as if it had been fixed at £19,000 rather than at £13,211 and should be further increased by 6 per cent. for the following financial year. That gave a maximum of £20,140 for last year.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North none the less referred the office, secretarial and research allowance to the Top Salaries Review Body. Its report was published earlier this year, as my right hon. Friend announced to the House in a written answer on 29 April. The TSRB recommended that the maximum allowance from 1 April 1987 should be £19,500, consisting notionally of £17,000 for staff and £2,500 for office and equipment costs. In view of the decision that the House had already taken that the allowance be set at £20,140, the TSRB recommended that the level should be retained on a mark-time basis until the figure of £19,500, uprated in accordance with the existing formula, reached a level higher than £20,140. The TSRB in addition made recommendations about good employment practice and accountability for claims made on the allowance.

The motion in my name on the secretarial allowance reflects in a number of ways the conclusions of the TSRB's report. It follows the reommendation, which I have just outlined, about the level of the allowance and mark-time arrangements. The amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) would overturn those arrangements. I shall listen with interest to what the hon. Gentleman has to say, but I believe the House would be doing itself a disservice if, having pre-empted the TSRB's review by voting for the present level of allowance, it rejected the TSRB's conclusion that the allowance was too high.

For the future, the Government motion retains the linkage which has previously been in operation with the maximum of the senior personal secretary scale receiving inner London weighting, again as the TSRB recommended. The TSRB believed that the allowance should be renamed the office expenses allowance. I have slightly adapted this recommendation to rename it the office costs allowance. This is to emphasise the point, both to hon. Members and to others, that the payments available are for costs incurred, and do not represent a second general source of income for Members.

The House will see that the motion takes account of the Top Salaries Review Body's recommendation that to promote good employment practice the Fees Office should receive copies of written statements of main terms and conditions of employment for Members' staff. It is, of course, already a legal obligation for Members to supply their staff with such documentation, and it is worrying that the TSRB found some instances where that was not happening. The implementation of this recommendation should rectify the position.

Additionally on accountability, the TSRB recommended that we should consider whether we should adopt in the resolution the Inland Revenue criteria of expenditure qualifying for reimbursement which is "wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred" in parliamentary duties. I considered carefully whether adopting that formula would substantially improve the arrangements for accountability. I accept the spirit of that recommendation, but I am not convinced that the wording of the criteria used by the Inland Revenue is necessarily appropriate for our own arrangements. Indeed, I believe that difficulties might arise if the same wording were used in different circumstances but in respect of the same claims both by the Fees Office and the Inland Revenue.

Finally, I refer to the TSRB's recommendation that Chief Whips should make informal arrangements so that any claims on which, exceptionally, substantial doubts have arisen, and which cannot be resolved by the Fees Office and the individual Member, can be referred to the appropriate Chief Whip. Those arrangements, by their very nature, are not suited to being expressed formally in the terms of the resolution. But I know that my right hon. and learned Friend the Patronage Secretary is discussing, through the usual channels, how such arrangements might work.

The motions are, of course, for the House to decide. I believe that they reflect what the House has in mind when we last debated Members' pay, and it is on that basis that I have brought them forward today. On Ministers' pay, I believe that our proposals represent a fair and realistic settlement, while as far as the office allowance is concerned, as I hope I have shown, the motion in my name was drawn up with the recommendations of the TSRB very much in mind. I commend the motions to the House.

Mr. Speaker: I have selected the amendment to motion No. 3 in the name of the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes). I have been unable to select the amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen), but I have selected the amendment to motion No. 4 in the name of the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) and his hon. Friends. At the end of the debate I shall put each motion separately and call upon the hon. Members concerned to move their amendments formally.

9.30 pm

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): Both from reading ancient debates on Members' pay and being present at some of the earlier debates in the 1980s I believe that it is fair to say that debates on our pay have always been long on humbug, but short on candour. I hope that the weight of precedent will not mean that I entirely follow what has happened in the past.

In a free vote tonight I am advising my right hon. and hon. Friends to support the motion to increase Members' pay and formalise the linkage, which we agreed in principle. I am also advising my right hon. and hon. Friends to support the amendment to the motion on

allowances proposed by my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden). Although I am sympathetic to the objectives of the amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes), which would, if passed, abate Members' earnings in relation to their outside earnings, I am extremely doubtful whether the drafting of that proposition is sound. *[Interruption.]*

Now that I have raised the subject of humbug I would like to get one bit of humbug out of the way — the Prime Minister's stance on this pay increase. There have been many apparent leaks in the newspapers — unattributable briefings — suggesting that the Prime Minister, in some way or other, wishes to block or reduce the proposed increase. In view of the fact that the right hon. Lady claims to be a conviction politician, that cannot be true. If hon. Members refer to *Hansard* for 19 July 1983 they will find that the right hon. Lady voted, not once, but twice, for the proposition that is before us tonight. Therefore, if any Conservative Members are seeking to ingratiate themselves with the inhabitant of 10 Downing street, I suggest that, rather than rely on the scurrilous rumours in the newspapers, they stick to the written record in *Hansard* and vote for this proposition for the increase and the linkage in the sure knowledge that they will be doing what the Prime Minister really wants.

In 1983 the Top Salaries Review Body recommended that, from June 1983, Members of Parliament should receive £19,000 a year. The Government refused to accept the recommendation of the independent review body. There were various behind-the-scene deals, in which Sir Edward du Cann, as boss of the 1922 Committee, was portrayed as our shop steward. As a result of his activities the proposed increase of £19,000 was reduced to pay increases rising by instalments to £18,500 in 1987, and an increase in Members' contributions towards pensions from 6 per cent. to 9 per cent.—not a brilliant effort as a shop steward, many hon. Members thought. However, in an extraordinary quid pro quo, it was also agreed that the proposed secretarial allowance of £13,000 should be reduced to £11,000, thus managing to give the impression that hon. Members put number one first and gave little attention to their responsibility for paying decent wages to their staff.

Nevertheless, at that time, with the Prime Minister's support, linkage was agreed, and that is the proposal that is before the House tonight. We welcome that linkage; it has been agreed twice before at a higher grading in the Civil Service than the one being proposed tonight, but it should, as the Leader of the House has said, help us avoid similar debates on this in future.

There have been discussions about the right level of pay for Members of Parliament. They are not really discussions of the principle, because that was decided in 1911, when Parliament was faced with many relatively impecunious Labour Members and decided to pay £400 a year. I am advised that the value of that £400 in today's money would be about £50,000, so we are not paying ourselves as well as was originally agreed in 1911. Some of my hon. Friends may be interested to know that the 1911 decision was an implementation of one of the six demands of the Chartists in 1838, who called for the payment of Members of Parliament

"to enable an honest tradesman, working man, or other person to serve a constituency when taken from his business to attend to the interests of the country".

The decision whether Members should be paid has been made, but the level of pay is a matter of judgment.

By way of comparisons, let us consider the sort of people that we, as hon. Members, have to deal with. These include large numbers of members of the staff of the House of Commons. I am advised that 62 of the present staff are on salary scales that start above the present level of ours and a further 49 are on scales that start below ours but end above it. It looks as though we are more or less on level pegging with 100-odd members of the staff of the House of Commons.

We might also compare ourselves with those who report on our activities in the House. It is the duty of hon. Members to formulate what they are going to say and to rely on all sorts of rhetorical attributes to get their message over, whereas the Lobby journalists have the simple and straightforward task of reporting truthfully and accurately what is said in this place. No invention, no embroidery and no imaginative skill are required.

If we examine Lobby journalists' expenses we may obtain some idea of how well we are looking after ourselves. Not a single Lobby journalist working for a national newspaper will be paid less than us if our proposed increase goes through. I am also advised that some Lobby journalists working for Sunday newspapers, and therefore producing at best one article a week, are paid as much as twice what we shall be receiving when the increase goes through—plus, in many cases, a free car and expenses.

Journalists' expenses are not really in the same class as those that we are paid. We must prove to the Fees Office that money has been properly spent on our parliamentary duties, whereas the expenses incurred by many journalists are, shall we say, self-consumed; or, occasionally, their consumption is assisted by hon. Members. Other people that we have to deal with are officials in health authorities and local authorities. Hon. Members will find that a substantial number of senior officers with whom they have to deal in those authorities will continue to be paid rather better than we are.

International comparisons are difficult, but the United States House of Representatives pays its members £50,000 and the Netherlands pays up to about £30,000, depending on the level of outside earnings of members. Again it appears that we are not really feathering our nests. What is proposed now springs from what was originally proposed by the Top Salaries Review Body and ought to be supported by the House because the linkage is extremely valuable.

Some of my hon. Friends think that we are already paid too much and that we should not give ourselves an increase. Self-denial has a long and reputable history, but the emphasis should be on self rather than on forcing denial on others. That applies to hon. Members who do not supplement their incomes from any source outside the House. I do not know exactly what view I take of some Conservative Members who earn or receive substantial sums from outside the House and still say that we ought not to increase our pay. That seems to be extremely close to humbug.

I shall now turn to the amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey. It proposes to abate Members' pay by a substantial proportion of their outside earnings. The amendment is badly drafted and might make the situation worse than it is. The clause would abate the present earnings of, for example, a Tory

[Mr. Frank Dobson]

Member who has been running a small engineering company for 20 years. However, if the income derived from his or her activities or employment as a Member of Parliament, and if the hon. Member was the parliamentary adviser to a Japanese video company, the salary would not be abated by the amount received from that source. That is a silly and unjustifiable position, although I think that there ought to be an abatement of Members' pay related to outside earnings.

I shall now turn to allowances. The Opposition, and I think most Conservative Members, welcome the provision to make the payment of the secretarial allowance subject to the submission to the Fees Office of a statement of the contract of employment of employees. That would clearly be good for the employee and for the reputation of Members, because we could no longer be accused of fiddling.

I do not support the standstill in the increase proposed this year by the Government, even though it was also recommended by the Top Salaries Review Body. The TSRB is not consistent. It says that in view of the increase that went through last year, there is evidence showing that hon. Members are moving towards employing two full-time staff. It says that Members should employ only one and a half members of staff. In a sense the market shows that there is a need for more staff and the allowances should respond to that. We support the amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, West. Setting aside the pay, most hon. Members regard the working conditions of most of our staff as absolutely abominable. The conditions should be massively improved. The only way to do that is to create more office space for the staff to work in. I want to suggest that although the House has not yet had time to debate a report from the Select Committee on House of Commons (Services) about the new buildings and additional accommodation, the House should seriously consider the possibility of taking over at least some, or possibly all, of Richmond terrace, the Whitehall rehabilitation, and the new buildings, 158,000 sq ft of offices provided at a cost of £36 million, presently earmarked for a large collection of civil servants. There is a greater need for hon. Members to be near to this House than for a large collection of civil servants to move yet nearer to 10 Downing street.

I present an entirely personal view about ministerial salaries. I welcome the Government's decision to abate the increases that would otherwise have gone to Ministers. I believe that Ministers have always done rather well in our system. After all, Cabinet Ministers were receiving £5,000 a year when hon. Members did not get a cent. I believe that it would be better and sounder for our democracy if the differential between Back-Bench Members and Ministers was reduced.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Why?

Mr. Dobson: I will try to explan why. At present if a Minister is feeling a little dissatisfied at what the Government are doing in Cabinet he is faced with the prospect of losing the chaffeur-driven car, his office and status and, in the case of Cabinet Ministers, he faces losing a very substantial chunk of income, as one of the recent victims of the post-election purge explained the other day. It is wholly sound that in our democracy we should encourage people to say what they think in Cabinet, to do what they believe to be right and not to face massive financial penalties if they want to get out. After all, had my proposition existed before, the right hon. Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen) would have been able to speak out about the Stalinist regime before he was thrown out of Cabinet.

In summary, I recommend my right hon. and hon. Friends to support the proposed increase and linkage in Members' pay, to support the amendment to raise allowances in line with the comparative pay and support ministerial salaries being held back.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: If I might follow the hon. Gentleman's arguments, if we are to pay Members of Parliament £20,000 or £30,000 or more, is there not more reason for hon. Members to want to keep their Government in office so that they do not risk their jobs? Is that not a better argument to get better Ministers rather than better-paid Members? How do we argue both cases? We either believe in better-paid Ministers or more Members of Parliament.

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Should it not be in order only for hon. Members to speak in this debate who rely entirely on their salary, unlike the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) who is a senior member of a firm of stockbrokers and a member of many companies, who does not depend on his parliamentary salary and indeed who could do without it?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is aware that there is an amendment on that very matter.

Mr. Dobson: The hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) puts forward arguments that were put forward by the Tory party in the debate in 1911 when it was suggested that, if hon. Members were paid anything, they would be forced to work even harder to sustain their party in office for fear of the electoral consequences. It was pointed out in that debate that the person who made that suggestion had taken a very large salary as a Minister and, before then, had done public service in the Army and received a substantial salary. It did not seem to affect his work. Despite the fact that the Tory party opposed the payment of Members in 1911, there is precious little evidence that even the rich ones among them did not pocket the 400 quid as soon as it became available.

Finally—this applies to the hon. Member for Selly Oak—if there are any hon. Members who do not want to take the pay increase or who feel that they cannot properly spend all the allowances in providing a service for their constituents, that is their decision. I do not believe that they should obstruct those of us who feel that we could make good use of both.

9.50 pm

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): This is a very important matter and it is interesting that a number of hon. Members are missing, not least some who have a reputation which, I suspect, would enable them to pay for the privilege of having an audience for the many witticisms which they provoke, often from a sedentary position. We need not pay any serious attention to them. I suspect that there are hon. Members present who have taken, either by wit or good fortune, precautions to link their salary or take-home pay to such extraneous matters as the housing market, which

will undoubtedly take greater care of them than any cost of living increase will take care of the salary of Members of Parliament in the future. I do not think that we need pay a great deal of heed to them.

There are hon. Members among us who have been in the habit of pouring contempt on what they see as the greed of Back Benchers because they are able to do so with the tremendous confidence that comes from having inherited a great deal from daddy or grand-daddy. That is undoubedly a powerful mechanism for making one immune from any suggestion that the salary paid to a Member of Parliament should reflect his quality.

It is some 20 years since I was a member of the Civil Service. I was a member of the grade to which we shall be linked, bar a mere 11 per cent. I do not believe that my constituents, or indeed many of the public outside, would believe that it was enormously self-seeking of me to vote in support of a motion which would put me back within 89 per cent. of the salary that it was felt I was worth to the public 20 years ago. In the debate about salaries and allowances, it is far too easy to forget the nature of the work which the public send us here to do. Members of Parliament are not simply managers or wage slaves of the ordinary kind. All hon. Members know, many much better than I, that most members of the public believe that anyone could become a Member of Parliament. In a real and precious sense, that is absolutely true, and long may it remain so. Before people become Members of this honourable House, they have to undergo, in nearly every case, a long and arduous apprenticeship. They have to attend meeting after meeting after meeting, usually with very small numbers of people and very small rewards, in either interest or effectiveness. They have to go at all sorts of hours to meetings which last late into the night so that they can make merely the first steps of a recognition that they might be eligible to put themselves forward to represent a constituency. That is not an easy apprenticeship and it is not one which most of our constituents would wish to undertake.

There is another large difference between our position here and that of most members of the general public. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Will hon. Members who are carrying on private conversations desist or leave the Chamber?

Mr. Rowe: It is also true to say that most members of the public have views on political issues. The thing that singles us out is that at some point in the game we have to be seen to make a decision. We have to be counted in our debates. We have to vote, and that vote is recorded in a way that comes back to haunt many of us later.

It is often said that the best advice that a new Member of Parliament is given is to be his own man—or her own woman. I think that that is absolutely right. However, it is a much more difficult thing to be than most members of the public, and indeed most people who give that advice, are capable of understanding. Because we have to try to be our own person, and because we must at some stage in the game stand up and be counted, and have our opinions recorded, we are in a unique position.

Finally, I believe that, by and large, Members of Parliament in this honourable House have a reputation—deservedly earned—for working hard, for representing their constituents and for engaging, to a degree that is uncommon in the world outside, in voluntary and other activities. The record of nearly every hon. Member is a pre-eminent record of public service.

For all those reasons, I believe that this is an honourable undertaking and a worthwhile profession. I think it wholly improper to suggest that to link ourselves with 89 per cent. of a civil service grade that already contains some 3,700 civil servants is in any way greedy or self-seeking.

9.57 pm

Mr. Stanley Orme (Salford, East): I think that it is time for a change on this subject. I have found over many years in Parliament under both Conservative and Labour Governments that it has never been a right time to pay Members of Parliament or their staff more. In 1964, we received no secretarial allowances, and had to pay for telephone calls outside London. Those things we built up slowly and painfully over a number of years. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the House to listen in silence.

Mr. Orme: I shall not detain the House for very long. However, I think that this is an important issue. The media are listening, and we know some of the remarks that will be made, but I believe that what we are doing is right, and it is not excessive. That is the important thing. The link is with 89 per cent. of a principal grade. That grade is £25,335. We are not receiving that, because the resolution is for 89 per cent. In 1964, the salary was £3,250. If the increase had been based on a retail price index, that salary today would be £22,780, which is very close to what we shall get. If it were linked to wages, it would be £36,500. That is an indication of what the salary could be.

It is not correct that we are to have a 21 per cent. increase. In 1983, the agreed figure of £18,500 was staged over four years. Consequently, there was no increase during that period. The retail price increase is about 21 per cent. — exactly the increase that we are to receive. Therefore, this provision is right.

I do not agree, however, about secretarial allowances. Hon. Members will be unable to give a pay increase to their staff for the next two years. That is wrong. I understand that the Leader of the House is to refer hon. Members' pensions to a review body.

It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Motion relating to the Motions relating to Members' Salaries and the Motion relating to Office Costs etc. Allowances may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Durant.]*

Members' Salaries and Allowances

Question again proposed.

Mr. Orme: Therefore, I support the amendment that stands in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden).

What the House is doing tonight is right. We have nothing to be ashamed of; we and our staff ought to be paid decent salaries. On that basis, I support the proposals.

10.1 pm

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): As a new Member of the House, it is with some trepidation that I rise to speak in the debate. One is in the Catch 22 situation: if one opposes the motion, one is unpopular with one's colleagues, whereas if one supports the motion one is unpopular with one's constituents.

I support the pay rise, because Members of Parliament are not properly remunerated for what they do. However, I cannot support this motion, because it is linked with pay in the Civil Service. It is wrong for Members of Parliament to be linked with civil servants. Hon. Members have had many arguments used against any increase in their salaries. Writing yesterday in the *London Evening Standard*, Mr. Enoch Powell suggested that we were gentlemen and that we did not need an increase in pay. I do not know what Mr. Enoch Powell's fee was, nor do I know what Mr. Julian Critchley earns—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member should refer to the hon. Member for Aldershot (Mr. Critchley).

Mr. Bennett: I do not know what the hon. Member for Aldershot (Mr. Critchley) earns when he writes that gentleman are people who have four buttons on their cuffs.

We ought to pay hon. Members a proper salary for the job that they do, to ensure that as wide a range of people as possible enter this House as Members of Parliament. Members of Parliament should not be just rich men with other incomes. I declare that I have no other income but that of a Member of Parliament.

I support the arguments that were used in 1911 when Members of Parliament were first paid, but the idea that our pay should be linked with that of civil servants appals me. It is the duty of hon. Members to control the size of Government and the cost of Government. There will be no incentive for hon. Members to keep down public expenditure if their pay is linked to that of civil servants. Instead, hon. Members' pay ought to be linked to pay in the private sector, where increases are most closely linked with economic prosperity. Our rewards ought to be a reflection of economic success. If private sector pay were to increase because of economic success, our pay would be increased, too. To link our pay with that of civil servants, which we ought to be controlling, would lead to an increase in public expenditure.

10.4 pm

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): I wish to speak to my amendment, in line 8, leave out 'and' and insert:

',except that any income received by a Member, and not immediately derived from his or her activities and employment as a Member of Parliament (a Member's extra-parliamentary income) shall

(i) in respect of service in 1988 or any subsequent year, but not after the next general election, be deducted from the difference between the rate specificied in paragraph *(a)* herein and the rate payable in 1987, and

(ii) in respect of services in any year subsequent to the next general election be deducted from the rate specified in paragraph *(a)* herein;

(a) that for purposes of computation and ratification each Member's annual total extra-parliamentary income shall be required to be recorded in the Register of Members' Interests, but shall not be made available to the public;

(b) for the purposes of definition of extra-parliamentary income, fees which are received are wholly and exclusively attributable to a Member's activities as a Member (such as articles and public, radio or television appearances) shall not be included.'.

The Leader of the House rightly said that the substantial point is that, if it were passed, any income that was earned from activities outside the House would be deducted from any increase that we receive tonight or subsequently, and that income that is received from activities outside the House after the next election would be deducted if it equalled or exceeded an hon. Member's salary. The result would be that if an hon. Member's outside income exceeded the £22,000 odd that we may vote ourselves this evening, he or she would receive nothing from the taxpayer.

Mr. Stan Crowther (Rotherham): Will we have to pay money in if we get more?

Mr. Hughes: A quite appropriate supplementary question was just asked from a sedentary position behind me as to whether we would have to pay money to the taxpayer if we earned more on the side. The logical answer to that is that it is not a bad idea, but we must proceed by stages and begin by getting the first principle agreed before we start on what might be regarded as a slightly more penal taxation policy.

There are two supplemental points. First, it is necessary, if there is to be such a proposal, that it is policed. The appropriate police officer would be the Registrar of Members Interests.

Mr. Cyril Smith (Rochdale) *rose*——

Mr. Hughes: I recognise an intervention when I see one. I shall give way in a moment if my hon. Friend will permit me.

The second qualification is that it may be better to include earnings for which one is paid that come from activities such as interviews, as a result of being a Member of Parliament—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Smith *rose*——

Hon. Members: Give way.

Mr. Hughes: That is not a matter of principle—*[Laughter.]* If the House took a hard line it would be perfectly proper for any other fees to be excluded.

Mr. Smith: I shall ask my hon. Friend two simple points. First, will my hon. Friend explain where or how his amendment would differentiate between earned and unearned income? Will he explain that, because, as I read the amendment, any interest, even from investments, would have to be taken into account? Secondly, may we assume that if an increase is agreed tonight he will waive the extra £4,000, or alternatively resign his practice at the Bar?

Hon. Members: Answer.

Mr. Hughes: I will answer. On the first point, all income would be included as the amendment is at present drafted. On the second point, the amount recorded as being my earnings at the Bar in the past year is about £900—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. This sort of reaction merely prolongs the agony.

Mr. Hughes: I cannot resign my profession, but I am certainly willing to agree that any other earnings that I have be deducted from the amount that the House votes itself. It would be inconsistent to do otherwise.

This is a matter of substantial importance. When the review was carried out in 1982, 69 per cent. of hon. Members had other income — that was out of the 329 hon. Members, 52 per cent., who replied. The Top Salaries Review Body found that the mean time spent on other activity was 10 hours per week and that other incomes ranged from between £1,000 or less to over £20,000. If the answers received were a fair sample, the median earning was £5,500. That would hardly make a substantial difference in present income because it is almost balanced out by the increase proposed.

Many hon. Members are consultants and advisers but do not have to declare the amount they earn. However, their decisions and activities in the House are substantially influenced by those other income-earning activities. For example, we have only to look at the debate we have just had on the Channel Tunnel Bill. Over 37 Tory Members of this House or the other place have one interest or another in one of the competing companies concerned in the Channel tunnel project. The public can never discover what people are paid for such interests and it is wrong and unprincipled that people can earn substantial sums of money about which the public never find out and which clearly must influence the way in which they conduct not only their decision making in the House but the way in which they spend their time.

This motion is an expression of opinion of the House. It has to be followed by an implementing resolution, which is on the Order Paper. The hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) said that the drafting of my amendment may be defective. I agree that there may be defective drafting, but this is not an implementing motion, it is an expression of opinion. It may not be word perfect and I do not pretend that it is, but the principle is clear even if the drafting is not as clear. It may not catch everybody. It may allow people to hide funds in trusts or allow their spouses to earn on their behalf.

There are other ways of dealing with the same issue. In the United States of America one can lose a percentage of one's income depending on how much one earns elsewhere. However, it is important that we do not bar people from other occupations but that we apply to hon. Members the same rule as applies to Ministers. For example, even if they keep on a solicitorial partnership they cannot earn from that. That tradition has a fine series of precedents. It goes back to the 19th century when directorships were disqualified from being compatibly held by Ministers.

Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Campbell-Bannerman extended that to partnerships, and in the 1930s it was extended again. It is now time to extend it to all hon. Members. There is no doubt that money is influence. There is no doubt that hon. Members are influenced away from representing their constituents by their other interests. Indeed, some openly admit to spending at least a day a week on other duties. If we believe in open government, we should be open about what we earn. I advocate decent pay for staff and hon. Members, but the time has come

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): If money is influence, what influence did the British School of Motoring exert on the Liberal party?

Mr. Hughes: The hon. Gentleman has asked that question so often that he should know the answer, which is, none. The matter was unrelated to hon. Members of this House or their activities here. I believe that the time for two-timing and earning two or more salaries is over.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it in order for the official spokesman of the Liberal party to talk about

Mr. Cyril Smith: No.

Mr. Gow: Is it in order, Mr. Speaker, for the official spokesman of the Liberal party to talk about principle when his party is totally without principle?

Mr. Hughes: The Leader of the House made it clear that this is a matter for the House. I have expressed a personal view and we shall vote as individuals. We are not pursuing a party line on this side, whatever may be the case elsewhere in the House. The job of hon. Members is unique and their parliamentary salary should be their unique source of income.

10.17 pm

Mr. Cranley Onslow (Woking): Until the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) spoke, I proposed to say that the House agreed on two matters. Now I think that it is agreed on three. The third is that the point that he has tried to make this evening is an extremely silly one on which the House will not want to waste much time. However, I must say that it is a wonderful recipe for saddling the country with professional politicians who are otherwise quite unemployable and who think that, apart from representing their constituents, their only duty is to go on television and be paid for doing so. That would be a recipe for parliamentary disaster.

The other two matters on which the House remains agreed are, first, that we do not want a long debate or long speeches and, secondly, that many hon. Members on both sides of the House are glad that the Government have brought forward the idea of linkage to which many hon. Members have been attracted for a long time. I am not one of them, and I make no bones about it. I believe that it would have been much better if, on previous occasions, we had contrived to arrange matters so that the outgoing Parliament voted the salary of the incoming Parliament, without inflation clauses, escalators or linkage — but with responsibility taken uniquely by hon. Members and not shuffled off through some other device. But that option was not open to us, which I can only regret. Others welcome what has been offered to us this evening.

I commend my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House on the straightforward way in which he brought the proposition before us. I commend the shadow Leader of the House, the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), on what must be one of his first appearances in that capacity, on many of the things that he said. I also commend the right hon. Member for Salford, East (Mr. Orme) in his newly acquired role of shop steward. I will not call him the joint shop steward, because, whatever my predecessor may have done, I do not aspire to be a shop steward in these matters. They are all far too difficult for me, but they will not be too difficult for the right hon. Gentleman. He got the mood of the House right, and I hope to keep it that way by speaking only briefly.

The less time that we spend on this matter, the more our constituents are likely to thank us. I hope that we shall not have to return to the subject for a very long time and that

[Mr. Cranley Onslow]

we can move to other and, dare I say it, more important matters. However, some of the things that have been said this evening deserve a passing mention. My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House was right to say what he did about secretarial allowances, and I was glad to hear the right hon. Member for Salford, East commend the decision to refer the difficult question of the anomalies in Members' pensions to the Top Salaries Review Body, because we owe it to some of our older and retired colleagues to sort out the muddles which prevail there. But I believe that we should make a decision on the matter without too much more debate.

10.21 pm

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): I want to intervene only briefly in the debate to refer to the consequences for Members' widows of decisions by this House to reject pay rises recommended by the body responsible for independently reviewing parliamentary pay. As the House knows, I do so as Chairman of the Managing Trustees of the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund and the House of Commons Members' Fund.

The decision to reject the Top Salaries Review Body's recommendations to increase Members' salaries to £19,000 from 13 June 1983 has had a markedly adverse effect on the pensions of Members now in retirement. To take just one example, Members who retired at last month's general election now have a pension 5·21 per cent. below what they would have received if the TSRB's recommendation had been implemented. Thus, a former Member who now receives £8,000 would have had more than £8,416.

The effect on widows has been even more marked, as an analysis of actual cases very clearly demonstrates. Yet the effect on them was not even considered in 1983, nor was there the merest mention of them by Ministers or in media comment on the decision. What was the effect? Three of the widows of Members who died in 1984-85 lost 19·62 per cent., 16·98 per cent. and 13·7 per cent. respectively of the pensions that they would have received if the salary increase recommended by the TSRB in 1983 had been implemented.

The moral surely is that Members can be as self-denying as they like in determining the parliamentary salary, but they should not be unmindful of the effect on those who work largely unseen, but often with much dedication, in the service of the House. In my view, there was a very strong case in 1983, when the House rejected the recommended salary of £19,000, for that figure to be accepted at least for pension purposes.

There was a precedent for that in 1975, when the TSRB recommended a parliamentary salary of £ 8,000 compared with the £4,500 then payable. Although the recommendation was not implemented by the House, with the salary moving only to £5,750, the Government of the day nevertheless allowed a higher notional salary to be implemented for pension purposes. As a result, the widows of Members who died in service were awarded pensions correspondingly higher than would otherwise have been the case. What we did in 1983, and what we should not repeat now, was to cut the living standards of widows whose pensions are, in the view of everyone who knows their value, anything but generous.

I think tonight of a very hard-working former colleague who is much missed in the House and whose widow's long-term pension entitlement since his death—she was not a young woman—was under £50 a week.

Mr. Denis Howell (Birmingham, Small Heath): My right hon. Friend is raising a matter of considerable importance which has not previously been touched upon outside the House in the general debate. The colleague he is referring to was one of the most respected Members of the House. His widow, like all wives of MPs, worked freely for the country. That fact ought to be recognised. It is a scandal that the widow of one of our colleagues, after many years of service, had to live on a pension of £50 a week and further lost 19·62 per cent. as a result of the delay of the last rise. Therefore, I hope that widows' pensions will not be a matter that the parliamentary trustees will lose sight of. I hope that the Leader of the House and my hon. Friend, who is chairman, will pursue the matter out of justice to the widows of our former colleagues.

Mr. Morris: I am most grateful to my right hon. Friend. He will appreciate that it is a statutory scheme. We are bound by the decisions of the House. The House should not forget the plight of widows whose pensions, compared with pensions outside the House, are quite disgraceful. Anything that the trustees can do to help the widows of Members who have died will be gladly done.

The case I mention is the kind of case in which the decision of 1983 resulted in unmerited hardship and which should inform the debate tonight. Whatever the electorate at large may have thought of our decision in 1983 to reject the findings of an independent review of parliamentary pay, the effect on Members' widows has been extremely punishing. If any hon. Member doubts that truth, let him or her read the parliamentary reply given to me yesterday by the Leader of the House about the financial losses sustained by the eight widows of Members who died between 1 March 1984 and 30 April 1987. In that regard, may I say how conscientiously Mr. J. L. G. Dobson and his colleagues in the Fees Office work at all times, far beyond the call of duty, to help those who are bereaved when a Member or former Member dies. That help deserves the admiration of the House.

Hon. Members find it at once very inhibiting and deeply embarrassing to have to decide their remuneration. That is why it was ultimately decided to link parliamentary pay to a Civil Service grade. To undo that decision now would affect not only pay levels for Members of Parliament, but also the incomes of widows. It will be an improvement on our previous debates if their interests are not overlooked in our deliberations tonight.

10.28 pm

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): I recognise that to speak tonight is not popular unless one is saying what it seems the majority of hon. Members wish to hear. This is not a road to Damascus. There will be no conversions on the way to the Lobbies.

It is not that I am against all of us as right hon. and hon. Members being paid properly for the services that we perform. However, on this one issue alone, it is right to ask why we wish to link ourselves to a mythical 89 per cent. of the grade of senior principal. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) that, at the end of the day, this House is the maker of laws and the

final arbiter of what is right and what is wrong in our country. Why do we not have the courage at the end of each Parliament to decide the proper pay scale for hon. Members? Why should we vote ourselves 89 per cent. of a principal's grade?

Is it not a fact that each Member of this House — there are only 640-odd of us — is in a unique occupation? We should at least keep some respect for the job that we do. At the end of each Parliament let us have the courage to debate, and for people outside to hear, what we think we are worth.

The only reason why this squalid alternative is brought forward is that hon. Members think that we cannot not argue about what we are worth as Members of Parliament. I believe that we can argue that. However, each time we back away from it. Instead of talking about 89 per cent. of a principal's grade, would it not be better to analyse what other Members of Parliament receive, whether in Australia, America, Canada, or even in Europe, which does not matter — they would receive more if we let them — and is it not better for us to judge, and to let other people judge, what we are worth? Why 89 per cent.? Why not 90 or 91 per cent.?

If it is true that the more we are paid, the better we are, why not be bold? Why not pay us £50,000 per year and receive a service that is twice as good? For those who are willing to take the risk, why not pay £100,000 per year and receive a service four times as good? However, that is not what the matter is really about. It is about this House keeping such matters within itself. If we are the mother of Parliaments, if we are the maker of laws for people, if we genuinely believe that if we said that men were women and that women were men, so in law they would be, and if we believe that if we said that the sky is black and not blue, so in law it would be, why are we unwilling to keep within ourselves the right for each Parliament to vote for what it believes in?

There are two reasons why I shall vote against these motions. The amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) is so bizarre that I shall not vote for that. However, if my colleagues believe with the Government, as I do, that inflation is of the greatest importance, which it is, and if we are to improve manufacturing industry — Opposition Members are always telling us about the importance of manufacturing industry — and say that we believe that we can afford to pay other people only 6 per cent., then on this occasion, because we did not have the courage in the previous Parliament to decide what we should award ourselves, we should vote for 6 per cent. for ourselves and for 6 per cent. for other people. That is what I shall do.

Mr. Dennis Howell: The hon. Gentleman has put forward the proposition that he cannot vote for this increase because it is above the 5 per cent. rate of inflation that he recommends for manual workers. Since he is a stockbroker, will he kindly tell the House which stocks he advises his clients to buy which guarantee that they will not yield more than 5 per cent?

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: With enemies like that I need no friends. If the right hon. Member had not been so keen on spending other people's money he would have recognised that I gave up practising as a stockbroker some five years ago. In common with the right hon. Gentleman, I depend upon others for their advice.

If we vote this increase for ourselves tonight — I recognise that hon. Members are worth that increase — could we at least forget the notion of giving up the right for each Parliament to decide what Members get? Let us keep within this House the right to decide so that people know that we do not lack the courage to tell them what we think we are worth.

10.40 pm

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): I beg to move the amendment in line 11, leave out from 'be' to end of line 18 and insert

'the amount obtained by increasing £20,140 by the relevant percentage, and

(ii) for any subsequent year, the limit should be the amount obtained by increasing the limit applicable to the immediately preceding year by the relevant percentage (so that, if the relevant percentage for any year is nil, the limit remains the same for that year);'.

There is printing error on the Order Paper because it should read:

"to the end of line 13"

This is a modest amendment and all that it seeks to do is to index the £20,140 for the current year to inflation and to use that figure as the base figure for future years. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Salford, East (Mr. Orme) said earlier, the amendment will enable all Members claiming the allowance to give their staff a reasonable increase in the current and succeeding years.

If one is described as "a *Guardian* reader", it is now a term of abuse. Therefore, the House will appreciate my hesitation at quoting from *The Guardian* editorial of yesterday, which said:

"for all MPs, failure to vote for the rise would mean funking a key opportunity to put Parliamentary pay on a sensible par with civil service salaries. If MPs do bottle out, they will be haunted by their failure. The whole impossible problem will be doomed to return each Parliamentary term, as it has done each term before. Better to be the real villains now and then to have done with it."

I reflected on those sentiments while the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) was speaking. He reminded me of someone who once said of someone else that they knew the price of everything but the value of nothing. I sense that the majority of the House cannot understand why the hon. Member for Selly Oak wishes that, each year, Parliament should go through this process of determining our salaries. We decided that we wanted a link that was clear and objective and took the issue of parliamentary salaries out of this Chamber and out of this political, controversial arena.

The second part of *The Guardian* editorial said:

"In a better world, MPs would not only put their salaries on a sensible footing, they would also bring their working conditions — their office space, research back-up and modern technological equipment — into the modern world. That would cost more than tomorrow's pay rise, and it might also be better understood by the public and be better for government."

That is the main burden of my amendment, the objective of which is to enable all hon. Members to employ one full-time secretary, a reseach assistant and be left with sufficient funds to provide adequate modern equipment to enable us to do our job, which is effectively to represent our constituents. In reality, we know that the allowance is not sufficient to meet those objectives.

I have to declare an interest as a sponsored Member of the Transport and General Workers Union. I wish to refer to evidence submitted by the 1/427 branch of that union

[Mr. Max Madden]

which represents a large number of staff employed by Members of this House. Some time ago that union branch submitted evidence to the TSRB. Referring to secretaries the evidence states:

"There can be no job to compare to that of working full time for an MP. A secretary or a researcher could be drafting press statements one minute and the next have to switch to being a tour guide, or deal with suicidal constituents, conduct advice surgeries, act as chauffeur, or even arrange for a decorator to paint the boss's flat.

The volume of correspondence is immense. Many secretaries process as many as 400 letters a week. A survey carried out by this Branch showed that during Parliamentary sessions, staff can work upwards of 60 hours a week. Paid overtime or time off in lieu is unheard of."

With regard to research assistants, the evidence states:

"Research assistants are still regarded as a luxury rather than a necessity. The first call on resources is always the secretary and, as a result, researchers tend to be part time and often underpaid".

On equipment the evidence said:

"much of this new technology has been introduced at the expense of staff pay. It is wrong that the allowance is supposed to cover staff and equipment. Staff are often played off against new technology. Or on an even more basic level, staff scrimp and save, terrified of buying a new stapler, typewriter ribbons or correcting fluid as this may affect their pay rise or possible bonus."

Finally, the evidence concluded:

"There is no shortage of people willing——"

Mr. Matthew Taylor (Truro): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Madden: I will give way in a moment.

The evidence concluded:

"There is no shortage of people willing to work for an MP —paid or unpaid. This has often given raise to low pay and abuse."

That is the view of the union that represents the majority of the staff employed by hon. Members of this House. It is disgraceful in 1987 that this House is at last complying with the law to issue our staff with contracts of employment that were required by law passed by the House in the middle 1970s. I believe that it is disgraceful that new hon. Members elected on 11 June are still in some cases without a desk or a telephone.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: Does the hon. Gentleman agree —and here I must confess to almost having an interest as I worked in the House as a researcher until very recently, and in the year before I was elected my earnings were only £5,000—that it is disgraceful that the House should consider putting hon. Members' salaries up to such a great extent and seek to salve hon. Members' consciences at the expense of those who work for us by stating that they will be denied any increase this year to pay for the rise?

Mr. Madden: Traditionally we have had substantial increases in the allowance put forward as a way of depressing parliamentary salaries. Tonight some hon. Members are arguing that an increase in the parliamentary salary should be used as an excuse to depress the allowances. My amendment argues for a modest increase, by inflation, of the allowances this year and to use that as a base figure for the coming years. I believe that that would enable us to employ a secretary, a full-time research assistant and provide proper equipment. Nothing less is permissible in a legislature that is serious and that seriously wants to represent our constituents effectively in 1987. I hope that the House will carry my very modest amendment.

10.43 pm

Mr. Stan Crowther (Rotherham): I want to make two very brief points. First, if there are right hon. or hon. Members who really do not think that the service that they give to their constituents, to this House and to the country is worth £22,500 they may well be right. Perhaps the service that they are giving is not worth that. However, I know that the service that I am giving is worth that much. In fact, I know that it is worth rather more.

I am one of those who are full-time hon. Members of the House. It is a well-known fact not often enough aired in public that many right hon. and hon. Members are not full-time Members; they are part-timers. That is because they are too busy spending time out of the House running businesses, appearing in court, writing highly paid articles for the popular press or perhaps less highly paid articles for the unpopular press. In some cases they are Members of an obscure body called the European Parliament.

Because they earn money from one source or another, many people have to spend time outside the House to justify the substantial amount of money that they pick up. I am not one of those; I am one of the full-time Members. To say the least, it would be grossly immoral for such part-time Members to vote against a pay increase for full-time Members. Indeed, we are working more than full-time because we also take a share of the work that they ought to be doing.

The return of attendances on Standing Committees and Select Committees makes interesting reading. Many right hon. and hon. Members have not been on a Standing Committee for years, and everybody knows it. The rest of us are doing part of their job for them. I repeat that it would be an act of pure immorality for such hon. Members to vote against a pay increase for us. I understand that some of my hon. Friends will oppose this increase on the grounds that they think that we should be paid no more than skilled workers in industry. That is an interesting argument and has been canvassed in the Labour movement for years.

I have carried out a little analysis and prepared a fairly detailed and precise estimate of the hours that I work. Over the year, including recesses and applying a normal industrial analysis—a formula based on a 39-hour basic week, time and a half for overtime during the week and double time at weekends, I have found that if this increase is agreed my hourly rate of pay will go up to £4·35 an hour. That could not be regarded as excessive in any industry. I say to my hon. Friends that it is a strange attitude for any trade unionist to vote against a pay increase.

10.47 pm

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): This debate is one of the occasions *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman has as much right to be heard as any other hon. Member.

Mr. Nellist: This is one of the few occasions when at 10 minutes to 11 the House is full. Possibly within an hour or so the House will vote to raise the salary of a Member of Parliament from £356 a week to £434 a week, an increase of 21·9 per cent. If the House decides to do that, it will take hon. Members even further from the day-to-day conditions of the majority of the population. The £80 rise to be voted on is £3 more than the current take-home pay for a whole week of the civil servants upon whom the Government have just imposed a 4·25 per cent. pay increase. Those civil servants will not get the cushion of the 20 per cent. by which their salaries have fallen in the last seven years which hon. Members intend to claim for themselves.

The civil servants have also been told that regional and flexible pay is to be introduced by the Treasury. Regionalisation is an interesting concept. Apparently the higher the unemployment in a region, the lower the commensurate pay increases ought to be for those public servants working in that region. The concept has been well expressed by education spokesmen and Treasury and Civil Service spokesmen. It is an interesting concept to apply to Tory Members of Parliament in Scotland, Wales, the north, the midlands and in areas where, in the past eight years, unemployment has rocketed. It would have been even more interesting to apply it to a Tory Cabinet that has doubled, if not trebled, unemployment and increased the number of those living on or below the margins of poverty to 18 million, one in three of the population. I do not think that, on a regionalised or flexible pay structure, Tory Members of the Cabinet would be thought to be worth over £1,000 a week.

Many Tory Members think that that is a bit of a joke. The civil servants do not think that regional or flexible pay is very funny. Despite the ballot result during the past week, if the Government intend to introduce for the Civil Service what they are not prepared to introduce for Members of Parliament, there will be a vastly different mood among civil servants, which will be shown in the new ballot which undoubtedly would have to be organised.

The House is supposed to reflect society as a whole. If this rise is agreed, the House will be even less reflective of society than it is. Some 5 million workers, including one in five of all adult women in full-time manual jobs, earn less in a week than the House is considering voting itself as an increase in Members' salaries. Some 500,000 workers earn as much as or more than the £22,500 that hon. Members will receive. In the past six years, the income of the richest 20 per cent. of households has increased from 45 to 49 per cent. of total income and the income of the poorest 40 per cent. of households has fallen from 9·5 to 6·3 per cent. If this rise is agreed, the House will reflect even more only rich sections of society and will in no respect reflect almost the majority of the population, especially those whose share of household income has fallen.

There are many reasons why the House does not reflect the whole of society. Some have already been mentioned. One reason is the degree to which Tory Members have outside interests; and the Liberal amendment deals with that in some respects. There are many Tory Members sitting opposite me to whom whether the salary is £18,500 or £22,500 is largely immaterial. It is just pocket money to them. Unlike Labour Members, 99 per cent. of whom have as their only job that of Member of Parliament and the income that comes from it, the Tories—*[Interruption.]* All right. I shall come to some of the points later.

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): It would be honourable if the hon. Gentleman were to make his position absolutely clear. If his argument prevails, will he take the increase voted? If his answer to that is no and if he redistributes any proportion of his money to his constituents, the Labour party or any other interest, will he redistribute a higher proportion?

Mr. Nellist: If the hon. Gentleman will forgive me, I intend to deal with that point in the latter part of my speech. But, briefly, the answer is no. I shall vote against the increase. If the rise goes through, I shall take the increase——

Hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth) *rose*——

Mr. Nellist: Hang on, I am answering——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Give the hon. Member a chance to finish.

Mr. Nellist: I shall listen to the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) in a minute. I am dealing with the hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon) at the moment.

Then I shall do exactly the same as I have done over the past four years, which is to return some £16,000 of my take-home pay, half of which has gone back to the Labour party and half of which has gone to pensioners' groups, unemployed groups, miners' families, and so on. If the House decides to give me an extra £3,000 after-tax income to distribute to working-class families in my constituency and others, I intend to do precisely that.

Mr. Dickens: For many years, I was a fully paid up member of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers. What the hon. Gentleman has just said to the House is what I used to describe in my trade union days as, "Taking a free ride, brother."

Mr. Nellist: I suspect that members of the AEU who listened to that contribution were as mystified by it as I am. If the hon. Gentleman wishes to explain it further, however, he can do so in his own contribution.

More than 120 Tory Members of Parliament are company directors. In the last Parliament, I discovered the king of company directors—Mr. Geoffrey Rippon, then the Member for Hexham. He had 50 jobs. He was a Member of Parliament; he was a barrister—a QC, in fact—with overseas legal interests; and he held 48 chairmanships or company directorships. I never understood how that gentleman ever had time to turn up here.

On the present Tory Benches there are 40 barristers, 27 company consultants, 21 farmers or landowners, 14 merchant bankers, and a few dozen Lloyd's names. In case you are unfamiliar with that term, Mr. Speaker, it means that those who go down to Lloyd's and do a spot of underwriting must demonstrate that they have £100,000 in liquid cash, and pay £3,000 a year in membership fees.

[Mr. Nellist]

For most Tory MPs, Parliament—this greatest club in Western Europe — is an extension of the life of privilege into which they were born, prefaced in 253 cases by private education and in 172 cases by Oxford or Cambridge. Incidentally, half a dozen Alliance Members have a similar educational background, exactly the same percentage as in the Tory party.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Does my hon. Friend accept that the Register of Members' Interests has not yet been compiled, and that the range of Tory outside interests is therefore even richer than he has suggested so far? Does he also accept that we have a register of interests not because of pressure inside but because of pressure outside following the Poulson scandal, in which a number of Tories were wrapped up?

Mr. Nellist: I think that my hon. Friend could well amplify that contribution in a full speech of his own. He is right to point out that the Register of Members' Interests for this Parliament has yet to be compiled. The sources that I used for the figures that I have given so far have been the Register of Members' Interests for the former Parliament, Mr. Andrew Roth's "Parliamentary Profiles" booklets and the Conservative party's own list of Conservative parliamentary candidates, which was issued in May 1986. I am fairly sure that the numbers that I have given are accurate.

For those Tory Members who are effectively moonlighters, a parliamentary salary is an addition to their main sources of income—banking, farming and so forth. They can always attend the odd board meeting, or trip off down to Lloyd's or the Stock Exchange. Those Tory Members, whatever happens tonight, are talking about their pocket money, not a salary on which they have to live. I think that the Liberals' amendment—although I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) about its deficiencies — at least raises a question that many Labour spokesmen have tried to raise, particularly in the last couple of weeks in the debate on the Local Government Bill. Far too many Tory Members, when they vote on matters coming before the House—for instance, privatisation in hospitals and local authorities—stand to gain financially. The issue deserves far wider attention in the future.

Let us take an example. Let us say that the hon. Member for Hove (Mr. Sainsbury) decides this evening to vote against the rise in Members' salaries, which he may well do. I do not think that that will make much difference to him and to his lifestyle. As of January this year, the hon. Gentleman had £114 million worth of shares in a family grocery business, which makes him the ninth richest shareholder in Britain. The dividends on £144 million worth of shares probably exceeds the £20,000 a week mark, so £20,000 a year is largely irrelevant.

Mr. Jerry Hayes (Harlow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Gentleman is besmirching the name of an hon. Member of this House.

Mr. Speaker: I am listening with the greatest care. It may have been provocative, but nothing that the hon. Gentleman has said so far was out of order.

Mr. Fallon: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is only fair that you should tell us whether the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) gave my hon. Friend the Member for Hove (Mr. Sainsbury) notice that he would be raising that point tonight.

Mr. Speaker: I do not know that.

Mr. Nellist: In accordance with the traditions and rules of this House, it is entirely in order to make points about the background of Members of Parliament. It is not dishonourable for an hon. Member to own £114 million worth of shares, but members of the public who read this debate may draw an entirely different conclusion. That is a matter for them.

It is worth noting that another member of the same family, David Sainsbury, is the chief financial trustee of the Social Democratic party and that he owns £739 million worth of shares. That gives a weekly income from dividends of over £100,000. I predict that within three or four years he will be Britain's first billionaire shareholder. Four members of that family are now among the top 10 shareholders in this country.

Dozens of other Tory Members of Parliament may vote against this pay rise, but I question whether £18,500 or £22,500 means very much to them. I remind those Tory Members who will vote in favour of the pay rise of the arguments that they have deployed while I have been a Member of this House. Since 1983 they have referred to British workers being too highly paid. In February 1986 Lord Young said:

> "Rising unit wage costs make it so difficult for Britain to compete in world markets. Over the past five years wage costs have risen in manufacturing by a quarter whilst those of our major international competitors have risen by much less. With raw material costs now falling, a halt to the rise in unit wage costs would enable us to hold prices steady, increase sales and thereby create genuine, long lasting jobs."

If a 25 per cent. increase for manufacturing industry workers in the last six or seven years is too high, how can Tory Members of Parliament justify voting themselves a 21·9 per cent. increase? Whatever happened to the concept of giving a lead?

Mr. Rowe: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Nellist: I hope the hon. Gentleman will forgive me for not giving way. We have crossed swords on a number of occasions. I am anxious to get on and finish my speech.

International surveys show that out of all European countries, British workers are the lowest paid, that they work the longest hours and that they have the shortest holidays. Whatever happened to the Tory argument about the free market economy? What would happen if the Prime Minister were to be run over by a bus tomorrow morning? First, there would have to be the selection of a new leader for the Tory party. Half the Tory Members who are here tonight would probably vote for the bus driver, while the other half would vote for the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen). Secondly, about 300 would apply for the job of Member of Parliament for the Finchley constituency. I thought that free-market economics meant that the greater the pressure of those wanting a job, the less the argument for an increase in wages. When that applies to Tory Members it goes out of the window, but that was the argument that was deployed in this Chamber——

Mr. Michael Lord (Suffolk, Central) *rose*——

Mr. Nellist: Just a second.

Almost 12 months ago, in July 1986, we were discussing the Wages Act. Some 500,000 workers under the age of 21

years who were on £40 or £50 a week were told that they were pricing themselves out of a job because of the level of youth unemployment.

Mr. Lord *rose*—

Mr. Nellist: Just a second, I said.

Some 12 months ago the House decided that, as a matter of principle, 400,000 young workers who were on £40 or £50 a week — hairdressers, those who were working in pubs, clubs, shops, restaurants and clothing establishments—were pricing themselves out of jobs. Yet tonight those same Tory Members are prepared to vote for an increase which is—*[Interruption]*—twice the amount that they considered to be too much for those young workers.

Mr. Lord: The hon. Gentleman is talking about wealth and being wealthy. Does he consider it a crime to be wealthy?

Mr. Nellist: The City seems to have been fairly profitable over the past couple of years.

The single hourly adult rate is all that is left for the wages council to decide. The rate for those over the age of 21 years who work in an unlicenced place of refreshment is £2·10 per hour, which is a weekly wage of £81·90—the same amount that Tory Members intend to vote for as an increase in their salaries.

The hon. Member for Harlow (Mr. Hayes) has said that the increase, is needed to attract the best people to stand for Parliament. How do we define who is best? From 1979 to 1986 the after-tax and insurance earnings of the lowest 10 per cent. of society rose by 3·5 per cent., but the earnings of the top 10 per cent. of society rose by 23·4 per cent. Who says that hon. Members representing the top 10 per cent. of wage earners in society will lead to a better House of Commons than those who represent the bottom 10 per cent.?

Some hon. Members say that we work long hours. That is true; I was one of the 260 hon. Members who were present in the Chamber at 3 o'clock this morning when some of us voted against the cuts in the rate support for two of the largest councils in Scotland. It is true that hon. Members work long hours, but it is ironic that we debated the matter until 3 o'clock this morning, yet on Friday we will have a vote on a three-month recess. Parliament could be organised on a more equal basis and the hours could be shared out over the year. Members of Parliament work long hours, but there are some 3 million shift workers in this country — *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Dorset, West (Mr. Spicer) may laugh, but he would not laugh if he wanted to be taken to hospital in an ambulance but discovered that the nurses and ambulance drivers had decided that they would not work shift work any more. What would happen if the steel workers, electricity workers, or those who work for basic industries, decided that they would not work shifts? Those shift workers receive an average wage of £210 a week for men and £142 for women. They work shifts all year, not one or two nights a week out of a possible 32 weeks in the year.

Hon. Members on both sides of the House have said, "Let us vote for the motion because it introduces continuity and we will not have to come back to this argument again." I would be happy to look at that as a concept, particularly if Tory Back Benchers and Tory Cabinet Ministers such as the Minister for Employment who replied to my question today, admitted that if those on youth training schemes had had a linkage system since April 1978 when their allowance was introduced, instead of being on about £28 a week they would be on £49 a week. Those young workers have seen 43 per cent. of their allowance cut because there is no linkage. They have lost some £21 a week because of the freeze. If it is good enough for hon. Members, why does not some Tory Cabinet Minister propose it for the 500,000 youngsters on the youth training scheme?

I shall come to my conclusion—*[Interruption.]* I am sure that Tory Members are happy to hear that. Some have raised, as a justification for the increase upon which we are voting tonight, the expense of being a Member of Parliament; the need to get taxis after late sittings, the need to eat on the move or the need for secretarial assistance and so on. I should put on record that the allowance for living in London is established at £8,000 a year. Some say that they cannot manage on that. When Lord Gowrie resigned from a £33,000 a year job in September 1985 he said:

"It is not what people need for living in Central London."

How do Tory Members expect young working class couples to live in London? Do they not read the London newspapers? Young people in London have to club together, not just one or two of them but three or four of them, to save up enough of a deposit to buy a two bedroom terraced house. If hon. Members are concerned about the horrendous level of rents and house prices in London they should do something to tackle the source of the problems, not just deal with the effects. The first and most important thing to do is to provide more money for public sector building so that new houses reduce the pressure on the private rented sector which is leading to the escalation of rents.

Living in London is a separate issue from that being voted on tonight, as is transport. If hon. Members have to take taxis home after a late sitting they can claim the mileage component from their travel allowance. I do not claim for taxis when I have to take them from the House. I take the cost out of the profit I make on the general mileage allowance across the whole year, which in my case is about £2,000 a year. That means that I have never charged anybody for a public or political meeting I have done in the past four years. We should tackle the source. We should tackle the late night sittings, not the question of complaining about the prices paid for taxis.

The secretarial allowances are still woefully inadequate. Many Tory Members get outside staff assistance from their business arrangements, but Labour Members, particularly those representing inner city areas, have a huge level of casework. They are trying to get to grips with the effects of eight years of decline and desolation caused by the Government, particularly in areas such as Coventry. There are wards in Coventry with over 50 per cent. male unemployment. That results in me receiving nearly 200 letters a week and the same is true for most of my Labour comrades, particularly those in inner city areas. The present secretarial allowance is woefully inadequate. If there had been a motion on the Order Paper to vote for the doubling of that allowance I would happily have done so. Unfortunately the only motion for which I can vote is that tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden).

I now turn to my Labour comrades and colleagues. In the past four weeks inside the parliamentary Labour party,

[Mr. Nellist]

in our publications and in our Labour party meetings we have been conducting an intense analysis about the result of the general election. If one fact has emerged above all others, it is that a successful four-week campaign that was intensively and professionally presented and packaged was unable to repair the damage of the preceding four years. During our discussions the word most used has been "image". There are 5 million workers who earn each week either the £80 that we are proposing to give ourselves as a rise or even less, and a total of 8·5 million workers who earn less than the Council of Europe "decency" threshold of £125 a week. How will these workers view tonight's decision? What effect will it have on our image? What will these voters think if Members vote for a £80 a week increase? The majority will think, "Once MPs get down in London there is no difference between them. They are all in it for what they can get out of it for themselves."

I have received many letters and phone calls on this issue, but during the past month I have not had one letter or comment from outside the House urging me to vote for the proposed increase. Instead, I have received many representations from those who believe that I should take a stand against the increase. I shall present the House with two examples. The first is from a Labour voter in Shropshire, and she writes:

"Dear Mr. Nellist, I want to thank you for what you said last week on Radio 4 about MPs' pay. I certainly don't begrudge MPs a decent wage, but I do agree with what you said about trying to live at a level similar to that of many of your constituents so that you can really understand their problems. What it does seem is that MPs could do with more sociable hours, especially for those who are parents of young children."

As a parent of three young children, one of whom is only 10 weeks old, I would agree with that.

The other letter from which I shall quote comes from someone in West Sussex. It reads:

"Dear Mr. Nellist, I applaud your attitude to parliamentary salaries that you expressed two days back on the 'Today' programme of Radio 4."—

[Interruption.] My hon. Friends who are commenting from a sedentary position will understand the point of this in a moment. The letter continues:

"I do so all the more when I think"——

An Hon. Member: Sanctimonious.

Mr. Nellist: If there is a choice between sanctimony——

Mr. Speaker: Order. It would be much more helpful to the House if the hon. Gentleman were to get on with his speech and if he were not interrupted from a sedentary position by comments that divert him from his line.

Mr. Nellist: If there is a choice between sanctimony and greed, I know that to which I shall plead guilty.

Mr. George Galloway (Glasgow, Hillhead): That was unworthy of my hon. Friend.

Mr. Nellist: I was responding to the charge of sanctimony. I suggest that my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Galloway) deals with that.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) has been correctly addressing his remarks to me, and he should continue to do so.

Mr. Nellist: All that I am suggesting, Mr. Speaker, is that it would be better to deal with the foul rather than to indulge in retaliation. I shall continue to read the letter from which I was quoting, which states:

"I do so all the more when I think that unlike a great many MPs you doubtless have to actually live on what the nation pays you. I do so also as a life-long Conservative, conscious all too well that many MPs in my party are well off and still demand the new increase! They shock me as a pensioner."

I have given two examples of the way in which millions of ordinary working-class families will view tonight's debate. Despite the efforts that my right hon. and hon. Friends will undoubtedly make—I have no doubt that they will explain what they do with part of their salary, and I have the highest regard for them—the majority of the low paid, pensioners and those on supplementary benefits will read only the reports that will appear in the newspapers tomorrow of an £80 a week increase. They will hear none of the arguments that have been advanced to justify it.

I said earlier that many people outside this Chamber will see no difference between Tory and Labour Members tonight. But there is a difference. Tory Members represent the 3 per cent. of the working population who earn more than £22,500 a year. Labour Members should represent the 97 per cent. of the population for whom £450 a week would be a dream. Few, apart from myself and my hon. Friends the Members for Liverpool, Broadgreen (Mr. Fields), Bradford, North (Mr. Wall) and Blyth Valley (Mr. Campbell) take the principled decision — in my case passed by my constituency Labour party about 10 years ago — that Labour Members should try to live on the same wages as the majority of their constituents and, therefore, reflect similar problems in terms of rates, mortgages, transport, the purchasing of kids' shoes and so on. I recognise that many of my hon. Friends — for example, my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) gave much, if not all, of his parliamentary salary to the miners' families during the miners' strike — give away part of their salaries, but none of them takes the principled decision that I have outlined. I make no further criticism of them for that.

To answer the point made earlier by Tory Members, that has meant that I have given £16,000 of my take-home parliamentary salary back to the Labour movement, in addition—to answer the point of the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) — to the £1,026 that I have earned during the past four years from television appearances and occasional journalism.

Mr. Cyril Smith: I assure the hon. Gentleman that I ask this question sincerely. I thought I heard him refer earlier to the figure of £16,000, and he has just mentioned it again. Since the parliamentary salary is only £18,000, how can he give £16,000 back to his constituents? I do not understand it.

Mr. Nellist: It is quite simple. It is the figure over four years, and it works out at between £80 and £90 a week of my take-home salary—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. This sort of attitude hardly does us justice.

Mr. Nellist: As for the approach of taking only the average wage of the skilled worker, one hon. Member said that, were it applied on an hourly rate, it would mean that hon. Members would be earning a similar amount to the

amount that they earn now. My reply to that is that in Britain today there are about 350,000 shop stewards and lay officials of unions who, in addition to full-time occupations, put in many hours of unpaid work representing the members of their unions or their sections. They do not get wages at twice or three times the level of those whom they represent, or holidays of 20 weeks in the year. There are perhaps half a million charity workers who work many unpaid hours outside their normal occupations, raising money for everything from research into cancer to famine relief overseas. The vast majority of them are unpaid workers who do it because they believe that the job must be done. I see no dichotomy in basing my role in life on taking an average skilled worker's wage and on making similar sacrifices to the nearly 750,000 shop stewards, conveners, trade union officials and charity workers by not taking extra money for the extra hours that I put in.

I urge my comrades on the Labour Benches to vote against the increase of £80 a week and, in solidarity with those low-paid workers throughout the country, to vote against the motion. However, if it is passed, I urge them to give at least 5 per cent. of their gross salaries——

Mr. Orme: To Militant.

Mr. Nellist: No Stan, not to Militant, to Walworth Road. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that the hon. Member is coming to the conclusion of his speech.

Mr. Nellist: My right hon. Friend from Salford, East (Mr. Orme) would be in a better position tomorrow morning to say to the National Executive of the Labour party that there would be no need for 40 redundancies and the closure of *Labour Weekly*, *Socialist Youth* and *New Socialist* if 229 Labour MPs each gave 5 per cent. of their gross salary. *[Interruption.]* My right hon. Friend started it.

Mr. Speaker: Order. If there is any disagreement between the hon. Members on this it ought to take place outside the Chamber.

Mr. Nellist: Tomorrow morning my right hon. Friend could then attend the National Executive as Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour party and report on additional £250,000 income for the Labour party and stop— *[Interruption.]* My right hon. Friend started it. He should not joke about Militant. He started it.

Mr. Orme: My hon. Friend is incorrect. I am not a member of the National Executive of the Labour party.

Mr. Nellist: My right hon. Friend——

Mr. Speaker: I was not going to interrupt the hon. Member, but I think that I will. I think the whole House would agree that the hon. Member should now be heard in silence.

Mr. Nellist: In which case, following that helpful suggestion to the House, I will not prolong the argument with my right hon. Friend. I think the message has got through. If the increase goes through, I think the jobs in the three Labour party publications are worth at least a 5 per cent. sacrifice in gross pay by my colleagues. To give them the opportunity, in solidarity with the low-paid, to vote against the increase, I give notice that, at the appropriate time, I shall try to divide the House.

11.28 pm

Mr. David Blunkett (Sheffield, Brightside): Many of the good points that my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) has just made would have been enhanced if he had hidden some of his light under a slightly larger bushel, because many of his comments were true. Many of his points were good ones. Lecturing colleagues on how much to give of their pay, however, smacks of the benevolence that some of us have tried to escape from in fighting for decent wages and conditions without receiving the charity of Conservative Members. I do not know anyone who owns shares in grocery firms. I do not even have any political associates who run PR consultancy firms. I try, as other Members do, to represent people in the House, to do a good job, to learn how to do it better and to try to earn the rewards that I am paid.

I hope that doing a decent day's—and night's—work will be properly rewarded and that the House will have the decency to support the amendment tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden), because the treatment of those who work with us is a sign of the kind of people we are and the kind of world we expect for those we represent.

I welcome the assurances of the Leader of the House about tightening up the procedures and monitoring, because if people outside were aware of the poor conditions in which those whom we employ have to work and the pay on which they have to do it they would want us to double the amount that we pay. *[Interruption.]* I hope that they would, because I think that your words, Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of the Session about holding a Government to account can be fulfilled only if hon. Members put in the necessary work and are adequately serviced and supported.

Successive Governments have been happy to ensure that all Back Benchers are inadequately serviced to carry out that task: We have only ourselves to blame. *[Interruption.]* No, I do not call upon God. I expect elected Members to be big and dedicated enough to provide—for themselves and the electorate they serve—decent conditions in which to do their job properly.

I have no intention of setting up any kind of umbrella organisation to draw in funds. I should be held to account by other hon. Members if I did. There will be no curly-coated advisory service or group for drawing in funds.

I must tell Conservative Members, however, that the ridicule that was poured on the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) was uncalled for. If we pay ourselves an adequate wage and we do an adequate job, we should not expect to take other jobs outside the House. No employer, including those who sit on the other side of the House, would tolerate in their employees what the electorate tolerate in us when it comes to other activities and employment. It is not moonlighting that we are engaged in; it is daylighting. I hope that we shall ensure that we do not continue to work silly hours. We must work in the daylight hours to do the job which we were sent here to do.

If we followed market forces and some people's ideas through to their logical conclusion, we would have sponsored Members. [HON. MEMBERS: "We already have."] I know of no trade union sponsored hon. Member who draws from his or her trade union money that goes

[Mr. David Blunkett]

into a personal bank account. The same cannot be said for Conservative Members who have consultancies and who charge fees for their activities.

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): Before the hon. Gentleman leaves his argument about no other employer allowing an employee to have separate jobs in normal circumstances, would he care to comment on the fact that the motion, with which I disagree but which, as the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) said, links hon. Members' pay—for the sake of convenience and hiding further debate on the subject—to the Civil Service, yet no civil servant in Britain is allowed to have a second job? Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the House seeks that convenience without accepting the obligations of the link?

Mr. Blunkett: I need not reply to that intervention from the hon. Member, because his words were clearly addressed not to me but to Conservative Members.

We can expect the support of the people whom we represent in our desire to be paid decently and have good support services only if they are persuaded that we are doing our job properly and are working on their behalf and serving their interests, not those of various outside organisations. If we all acted in that way, politicians and politics would be more highly respected and Parliament would benefit.

11.36 pm

Mr. Chris Mullin (Sunderland, South): It was unfortunate that we were an hour and half into the debate before coming across a dissenting point of view. I suggest that if we took a stroll up Whitehall and conducted a straw poll among the first few citizens we met, we should discover that a different view was held by — *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The whole parliamentary process means listening to views with which we do not wholly agree.

Mr. Mullin: We would find that a different view on this issue is held by the people out there than exists in this rarefied atmosphere.

I shall be voting against the proposed increase, and in doing so I shall be casting no aspersions on the motives of those whose equally sincerely held views lead them to vote in the opposite direction. I shall vote in that way because I believe it wrong, at a time when increases of 3 to 5 per cent. are being imposed by this House on the public sector, that we should vote ourselves an increase of about 22 per cent.

I can think of no action that will more encourage public cynicism and help to undermine confidence in the democratic process than Members of Parliament doing for themselves the opposite to what they would have done to the public. It is fortunate for the reputation of the House that the debate is taking place at this late hour, unwitnessed by many representatives of our free press.

In the last decade we have grown used to appeals from this place for restraint addressed to most sections of the population—to postmen and nurses, for example. It is hypocritical that those who call most often for that restraint should make themselves be immune from it. Our constituents will not understand how, when the living standards of many are lower than at any time in living memory, we should be voting ourselves such a massive increase.

Last week I was approached by a lady who lives on £30·40 per week supplementary benefit. She was not complaining about that. She contacted me because her benefit had failed to arrive and she was faced with destitution.

I have a wages slip from a young woman in my constituency. *[Interruption]* I hear groans from Conservative Members, but we should confront reality from time to time. We do not do so often, but I think that we should have a bash this evening. That young woman works a 41-hour week at a food processing factory in my constituency. Her gross pay was £52·20 for a 41-hour week. After deductions she received £47·56. That is not uncommon in this country. Many hon. Members could point to similar cases in their constituencies.

As I have said, I cast no aspersions on the motives of any hon. Member. I am simply saying that I am unable to look such people in the eye and to vote myself — *[Interruption.]* I shall come to that point in a minute. [HON. MEMBERS: "Give way".]

Mr. Robert Litherland (Manchester, Central): My hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) said that he would vote against, but accept, the increase. Therefore, I ask my hon. Friend whether he will assure the House that although he will vote against the motion, he will not accept one penny of the increase?

Mr. Mullin: I have no problem with that point and I shall deal with it in a minute. *[Interruption.]* I shall deal with it as robustly as did my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist), who, whatever one may think of his views, is one of the people in this place who practises what he preaches.

It has been said that our wages should be pegged to those of senior civil servants. I suggest that if we are interested in future in assessing by how much our wages should rise—I know that it is embarrassing for hon. Members to be called upon regularly to deal with the question of their own pay—and if we are looking for a convenient index against which to peg our wages, the national average industrial wage would be appropriate. I do not suggest that we should accept exactly the national average industrial wage, but that our wage level should be pegged to that rather than to the wage level of some mythical civil servant over the road whose lifestyle has nothing to do with those of most of the people whom we represent.

The question of allowances has been raised — *[Interruption.]* Conservative Members should keep their hair on. *[Laughter.]* I shall get there in a minute. It is nice to see the House so full at a quarter to midnight. Only a hanging debate attracts more Conservative Members.

The question of allowances has been raised. Many hon. Members have made the point, which I endorse, that if there is any public money to be spared, or rather any taxpayers' money—Conservative Members so often use that expression — it should go towards providing facilities that would better enable us to serve our constituencies. The point has also been raised, but it bears repeating, that as yet some hon. Members do not have a desk or telephone in the House. If we are here to serve our

constituents it is not an inconvenience for the hon. Member concerned, but for the constituents we are here to serve.

If there is extra taxpayers' money swilling around it might at least go towards for example, providing my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) with a desk and an office. Surely that is not a terribly unreasonable demand in this last quarter of the 20th century.

Hon. Members: Is the hon. Gentleman going to take the increase?

Mr. Mullin: I will keep hon. Members in suspense for just a moment longer. They should relax. I will come to my conclusion shortly.

I am in the process of employing 1½ people — *[Interruption.]* Hon. Members have asked a question and they should listen politely to the answer.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that the hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) would be well advised to address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. Mullin: Hon. Members have repeatedly asked whether I intend to take the allowance and I will now answer.

Hon. Members: The salary.

Mr. Mullin: I propose to employ 1½ people—a full-time assistant in my constituency and a half share of a secretary in London. The salary costs, taken with employer contributions, come to almost £18,000 a year. After paying those costs from the current allowances I am left with about £2,240 for the rent and rates on an office in the constituency. There is nothing remarkable about my plans—many of my hon. Friends and, perhaps, some Conservative Members follow the same practice.

I am left with £2,240 to pay the rates and rent on the constituency office, pay for a photocopier and more besides. I intend to put the proposed increase towards the allowance—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"]—Yes, every penny of it—to enable me to serve my constituents.

Mr. Hoyle *rose*——

Hon. Members: Give way.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think that the hon. Member for Sunderland, South will give way now.

Hon. Members: Yes he will.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Mullin: That is the action that I propose to take——

Mr. Hoyle: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way. I am extremely interested in what he has to say. My hon. Friend has said that he will give the increase to his staff. What will my hon. Friend do with his journalistic earnings in addition to his salary?

Mr. Mullin: Thus far, since coming to the House——

Mr. Hoyle: My hon. Friend has only been here for six weeks.

Mr. Mullin: Thus far I have received £30 for a ludicrous questionnaire, which I donated, instantly, to the constituency party funds.

I have tried to emphasise that I am not seeking to cast aspersions on the motives of any hon. Members who take a different view from me. I cannot bring myself to look in the eye people such as the young woman in my constituency who is paid £47·50 for a 41-hour week while voting myself an increase of £80 a week. I cannot and will not do that.

11.50 pm

Mr. Wakeham: I sense that the House wants to reach a decision on these matters very quickly. We have heard many powerful speeches, but I suspect that hon. Members have made up their own minds.

I want to congratulate the shadow Leader of the House, the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), on his robust first appearance at the Dispatch Box in his new role. The motions are matters for the House and I have already said why I believe that the House should support them and reject the amendments. However, one or two things need to be said.

The hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras and others referred to matters concerning the inadequacy of the accommodation in the House. I appreciate that things are not perfect. The House will be aware of the programme to improve the position. However, I hope that the House will want me to acknowledge that the sterling work of the Serjeant at Arms and his staff in providing accommodation for hon. Members and their staff within the available resources is appreciated by everyone.

The right hon. Member for Salford, East (Mr. Orme) and others referred to the Members' pension fund. I will refer that matter to the Top Salaries Review Body and I hope to make an announcement about that later this week. The right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) rightly referred to the effect of Members' salary decisions on the pensions of hon. Members who have left the House and of widows. That is an essential part of the judgment that we have to make. I am grateful to him for his remarks about the helpfulness of the staff in the Fees Office. I know that I speak for the whole House when I endorse that and that they will be grateful for it.

The time has come to decide these matters. The House has an opportunity to put the debates behind us. I recommend the motions to the House.

Amendment proposed to the Question, in line 8, leave out 'and' and insert—

> ', except that any income received by a Member, and not immediately derived from his or her activities and employment as a Member of Parliament (a Member's extra-parliamentary income) shall
>
> (i) in respect of service in 1988 or any subsequent year, but not after the next general election, be deducted from the difference between the rate specified in paragraph *(a)* herein and the rate payable in 1987, and
>
> (ii) in respect of services in any year subsequent to the next general election be deducted from the rate specified in paragraph *(a)* herein;
>
> *(b)* that for purposes of computation and ratification each Member's annual total extra-parliamentary income shall be required to be recorded in the Register of Members' Interests, but shall not be made available to the public;
>
> *(c)* for the purposes of definition of extra-parliamentary income, fees which are received and are wholly and exclusively attributable to a Member's activities as a Member (such as articles and public, radio or television appearances) shall not be included.'.—*[Mr. Simon Hughes.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 65, Noes 275.

Division No. 24] **[11.51 pm**

AYES

Allen, Graham
Ashdown, Paddy
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Blunkett, David
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Clay, Bob
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cryer, Bob
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Duffy, A. E. P.
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galloway, George
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Hoyle, Doug
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kilfedder, James
Lewis, Terry
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McAllion, John
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morley, Elliott
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Pike, Peter
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Steinberg, Gerald
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wareing, Robert N.
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilson, Brian
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Simon Hughes and
Mr. Matthew Taylor.

NOES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Hon Peter
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cartwright, John
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dewar, Donald
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Home Robertson, John
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
John, Brynmor
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Johnston, Sir Russell
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lambie, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Leadbitter, Ted
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
Onslow, Cranley
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Robertson, George
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Cyril *(Rochdale)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis

Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. Peter Lloyd.

Question accordingly negatived.

Main Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That, in the opinion of this House, the following provision should be made with respect to the salaries of Members of this House—

(a) the salaries of Members not falling within paragraph *(b)* shall, in respect of service in 1988 or any subsequent year, be at a yearly rate equal to 89 per cent. of the rate which on 1st January in that year represents the maximum point on the main national pay scale for Grade 6 officers in the Home Civil Service, or if that scale ceases to exist, on the scale which for the time being replaces it (disregarding, in either case, any discretionary pay point on that scale); and

(b) the salaries of Officers of this House and Members receiving a salary under the Ministerial and other Salaries Act 1975 or a pension under section 26 of the Parliamentary and other Pensions Act 1972 shall, in respect of service in 1988 or any subsequent year, be at a yearly rate equal to 67 per cent. of the rate which on 1st January in that year represents the maximum point referred to in paragraph *(a)*.

Mr. Nellist: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. As I think the Serjeant at Arms will accept, I along with other Labour Members shouted "No" quite clearly in order to force a Division on the main Question.

Mr. Speaker: I was collecting the voices and I did not hear a sustained "No". I suggest that the hon. Gentleman maintains his objection on motion No. 5, which will cover the same point.

OFFICE COSTS ETC. ALLOWANCES

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That, in the opinion of this House—

(a) the allowance payable to a Member of this House in respect of the aggregate expenses incurred by him for his Parliamentary duties—

(i) as general office expenses (including expenses incurred in the purchase of office equipment),

(ii) on secretarial assistance, and

(iii) on research assistance for work undertaken in the proper performance of such duties,

should be known as the office costs allowance:

(b) the limit on the office costs allowance should be determined as follows—

(i) for the year ending with 31st March 1988, the limit should be £20,140,

(ii) for the year ending with 31st March 1989, the limit should be the greater of the following amounts, namely the amount obtained by increasing £19,500 by the relevant percentage and £20,140,

(iii) for any subsequent year, the limit should be the amount obtained by increasing the limit applicable to the immediately preceding year by the relevant percentage (so that, if the relevant percentage for any year is nil, the limit remains the same for that year);

(c) the arrangements approved by Mr. Speaker pursuant to paragraph *(b)* of the second Resolution of 19th July 1983 (payments by Fees Office in respect of secretarial and research assistance) should include arrangements for securing that, before any salary or fee is paid to any person in respect of his employment by the Member concerned, the Member—

(i) in the case of a person by law entitled to receive a written statement of the main terms and conditions of that employment, has furnished the Fees Office with a copy of any such statement and has furnished the Fees Office and that person with a statement containing a job description relating to that employment, or

(ii) in the case of any other person, has furnished the Fees Office and that person with a statement containing a job description relating to that employment and has either included in that statement details of that person's pay and hours of work or furnished the Fees Office with a copy of a written contract relating to that employment,

together with arrangements for securing that, before any other payment is made in respect of services provided by any person, the Member concerned has furnished the Fees Office with invoices specifying the services in question;

(d) the limit applicable to the sums referred to in paragraph *(b)* of the third Resolution of 5th June 1981 (pension contributions for Members' secretaries and research assistants) should, for the year ending with 31st March 1988 and any subsequent year, be equal to—

(i) 10 per cent. of the salary, or (as the case may be) of the aggregate amount of the salaries, payable for that year to the person or persons in respect of whom any such sums are paid, or

(ii) 10 per cent. of the amount which is the limit for that year on the office costs allowance,

whichever is less.

In this Resolution "year" means a year ending with 31st March, and for the purposes of this Resolution—

(i) the relevant percentage for any year is the percentage by which the amount of salary (exclusive of allowances and overtime) payable for that year to a person in the Home Civil Service at the maximum point on the scale for Senior Personal Secretaries and in receipt of Inner London weighting exceeds the corresponding amount for the immediately preceding year;

(ii) any fraction of a pound in the amount obtained as mentioned in paragraph (*b*)(ii) or (iii) above for any year shall be treated as a whole pound if it is not less than 50 pence, but shall otherwise be disregarded.—*[Mr. Wakeham.]*

Amendment proposed to the Question, in line 11, leave out from 'be' to end of line 18 and insert—

'the amount obtained by increasing £20,140 by the relevant percentage, and

(ii) for any subsequent year, the limit should be the amount obtained by increasing the limit applicable to the immediately preceding year by the relevant percentage (so that, if the relevant percentage for any year is nil, the limit remains the same for that year);'.—*[Mr. Madden.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 241, Noes 198.

Division No. 25] **[12.06 am**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Amess, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashby, David
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Bowis, John
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cran, James
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dover, Den
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Gower, Sir Raymond
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Haselhurst, Alan
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Henderson, Douglas
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Ilsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jack, Michael
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Knox, David
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Mans, Keith
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Mrs Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Paice, James
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Patnick, Irvine
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, John
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowe, Andrew
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Cyril *(Rochdale)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Squire, Robin
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Walley, Ms Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Wells, Bowen

Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Dave Nellist and
Mr. Graham Allen.

NOES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brooke, Hon Peter
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Day, Stephen
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howard, Michael
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Onslow, Cranley
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roe, Mrs Marion
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Watts, John
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Alan Howarth.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Main Question, as amended, put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That in the opinion of this House—

(a) the allowance payable to a Member of this House in respect of the aggregate expenses incurred by him for his Parliamentary duties—

(i) as general office expenses (including expenses incurred in the purchase of office equipment),

(ii) on secretarial assistance, and

(iii) on research assistance for work undertaken in the proper performance of such duties,

should be known as the office costs allowance;

(b) the limit on the office costs allowance should be determined as follows—

(i) for the year ending with 31st March 1988, the limit should be the amount obtained by increasing £20,140 by the relevant percentage, and

(ii) for any subsequent year, the limit should be the amount obtained by increasing the limit applicable to the immediately preceding year by the relevant percentage (so that if the relevant percentage for any year is nil, the limit remains the same for that year);

(c) the arrangements approved by Mr. Speaker pursuant to paragraph *(b)* of the second Resolution of 19th July 1983 (payments by Fees Office in respect of secretarial and research assistance) should include arrangements for securing that, before any salary or fee is paid to any person in respect of his employment by the Member concerned, the Member—

(i) in the case of a person by law entitled to receive a written statement of the main terms and conditions of that employment, has furnished the Fees Office with a copy of any such statement and has furnished the Fees Office and that person with a statement containing a job description relating to that employment, or

(ii) in the case of any other person, has furnished the Fees Office and that person with a statement containing a job description relating to that employment and has either included in that statement

details of that person's pay and hours of work or furnished the Fees Office with a copy of a written contract relating to that employment,

together with arrangements for securing that, before any other payment is made in respect of services provided by any person, the Member concerned has furnished the Fees Office with invoices specifying the services in question;

(d) the limit applicable to the sums referred to in paragraph *(b)* of the third Resolution of 5th June 1981 (pension contributions for Members' secretaries and research assistants) should, for the year ending with 31st March 1988 and any subsequent year, be equal to—

(i) 10 per cent. of the salary, or (as the case may be) of the aggregate amount of the salaries, payable for that year to the person or persons in respect of whom any such sums are paid, or

(ii) 10 per cent. of the amount which is the limit for that year on the office costs allowance,

whichever is less.

In this Resolution "year" means a year ending with 31st March, and for the purposes of this Resolution—

(i) the relevant percentage for any year is the percentage by which the amount of salary (exclusive of allowances and overtime) payable for that year to a person in the Home Civil Service at the maximum point on the scale for Senior Personal Secretaries and in receipt of Inner London weighting exceeds the corresponding amount for the immediately preceding year;

(ii) any fraction of a pound in the amount as mentioned in paragraph *(b)*(ii) or (iii) above for any year shall be treated as a whole pound if it is not less than 50 pence, but shall otherwise be disregarded.

MEMBERS' SALARIES

Queen's Recommendation having been signified—

Motion made, and Question put,

That the following provision should be made with respect to the salaries of Members of this House—

(a) the salaries of Members not falling within paragraph *(b)* shall, in respect of service in 1988 or any subsequent year, be at a yearly rate equal to 89 per cent. of the rate which on 1st January in that year represents the maximum point on the main national pay scale for Grade 6 officers in the Home Civil Service or, if that scale ceases to exist, on the scale which for the time being replaces it (disregarding, in either case, any discretionary pay point on that scale): and

(b) the salaries of Officers of this House and Members receiving a salary under the Ministerial and other Salaries Act 1975 or a pension under section 26 of the Parliamentary and other Pensions Act 1972 shall, in respect of service in 1988 or any subsequent year, be at a yearly rate equal to 67 per cent. of the rate which on 1st January in that year represents the maximum point referred to in paragraph *(a)*.—*[Mr. Wakeham.]*

The House divided: Ayes 407, Noes 34.

Division No. 26] **[12.18 am**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allen, Graham
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Ashton, Joe
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Batiste, Spencer
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, A. F. *(D'int'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Buckley, George
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cartwright, John
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Crowther, Stan
Cummings, J.
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dewar, Donald
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas, Dick
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunn, Bob
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eadie, Alexander
Eggar, Tim
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fallon, Michael
Fatchett, Derek
Favell, Tony
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Fookes, Miss Janet
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fraser, John
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galloway, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Gill, Christopher
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gould, Bryan
Gower, Sir Raymond
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grist, Ian
Grocott, Bruce
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hardy, Peter
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Haselhurst, Alan
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Haynes, Frank
Hayward, Robert
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Douglas
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Holt, Richard
Home Robertson, John
Howard, Michael
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*

Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Ingram, Adam
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
John, Brynmor
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Leadbitter, Ted
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leighton, Ron
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Lilley, Peter
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
McCrindle, Robert
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
MacGregor, John
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McKelvey, William
Maclean, David
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxton, John
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Michael, Alun
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Mowlam, Mrs Marjorie
Moynihan, Hon C.
Murphy, Paul
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Onslow, Cranley
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patchett, Terry
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Randall, Stuart
Rathbone, Tim
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Richardson, Ms Jo
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Salmond, Alex
Scott, Nicholas
Sedgemore, Brian
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Cyril *(Rochdale)*
Snape, Peter
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Steen, Anthony
Steinberg, Gerald
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stott, Roger
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walley, Ms Joan
Ward, John
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Worthington, Anthony

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Alan Howarth.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Ashdown, Paddy
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Clay, Bob
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Gow, Ian
Hinchliffe, David
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Illsley, Eric
Irvine, Michael
Kilfedder, James
Knapman, Roger
Livingstone, Ken
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Meale, Alan
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Mullin, Chris
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Redwood, John
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Dave Nellist and
Mr. Harry Barnes.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Ministerial and other Salaries

Resolved,

That the draft Ministerial and other Salaries Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 16th July, be approved. —*[Mr. Wakeham.]*

Corporal Michael Owen

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.]*

12.34 am

Mr. Patrick Thompson (Norwich, North): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to you for giving me the opportunity this morning to raise on the Adjournment the case of the late Corporal Michael Owen. I am also grateful to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces for his trouble over the case during the past year and also for his attendance tonight. The case was brought to my attention by Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Nooney, who live in Hellesdon in my constituency of Norwich, North.

Corporal Michael Owen was in the 8th Field Workshop, REME, at Colchester, and was admitted to hospital on 15 June 1985. In this distressing case, as it turned out, he was terminally ill, and he died on 2 October 1985, having returned home just one or two days before he died. At that time he was still a serving soldier, although in normal circumstances if he had not taken ill he would have left the Army on 22 July 1985, with a terminal grant. In the event, because of his illness, his time in hospital and because he was still a serving soldier, he received a gratuity which, according to a letter that I received from the Under-Secretary on 9 July 1986, was payable to

"his widow, provided that she was not separated from him at the time of his death. If no eligible widow exists it is paid to any eligible child or children".

Corporal Owen was separated from his wife, and divorce proceedings, as far as I am aware, were under way and still in progress at the time of his death. Therefore, through this gratuity, money was paid by the Army to his 18-year-old daughter, Joanne. In the months during which I have been dealing with the case, it has become clear to me that Corporal Owen's definite intention was that his estate should be left to his mother, Mrs. Irene Muriel Nooney, who, as I said, lives in my constituency at 34 Coppice Avenue, Hellesdon. Corporal Owen signed an Army will form, of which I have a copy, on 22 June 1985, and made it clear to his family that he had done this and that it was his intention that any money that came into his estate or that he received would go to his mother.

The question whether Corporal Owen's service continued beyond 22 July 1985 is important. According to a letter from the Ministry of Defence to Mrs. Nooney's solicitor dated 20 March 1987, if a serving soldier is in hospital at the time that he is due normally to leave service in the Army, he can be retained on full pay until treatment ceases or after five months from the period that he was last on duty, in which case a medical board is called and a decision taken as to whether the soldier is then discharged or kept in hospital for further treatment and remains a serving soldier before ultimate discharge. Further boards can be called at intervals of a maximum of 18 months.

In this case, if Corporal Owen had remained in hospital and had not died, a board would have been due after five months—on 22 December. If Corporal Owen had lived after that five-month period, his case would have been due for further examination by a medical board and a decision would have been taken whether to extend his time in hospital, extend his service or discharge him from the Army. On my reading of the regulations and the letter from the Ministry of Defence, Corporal Owen could, if he wished, have requested an earlier board and obtained release while receiving medical care, and the moneys due to him.

I believe that Corporal Owen was in total ignorance of this fact and that he was fully confident that the intention of his will, made in June, would be carried out. I want to stress that I think that it is important that Corporal Owen was under that firm impression.

A further and more serious complication arose, which makes the case more difficult to judge. The Army was definitely at fault in its handling of the case. My hon. Friend the Minister has expressed regret—he apologised when he wrote on 6 October 1986. According to the Army, Corporal Owen signed a form to extend his service from 22 July 1985 to 22 December 1985. It may be a coincidence, but this is also a five-month period — identical to that which I mentioned earlier.

Nobody can establish why Corporal Owen was asked to sign such an extension of his service. It was not relevant because, if he had stayed in hospital, he would have remained a serving soldier and if, after a medical board, it was decided that he should be discharged, he would have been discharged. I am not clear even now why he should have wished to fill in the form, or why anyone else, including the Army, should have wished him to fill it in. There appear to have been serious errors.

The date on the form—the certificate of amendment to terms of service—of which I have a copy here, is 28 September. That is the date on which the form was supposed to have been signed by Corporal Owen and countersigned as witness by Captain Powers. It was signed by the commanding officer somewhat later.

According to the family and all of the evidence that I have, Corporal Owen returned home—a sick man about to die—on the day before, that is 27 September. In the letter from the Ministry of Defence to the solicitor of 20 March, it was stated that the witnessing of the signature did not take place when the form was signed but that it was signed in Otterburn — miles from Colchester — by Captain Powers, who had apparently satisfied himself that Corporal Owen's signature was the correct one. Goodness knows how he did that.

In the words of the Ministry of Defence, this could have been better organised. That is the understatement of the year. Somewhat later, the commanding officer countersigned the form saying that he was satisfied that Corporal Michael Owen had been interviewed and fully understood the implications of completing the extension of service form. As, after many months of study, I am still baffled as to how the form was remotely relevant. I fail to understand how Corporal Owen could have been interviewed, let alone how he could have understood the implications of what was going on. I reject that explanation and believe that there was a serious error of administration which throws the competence of the Army into doubt.

Filling in the form had no direct bearing on whether Corporal Owen was a serving soldier. If and when he signed the form—there is some doubt about it in the family—it is clear that he had no idea that it could have had any effect on his intention to leave money due to him to his mother.

The Army regulations, as quoted in the "Army Pensions Warrant," refer to terminal grant, which a soldier gets if he leaves the Army in normal circumstances, or a

gratuity if he dies in service, as happened here. The "Army Pensions Warrant" says that in the case of a gratuity, which happened in this case

"the widow of an officer or a soldier who dies while serving on full pay on the Active List or after 31st March 1973 may be granted a gratuity which will either be the amount of the terminal grant or gratuity to which her husband would have been eligible had he been invalided from the Army."

I stress the word "may" there because there is an element of discretion to which the Army did not appear to give even a moment's thought when considering Michael Owen's case. It is worth noting in passing that it makes it clear in that passage that the amount of money involved is not different if we are talking about terminal grant or gratuity, so that is not a factor in this case.

The "Army Pensions Warrant" adds in section 14:

"Subject to any exception which the Defence Council may approve, a gratuity shall not be granted to a widow who was separated from her husband at the time."

That was appropriate in this case because the separation was in effect, and thus the section applied. It goes on in paragraph 260:

"Where the officer or soldier did not leave a widow eligible for an award under this section, but a child or children, the Defence Council may at their discretion award a gratuity to the child."

As we know, that happened; the 18-year-old daughter was awarded a gratuity. But again, the word "may" appears and it is at the discretion of the Defence Council.

I have seen no evidence in this case of any exercise of discretion having been involved. From my reading of the papers and letters, what happened occurred automatically, as though the regulations said, "This shall happen", rather than "This should be given some thought before a final decision is made."

To sum up, there is uncertainty in the law and the regulations. Does the Minister think that that uncertainty can be cleared up? I am not necessarily opposed to the intention of the regulations, which is to look after dependants in the event of the death of a soldier during his time in the Army. But the provision should be clarified, and I hope that the Minister will comment on that when he replies.

Then there was administrative bungling. Apologies have been received by the family from the Ministry of Defence on that count, so perhaps the Minister need not comment at length about that, except in so far as it has a bearing on the equity and fairness of the case, and in so far as it relates to the confusion which was clearly in the mind of Corporal Owen, who believed, until he died, that what he wanted to happen would happen. In my view, nothing happened to make him believe anything to the contrary.

Some compensation should be paid to the mother, to the family, because they and Corporal Owen were effectively, if not deliberately, misled, and at the time and since that has caused great distress and uncertainty to the family, certainly for the two years or so since Corporal Owen died.

I hope that the Minister will be positive in response to the three major points I have made—the uncertainty of the law, the bungling of the administration involved and the need in equity for some compensation for Mrs. Nooney. I look forward to his reply.

12.49 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Roger Freeman): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Thompson) on securing this Adjournment debate and I pay tribute to the considerable interest he has shown in this case and to the support he has given to Mrs. Nooney and her family. I am sure she is most appreciative of all the efforts he has made during these months — indeed, almost a year—in pursuit of her interests and those of her late son.

My hon. Friend has raised a number of wide-ranging issues relating to the "Army Pensions Warrant" and the armed forces policy concerning personnel who become ill, particularly in respect of retention in service and financial guidance. Before dealing with the specific points raised by my hon. Friend—and I shall, in the time available, deal with them as fully as I can—I will set out briefly the history of this sad case concerning some of the points raised by my hon. Friend.

Michael Owen was a Corporal in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, who was due to leave the Army on completion of a 22-year engagement on 22 July 1985. As my hon. Friend knows, when a service man completes 22 years' reckonable service he is eligible on discharge to be granted an immediate pension and a non-taxable terminal grant. Corporal Owen was admitted to hospital on 15 June 1985, about five weeks before he was due to leave the Army. In these circumstances and in accordance with normal practice, he was automatically retained in the Service on full pay. I think my hon. Friend will agree that that practice is generous and humanitarian.

Sadly, Corporal Owen died of cancer on 2 October 1985, while still on full pay. He was never discharged. His widow would have been granted a gratuity, equal to the amount of the terminal grant, for which he would have been eligible had he been invalided from the Army on the date that he died. However, as he was separated from his wife, he did not leave a widow eligible for the award and, in accordance with the provisions of the "Army Pensions Warrant", the money was paid to his daughter.

As my hon. Friend stated earlier, the problem arises over the fact that Mrs. Nooney considers that the gratuity paid on her son's death should have formed part of his estate and, as such, should have been paid to her as the named beneficiary of her son's will.

Those briefly are the facts. However, there are two or three points that I should like to go into in more detail and some questions raised by my hon. Friend which I would like to answer rather more fully. I hope it will become clear that everything done by the Army during the last few months of Corporal Owen's life was done with his best interests in mind.

I shall deal first with Corporal Owen's retention in the Army past his due date of discharge. For compassionate reasons, it is our practice to postpone a soldier's discharge if he is in hospital on the due date. This is to the clear benefit of soldiers and their dependants. The soldier continues to receive his full pay and all the support the Army can provide. If he is married, he remains entitled to a married quarter. Although in Corporal Owen's case he would immediately have become eligible to be granted his pension if he had left the service this would not be the case for a soldier who had not given 22 years' service.

We certainly would not wish to introduce a system which resulted in all individuals who were unfit on the date that their engagement was due to terminate being discharged forthwith. Wherever possible we want to see them restored to full health before they return to civilian

[Mr. Roger Freeman]

life. I know that my hon. Friend agrees with that principle. Of course, if a soldier in hospital, who had completed his engagement, requested his immediate discharge, no obstacle would be placed in his way. He would be medically boarded and would then be released to pension and lose his service pay, of course, although still entitled to service medical care. However, at no time did Corporal Owen ask for a medical discharge. Indeed, he expressed a clear wish to the doctor in charge of his case that he wanted to remain in the Army.

Service medical regulations stipulate that an individual who is in hospital on the date of his normal termination of service is to be retained on full pay until in-patient treatment ceases to be required or five months have elapsed since he was last on duty. By the five-month point it is normal—this can be delayed—for a medical board to be held, which will either recommend a medical discharge or, if the individual is only part way through his engagement and has a good chance of recovery, the continuance of treatment with periodic future boards up to a maximum of 18 months. Under this system Corporal Owen would have been due a medical board by November, but an earlier board could have been arranged had he requested it. If he had been medically discharged he would have received an invaliding pension and terminal grant and may also have been eligible for a war pension from the Department of Health and Social Security.

My hon. Friend has raised the matter of the element of discretion in the relevant articles of the "Army Pensions Warrant". Where these state that

"a gratuity may be granted"—

my hon. Friend stressed the word may—that should not be taken to imply any discretion other than to pay or withhold the appropriate sum. Furthermore, that discretion itself can be exercised only within certain limits. Article 250 of the warrant provides that where there is an eligible widow a gratuity may or may not be paid to her. No further discretion is allowed for save that the Defence Council may divert a part of that sum to any eligible children.

Article 260 provides that where there is no eligible widow a gratuity may or may not be paid to an eligible child or children. Where there is no eligible wife or children Article 177 provides that a lump sum may be paid to a soldier's estate. It should be noted that the discretion to make such a payment arises only in those circumstances. If there is a wife or child the only choice is whether to pay them or not.

The Army is very much aware that it has a great obligation towards its sick and injured and to their dependants. By definition soldiers may be required to risk their lives for their country and they are entitled to expect the best support possible for them and their families, including immediate payment of pensions and gratuities where appropriate. Were the rules to be changed so that any benefits owing would pass under the deceased's will, it would be necessary in all cases to demand that probate, or letters of administration, be obtained before the terminal benefits could be paid. This would inevitably involve the dependants of soldiers in additional worry, delay and expense. Obviously we would not wish to move in this direction. However, I assure my hon. Friend that I have asked that consideration be given to the possibility of introducing a limited option which would allow divorced soldiers without dependent children, if they so wished, the opportunity to nominate a particular individual to receive their death benefit. My hon. Friend will appreciate that this is a matter which requires careful study and, of course, it will not benefit in any way the estate or dependants of the late Corporal Owen. I hope that my hon. Friend will welcome the initiative that the Ministry is pleased to take.

We know that on 27 June 1985 Corporal Owen signed a will leaving all his estate, including his service benefits, to his mother, Mrs. Nooney. The evidence suggests he was not aware on 27 June that under the "Army Pensions Warrant" if he died in service his service benefits would go to his daughter, not his mother. If he had been aware, he could have initiated steps to change matters. That is common ground between my hon. Friend and myself.

In view of the issues which this case has highlighted, I am instructing my officials to re-examine the procedures for financial counselling of patients in hospital, including formal communication in writing. It will be appreciated that this is a subject that needs to be considered with great care in view of the possible psychological effects on a patient, particularly on one whose death could be imminent. I have therefore asked for consideration to be given to how best patients can be made aware, on being admitted to hospital, of the ways in which they might be financially affected, including the implications of remaining in the service and the consequences of being medically discharged; and to how further financial counselling might be made available on request.

One other point that has emerged from our inquiries is the fact that Corporal Owen was asked to sign a form whilst in hospital to extend his service. My hon. Friend referred to that in some detail. That incident has caused his mother a degree of concern as she feels that it was the real reason why she did not receive the death gratuity.

It is true that while in hospital Corporal Owen was asked to sign this form which deferred the termination of his colour service until 22 December 1985. That was requested purely as an administrative tidying up exercise by those responsible for maintaining his record of service. As an in-patient there was no requirement for him to sign such a form. The procedure was invalid since extensions of service must be agreed before the completion of the earlier contract, the completion of Corporal Owen's period of engagement. The form is designed for use in the unit where it can be witnessed at the time of signature by an authorised officer. Although there has been some difficulty in establishing exactly when Corporal Owen signed the form, we know that, when he had done so, the form was returned to his former unit which was on exercise at Otterburn where it was countersigned and dated by the administrative officer. That was some two months after the due date of his discharge.

I apologise to my hon. Friend for that incorrect procedure. While it is regrettable that Corporal Owen was asked to sign the form, I assure my hon. Friend that it made no material difference. As I have said, the evidence suggests that Corporal Owen wished to remain in the Army and not be discharged. However, to avoid any recurrence of that situation I issued appropriate instructions. In September 1986 those instructions were reissued to all manning and records officers to prevent any such unfortunate recurrence.

Various questions have been asked about whether Corporal Owen understood the implications of remaining

on full pay. The service medical authorities are, however, very clear that Corporal Owen specifically stated that he did not wish to be discharged. Against this background, the medical staffs formed the view that to initiate a medical discharge could, in Corporal Owen's case, have had a harmful psychological effect which might have further undermined his health.

Corporal Owen's finances do not appear to have suffered in any way. While alive he remained on full pay rather than pension and when deceased the gratuity payable equalled the terminal grant that he would have received on discharge. As the terminal grant is calculated on the basis of length of reckonable service, the amount payable actually increased as a result of the extension of his service.

To sum up, taking first the broader issues raised, I must thank my hon. Friend for raising this debate and providing the opportunity for me to examine the procedures and rules governing discharges and related payments. I am satisfied that in general terms the procedures are just, humane and serve the armed forces' needs very well. However, there is room for improvement and as a result of the investigations arising out of this case, I intend to review the question of counselling service men in hospital at the time of their discharge date, and, as I have said, to examine the possibility of introducing limited nomination schemes under the "Army Pensions Warrant". I have already issued instructions that the form mentioned by my hon. Friend should not be used for service men in hospital. All those are improvements to deal with cases such as that raised by my hon. Friend.

My hon. Friend has also stated that Corporal Owen's mother considers that she should receive a payment equal to the sum paid to her granddaughter on the grounds that her son's intentions were thwarted by the provisions of the "Army Pensions Warrant". I have listened carefully to all the points raised this evening and, although I am already very familiar with this case, I give my hon. Friend the assurance that I will read the record again and seriously reflect on it. I shall write to my hon. Friend in due course.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at one minute past One o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 22 July 1987

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

HAMPSHIRE (LYNDHURST BYPASS) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

Order for Second Reading read.
To be read a Second time tomorrow.

Oral Answers to Questions

SCOTLAND

Health Care

1. **Mr. Michael J. Martin** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he is taking to improve health care in Scotland.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Forsyth): There are more doctors and nurses than under any previous Government and more patients are being treated than at any time in the history of the National Health Service in Scotland. A massive capital programme is under way, with 48 major new hospital developments completed since 1979 and 34 more in the pipeline. The Government will continue to build on this record of success in Scotland.

Mr. Martin: The Minister may know that prior to the election Lord Glenarthur wrote to me to say that the Stobhill maternity unit would be saved and that it was possible that Stobhill might be the site for the new Royal maternity unit. Given his new position, does the Minister consider that Stobhill would be an excellent place to have the Royal maternity unit?

Mr. Forsyth: The future of the Stobhill hospital will depend on a general review of acute services that is being carried out by Glasgow. As the hon. Gentleman knows, a decision whether the maternity unit should close was deferred while a feasibility study and appraisal for the replacement of the Glasgow Royal maternity hospital was conducted. That is still going on. I have nothing to add to the previous commitments that have been given to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: Is my hon. Friend aware of the concern in Grampian and Aberdeen about the need for a new, modern cardiac surgery unit? Can he tell us what progress has been made in the review and when we can expect a decision?

Mr. Forsyth: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend. I was made well aware of that when I visited Aberdeen the other day. As he knows, the Advisory Committee on Specialist Services is looking at the matter and we expect to have a report shortly. At that point, it will be possible to take a view about Aberdeen.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: Is the Minister aware that in general terms in Grampian there is concern at the delay in implementing the SHARE formula and at the shortfall in facilities such as those mentioned by the right hon. Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith)? Is he further aware that we are disadvantaged by the fact that there is no such formula for ambulance services and that people in my constituency, in the community of Ellon, have no firm indication of when they will have an ambulance station, in spite of a commitment from the local chief ambulance officer that that will be provided? Will the Minister tell us when we will receive the resources?

Mr. Forsyth: Aberdeen and Grampian have done extremely well under the SHARE formula. It is true that they have not reached parity, but the resources made available to the Grampian health board are substantially greater than they would have been without the SHARE formula. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would welcome that.

Mr. Forth *rose—[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Scottish Members take part in English Question Times and English Members may take part in Scottish Question Times.

Mr. Forth: Will my hon. Friend confirm that National Health Service expenditure per capita is higher in Scotland than in England? As the per capita consumption of alcohol, tobacco and confectionery is higher in Scotland, particularly in Strathclyde, than in England, may I ask what impact that has on the effectiveness of NHS services?

Mr. Forsyth: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's question. I confirm that health expenditure per head in Scotland is 23 per cent. higher than the average for the rest of the United Kingdom. There are also 39 per cent. more health staff in Scotland than in the rest of the United Kingdom and 59 per cent. more hospital beds in Scotland than in England. That is the extent of the Government's commitment to the Health Service in Scotland.

On the point about the incidence of smoking and so on, the Government, through SHEG—the Scottish Health Education Group—are endeavouring to change attitudes and behaviour. That is the best way to make further progress in preventive medicine.

Dr. Moonie: I am fascinated by the Minister's description of the success of the Health Service in Scotland. It bears little resemblance to my experience of the reality over the past 10 years. Will he turn his attention to the provision of community care in Scotland? Will he perhaps let the House know when the Government will make some necessary short-term commitment, as agreed by health boards, local authorities of whatever political colour and voluntary groups, to ensure the success of community care for the mentally ill and mentally handicapped?

Mr. Forsyth: I am grateful for the hon. Gentleman's question. As he knows, the Government have placed considerable emphasis on the importance of community care and achieving a gradual shift of elderly, mentally and physically handicapped people into the community. We

have encouraged health boards and local authorities to give high priority to the provision of community care facilities. However, there will be a need for some patients to remain in long-stay accommodation.

We have increased funding for health boards by 8·4 per cent. in the current year, which, by any standards, is substantial. Fife has benefited considerably from SHARE. An extra £7·6 million was allocated to the board because of the existence of SHARE.

Rating Reform

2. **Mr. Harry Ewing** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to bring forward modifications to the community charge scheme in Scotland in the proposed legislation introducing a similar tax in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister of State, Scottish Office (Mr. Ian Lang): My right hon. and learned Friend expects that the fundamentals of the reforms to be proposed for England and Wales will be comparable with those already enacted for Scotland in the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987. If changes are made to these proposals, he will, of course, consider whether any parallel changes need to be made to the 1987 Act.

Mr. Ewing: During the summer recess, will the Minister, together with the Secretary of State, give most serious consideration to the proposal not to implement the poll tax in Scotland until the measure has been fully implemented in England and Wales? Does the hon. Gentleman understand some of the anomalies that will arise if he goes ahead and implements the poll tax in Scotland in advance of its implementation in England and Wales? Nurses who are training in nursing colleges in Scotland will pay the poll tax, and their colleagues in England and Wales will not; policemen in Scotland will pay the poll tax, and policemen in England and Wales will not; service men stationed at Glencorse barracks will pay the poll tax, and service men stationed at Catterick will not. Why does the Minister not gather all copies of the Act, take them to a site in south Edinburgh, get Michael Ancram to set them on fire, and put an end to the whole stupid carry-on?

Mr. Lang: One of the qualities of the House of Commons is its capacity to accommodate the separate need for Scottish legislation quickly and effectively. We brought forward the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Bill to meet a pressing need in Scotland arising from the injustice that is faced by ratepayers. We are meeting that need. The implementation of the Act cannot come soon enough to bring that relief to Scottish ratepayers.

Mr. Allan Stewart: Does my hon. Friend recall the remarkable ease with which the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987 went through Committee? Earlier this week, the supposed great assault by the Labour party on local authority finance in Scotland ended in the humiliating fiasco of only 80 Labour Members staying for the final vote. Is it not clear that the Labour party's opposition to such matters is limited to making a lot of noise during the day? Labour Members will not stay and fight after midnight because they do not have the guts for it.

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. In so far as the Labour party has any discernible policies on the matter, they are wedded to the discredited and regressive rates system. That is an intolerable system and we cannot accommodate it any longer.

Mr. Wilson: Does the Minister agree that it would be extraordinary if, with a majority of 180 in England and Wales, the Government were frit to introduce the poll tax in England and Wales this side of the next general election, but, with a minority of 62 in Scotland, decided to proceed with it in advance of that date, despite the humiliation that they suffered in Scotland on 11 June?

Mr. Lang: I am happy to reassure the hon. Gentleman that reform of the domestic rating system is a United Kingdom policy for which we have a United Kingdom mandate. The Scottish part has already been implemented and the English part will be implemented very soon.

Mr. Bill Walker: When considering amendments to the community charge in the light of what happens when the measure for England and Wales passes through the House, will my hon. Friend bear in mind that one of the great advantages of the community charge is that people will be paying for what they vote for? That being so, might it not be a good thing for the Government to consider having no rebates at all and insisting that everyone pays the full amount so that those in receipt of public support, whether they be students or people on supplementary benefit or pensions, had the average United Kingdom community charge level paid to them, which would encourage people still further to vote for low-spending authorities?

Mr. Lang: I shall have to reflect on my hon. Friend's recommendations. One of the merits of the community charge is that it is a simpler and fairer system which takes account of the capacity to pay. The rebate system is an important and integral part of it.

Mr. Worthington: The Minister will be aware that directors of finance believe that only 80 per cent. of the poll tax levied will be recovered from payers of the tax. By what amount does he advise local authorities to increase the poll tax for those paying it to compensate for that level of under-recovery?

Mr. Lang: The figure of 80 per cent. was the outside limit of a range from 80 to 95 per cent. The hon. Gentleman is therefore mistaken in his assumption. The vast majority of people are law abiding, the Act is now the law of the land, and we can expect that most people will pay it.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: Will the Minister bear in mind that Conservatives were abolished north of the border almost as quickly as English Conservatives rushed through the Lobby to make the people of Scotland guinea pigs in the poll tax legislation? The Minister has not changed his mind since the election. Is he aware that almost every section of the community in Scotland is angry about implementation of the poll tax and that both the business community and the Church have been alienated from the Conservatives? Will the Minister reconsider the Government's failure to honour their promise in the White Paper "Paying for Local Government" that the churches would be exempt from poll tax?

Mr. Lang: I shall try to answer some of the hon. Lady's questions, although I am not sure whether she is claiming

that the Scottish National party has a mandate to govern in Scotland. As the community charge is a personal tax, I should have thought that ministers of the Church of Scotland and other churhes would wish to pay it in the same way as other members of their community.

Mr. Fairbairn: Will my hon. Friend catch the drift of the questions from the Opposition and comprehend that if they have a mandate to govern in Scotland it follows that they have no mandate to govern in England? May we therefore assume that none of the Opposition, few of whom bothered to vote on Scottish matters the other night, will vote on the introduction of the poll tax in England?

Mr. Lang: Like my hon. and learned Friend, I find the whole concept of a Scottish mandate incomprehensible, the more so since the Labour party has abandoned half the policies on which it fought the general election.

Mr. Dewar: The electorate last month told the Government in no uncertain terms that the poll tax was unwantable, unworkable and ought to be abandoned. If the Minister insists on ignoring Scottish opinion, does he share the expressed view of the Secretary of State that it would be wrong to have different local tax systems in operation north and south of the border? As implementation of the poll tax in England is unlikely before the mid-1990s, does he agree that a gap of five years between full implementation in the two countries is totally unacceptable? Despite what the Minister has said today, will he give an assurance that he will reconsider the situation and ensure that the timetable for the introduction of the tax in Scotland will be delayed so as to overcome that difficulty?

Mr. Lang: I really do not recognise the difficulties that the hon. Gentlemen discerns. It was in response to representations from the Labour party, from COSLA and from others that we decided that phasing-in was not appropriate for Scotland. I hope that the hon. Gentleman is not now claiming that the Labour party has a mandate to govern in England.

Scottish Assembly

3. **Mr. Doran** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will hold discussions with a view to setting up a Scottish Assembly with legislative powers.

9. **Mr. Tom Clarke** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will hold discussions with a view to setting up a Scottish Assembly with legislative powers.

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): I have no proposals for setting up a Scottish Assembly.

Mr. Doran: Given that during the recent election campaign the Conservative party gave a commitment to enter into discussions on the future government of Scotland if there was evidence of a demand for an Assembly, and given that the Scottish electorate answered that question clearly — 76 per cent. voted in favour of parties that favoured devolution — will the right hon. and learned Gentleman advise the House when those discussions will begin and what form they will take?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman's premise is surprising, particularly as he comes from a part of Scotland that voted overwhelmingly against the Scottish Assembly when the referendum took place. He should be more aware than most people that in the Grampian region, from which he comes, feelings have always been expressed in a manner adverse to the concept of a Scottish Assembly because of the damaging consequences that it is perceived it would have on Aberdeen and on the north-east region of Scotland as a whole.

Mr. Clarke: Does the Secretary of State recall that the superficial negotiations that took place with COSLA over rate support grant led to a one-and-a-half hour debate in the House and that the decision then taken has an input and influence upon every family and household in Scotland? Is that accountability? Why does the Secretary of State not adhere to his personal views on these matters? Why does he not honour Lord Home's intervention in the referendum and, above all, why does he not respect the overwhelming view of the people of Scotland as expressed on 11 June?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman should appreciate that the time spent on Scottish rate support grant orders is exactly the time spent on English rate support grant orders. Why the hon. Gentleman should conclude that this is an unsatisfactory amount of time in respect of Scotland but not in respect of the rest of the United Kingdom I find difficult to comprehend.

Mr. Arnold: Will my right hon. and learned Friend make it absolutely clear that he is opposed to devolution?

Mr. Rifkind: I have always expressed, and still express, the view that any form of devolution that proposes within a unitary state a devolved system of government for one part of the United Kingdom without any consequential changes for other parts of the United Kingdom is profoundly unworkable and is likely to lead to severe strains of an undesirable kind.

Mr. Foulkes: Is the Secretary of State aware that since the election, now that they are free to say exactly what they believe, Councillors Struan Stevenson, Murray Tosh and, above all, his close confidant Brian Meek have all said that they strongly favour a Scottish Assembly? I know that deep down the Secretary of State for Scotland also supports a Scottish Assembly. Therefore, will he now show that he has some conviction, some guts and some sincerity and give some indication that at the very least he will set up some sort of group to examine the possibility of a Scottish Assembly in accordance with the wishes of the people of Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: I recall that almost 750,000 people in Scotland voted for the Conservative party. The fact that the hon. Gentleman is able to identify three people who share his views on devolution is unlikely to persuade me of his argument.

Mr. Salmond: I am interested in the fact that the Secretary of State spoke confidently for the Grampian region, given that there are twice as many SNP Members of Parliament as Tory Members of Parliament in the region. Given that the Conservative party in Scotland stood on a separate manifesto, which was separately tested and separately rejected, how can he possibly maintain that the Government have a mandate to impose their policies on an unwilling country? Does he believe that if the Labour party were less confused on the mandate issue he would have more difficulty in sustaining what is in truth an untenable position?

Mr. Rifkind: I remind the hon. Gentleman, first, that the Conservative party received more votes in Grampian region than any other Scottish party, and, secondly, that the Conservative party in Scotland fought and won the general election on a United Kingdom manifesto.

Sir Hector Monro: Has my right hon. and learned Friend made any calculation of the reduction in the numbers of Scottish Members of Parliament if there were an Assembly? Would there not be severe casualties in the Labour party in the central belt? Is it not rather odd that the Opposition are calling for a Scottish Assembly, yet supporting a Welshman as their leader in Westminster?

Mr. Rifkind: Not only would the creation of an Assembly of the kind proposed by the Labour party inevitably lead to a reduction in Scottish representation in the House of Commons, but one is entitled to assume that the achievement of what could be called Scottish home rule would lead inevitably to an expectation and requirement for English home rule. *[Interruption.]* Opposition Members express puzzlement about that. If they believe that English Members would be prepared to allow Scottish Members to continue to vote on English domestic legislation when they were no longer able to influence Scottish legislation, they have a profound misunderstanding of the concept of a democratic system of government.

Mr. Dewar: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman accept that I am genuinely puzzled by his reference to his personal position and the fact that he has always thought it wrong to have a one-off Scottish solution for devolution? I understand that he voted for and supported the devolution settlement in 1978, which was, of course, a one-off Scottish solution. Will he clarify that point? I also understand that the right hon. and learned Gentleman largely jusified his retreat on devolution on the ground that it was unwanted in Scotland. If he is not convinced —as I understand that he is not—by the results of the general election, what evidence is he prepared to accept of Scotland's wish for reform in the structure of government? Does he agree that his presence at the Dispatch Box, blandly denying the reality of Scottish opinion and blandly defying what Scotland wants, is bad for the House and for the country?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman fought the last election as a member of a party seeking to try to achieve a United Kingdom Government. While 5 million Scots returned 10 Conservative Members of Parliament, 16 million Englishmen in the south of England returned only three Labour Members of Parliament. Is the hon. Gentleman suggesting that a Labour Government, if it had been elected, would have had no mandate in the South of England? I also remember that—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask hon. Members to give the Secretary of State a fair hearing.

Mr. Rifkind: I also remember that when these matters——

Hon. Members: Answer the question.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Secretary of State is answering the question.

Mr. Rifkind: I remember also that when these matters were last discussed, the hon. Gentleman admitted that if devolution ever took place he assumed that there would indeed be consequences for the rest of the United Kingdom. He might like to discuss that with the leader of his party.

Youth Unemployment

4. **Mr. Dunnachie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland by how much the percentage level of youth unemployment in Scotland increased between May 1979 and the most recent date for which figures are available.

Mr. Laing: Because accurate labour force figures are not available by age group, percentage levels cannot be calculated. Unemployment amongst under 20-year-olds in Scotland has fallen in each of the last four years.

Mr. Dunnachie: I thank the Minister for his reply—[HON. MEMBERS: "Reading."] I can read; hon. Gentlemen cannot.

Is the Minister aware that in the United Kingdom, excluding Scotland, unemployment among the under-25s fell by 13·7 per cent. between April 1986 and April 1987, while in Scotland it is claimed that it fell by a mere 3 per cent? Is he also aware—[HON. MEMBERS: "Reading."] I can read; hon. Members are unfortunate.

Is the Minister also aware that Scottish youths have been unemployed for longer periods than their counterparts elsewhere in the United Kingdom? Scottish youngsters have been unemployed on average for more than 28 weeks. What hope can the hon. Gentleman offer those unemployed youngsters?

Mr. Lang: I am happy to be able to tell the hon. Gentleman that unemployment in Scotland among 18-year-olds fell by 12 per cent. in the past year and unemployment among school leavers is 3,700 lower than —[HON. MEMBERS: "Reading".] The hon. Gentleman asked me what hope I could offer to young Scottish unemployed people. I offer them the hope that they will find in the Fraser of Allander Scottish business survey published today, which is the most optimistic to be published since the survey began.

Mr. Hind: Is my hon. Friend aware that Conservative Members are fed up to the back teeth with the carping of Scottish Members? *[Interruption.]* Is he not also aware that although there may be young people in Scotland who may have been unemployed for a long time — *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that provocative statements do not help.

Mr. Hind: Is my hon. Friend aware that the levels of unemployment among young people under the age of 25 in the United Kingdom are lower than in any other country in the EEC? Those of us in the north of England and other regions in the United Kingdom have similar problems, but we are not complaining so bitterly about them, while Scotland is doing so much better than we are in the northern region.

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Unemployment among under-25-year-olds fell by 14 per cent. in the United Kingdom last year, which was much more than in the rest of the European Community. I am glad that the north of England, like Scotland and all the other parts of the United Kingdom, is now sharing in the fall in unemployment generally, the rise in economic activity and continuing low levels of inflation.

Mr. Strang: Did either the Minister or his right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland gain any impression of the scale of despair among Scotland's young people over the mass unemployment that they are experiencing? Does the Minister recognise that the two-year YTS and the fact that so many young people are driven away from their homes to find work in the south of England are utterly unacceptable? The figures do not reflect the situation and the young people in Scotland are seeing the waste of the whole generation.

Mr. Lang: The hon. Gentleman is talking nonsense. Unemployment in Scotland has fallen by 40,000 in the past 20 weeks. As I said a moment ago, the Fraser of Allander Scottish business survey is the most optimistic since the survey began. It offers encouragement in manufacturing, construction, retailing and increased employment in those sectors and more is expected in the months to come.

Mr. Kennedy: Given that in the Scottish Highlands historically unemployment has led to depopulation, and given that within the Highlands youth unemployment has been severely increased by the major closures such as Corpach, Invergordon and more recently Kishorn, does the Minister have any specific measures to suggest to arrest the continuing increase in youth unemployment that leads to youth depopulation?

Mr. Lang: I am sure the hon. Gentleman will welcome the fact that the population in the Highlands is increasing, as is the budget of the Highlands and Islands Development Board. The Highlands, like other parts of Scotland, can share in the youth training scheme, the community programme, the job training scheme and all the other measures that we offer that give training and job opportunities to young people.

Sir Hector Monro: Does my hon. Friend agree that in June 1986 the number of unemployed school leavers was 17,000, and in June this year the figure was 13,444? Is that not a sign of good news in Scotland, showing that YTS and the many other programmes are working and that the future looks much brighter than it looked some years ago?

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend is absolutely correct. It is clear that the best prospects for the youth of Scotland lie in the continuation of this Government's sound economic policies.

Mr. McLeish: Is the Minister aware that in a report published by the Department of Employment in Scotland last week 31,275 claimant and non-claimant school leavers were registered as unemployed? Is the Minister further aware that 131,000 young Scots under 25 are registered as unemployed? Is he also aware that there are only 400 registered vacancies at careers offices in Scotland? In view of that appalling record, will he bring a report before the House suggesting the steps that he might want to take to tackle that situation?

Mr. Lang: I have just told the House about the improvement in the trend of all these figures. One of the other figures that I have not yet given the House is the one about vacancies that are advertised at jobcentres. They are now at their highest level for seven years.

Economic Growth

5. **Mr. Fairbairn** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the sectors of the Scottish economy which have experienced improvements since 1979.

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. and learned Friend will appreciate that time is too short for anything like a full list. Since 1979 manufacturing productivity in Scotland has gone up by an average of 4·9 per cent. per annum; service sector employment is up by nearly 38,000 and self-employment is up by 45,000. Net company registrations are up by 15,000 and average male weekly earnings are higher than in any other part of the United Kingdom except the south-east. Scotland is now third in terms of personal disposable income per head, behind only the south-east and East Anglia, as compared with sixth in 1979. Since 1981 Locate in Scotland has attracted investment of about £2·3 billion and has helped to create or safeguard over 42,000 jobs in Scotland.

Mr. Fairbairn: Will my right hon. and learned Friend reflect on the fact that I regret the necessity for brevity on this occasion? The list of economic improvements is long and the benefits that Scotland enjoys, and which no other part of the kingdom enjoys, are huge. Will he use all his efforts to remind the Opposition that if there is a north-south divide at Hadrian's wall all the benefits are north of it in terms of transport, employment, prosperity, inward investment and all the qualities of life?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. and learned Friend is right to point out that any fair and objective assessment of the Scottish economy identifies not only the difficulties that Scotland undoubtedly experiences, but the major advantages and achievements that Scotland has realised over the last eight years. Any attempt to concentrate on one factor to the exclusion of the others shows a basic disinterest in the problems that Scotland faces.

Sir Russell Johnston: As the Secretary of State is in a fair and objective frame of mind, he will agree that there are a great many English Members here who have never before attended Scottish Questions. One can see the wonder in their eyes. Can he explain this sudden surge of intellectual hunger south of the border? Is it because of his own charismatic appeal, or have they been dragged here on the promise that they will not have to go to the Scottish Grand Committee?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman must make up his mind about what he and other Opposition Members really wish. On the one hand they seek to deplore the lack of interest that English Members allegedly have in Scottish affairs, but when my hon. Friends attend the House and seek to ask intelligent and constructive questions the Opposition take exception to this interest in our affairs. I am delighted to see in this Chamber of the United Kingdom Parliament my colleagues from other parts of the kingdom showing a sensible and constructive interest. Indeed, sometimes they seem to show a better awareness of circumstances in Scotland than do some Opposition Members.

Mr. Darling: Does the Secretary of State not regret the remarks by the chairman of Guinness plc in the June edition of the *Scottish Business Insider*, that it now looks unlikely that Guinness will set up its headquarters in Edinburgh, despite promises made at the time of the takeover of Distillers? Does he not accept that the proposal to restructure Distillers into a company that might be called United Distillers with those chiefly responsible for running it living largely in the south of England represents a slap in the face for the Scottish

business community? Does it not illustrate how powerless the Government are in attracting the very sorts of office and business developments that they say they have managed to generate in other parts of the United Kingdom? Does this not demonstrate that the Government have misplaced their trust in private enterprise? They ought to be doing far more to get jobs into the capital of Scotland.

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman is quite mistaken on his general point. He represents an Edinburgh constituency and should be aware that in recent years Edinburgh has established itself as the second financial centre of the United Kingdom. It has experienced enormous growth in jobs related to the financial sector. The hon. Gentleman asked about Guinness. As Secretary of State for Scotland, my main interest is in where the control of the Scotch whisky aspects of the Guinness company are concentrated rather than in from where Guinness beer is controlled. I understand that thought is being given to some restructuring of the company which may lead to greater and more effective control of the Scotch whisky aspect of Guinness in Scotland. If that turns out to be the case, I am sure that it is something about which we should all be satisfied. However, we must wait and see exactly what the company's proposals will be. I do not think that anyone would dispute that Sir Norman MacFarlane will have Scotland's interests firmly in mind in the work that he does in the company. I understand that he will be anxious to ensure that commitments to Scotland, especially those to the Scotch whisky industry, will be properly honoured.

Mr. Bill Walker: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that, certainly as far as the Scottish economy is concerned, the private sector has performed well in creating new jobs? With regard to the Guinness affair, if I can describe it as that, does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that it is important to ensure that those who did things incorrectly, wrongfully or illegally are dealt with properly? That will happen only when the inspector's report has been presented to the Department of Trade and Industry, and we can then look forward to action in the courts.

Mr. Rifkind: I agree with my hon. Friend.

Mr. Maxton: Does the Secretary of State believe that the *Scottish Economic Bulletin,* which is published by his own Department, is a fair and unbiased account of the Scottish economy? If he does, why does he not accept the view of the bulletin that the Scottish economy is growing considerably less than the United Kingdom economy and that there is no prospect of growth in jobs during the next 12 months?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman has not given an accurate description of what the bulletin stated. I think he will acknowledge that the bulletin referred to the fact that the Scottish economy is growing—a phenomenon that one would not believe if one listened only to the hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friends. The *Scottish Economic Bulletin* referred to the setback that occurred last year because of the recession that was then taking place in the North sea oil industry. However, in recent months we have seen a tremendous upturn in the Scottish economy, as evidenced by today's survey published by the Fraser of Allander Institute, which in the past has been perfectly willing to be critical of the Government, but which now reports the most optimistic survey since its reports began. When one adds to that the 40,000 drop in the Scottish unemployment figures in the past 20 weeks alone, hon. Members have to be positively blind not to acknowledge the major progress that is now taking place

Industrial Production and Construction

6. **Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the index of industrial production and construction for Scotland in each of the most recent four quarters for which figures are available and for each of the quarters of 1979.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton): For successive quarters in 1979, the estimates are 102·9, 107·8, 107·7, 107·1, giving an annual figure of 106·4. For successive quarters in 1986, the estimates are 99·8, 99·6, 101·2, 101·7, giving an annual figure of 100·6.

Mr. Ross: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that if he and his colleagues were to address more helpfully the recent housing document issued by COSLA that would help the construction industry and might put more people in Scotland back to work?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Substantial funds have been given for housing. For example, £184 million has been paid, which is an increase of 81 per cent. over the past three years. Expenditure on new build has remained relatively constant at about £60 million per year.

Mr. Steel: Does the Minister agree that the most effective way of giving speedy help to the construction industry would be to restore the house improvement programme in both the private and public sectors? Does he recognise that both the housing authorities in my constituency have plans for house improvement schemes, but with which they cannot proceed because of a lack of funds? Unhappily, I represent the town which still has the highest level of sub-tolerable houses in the private sector in Scotland. Will the Minister make this a priority?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his statement. I shall consider his point, but I should mention that a larger sum has been spent on the housing associations than ever before—more than £120 million this year.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: Will my hon. Friend point out to the Labour party what has been achieved on the roads programme in Scotland, for example, the completion to dualling of the Perth to Aberdeen road, and the upgrading of the A74 to a motorway? Does that not suggest the good prospects for the construction industry in Scotland under a Conservative Government?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: About £95 million is being spent and will make a considerable difference to employment by encouraging tourism. It is very much in the national interest.

Mr. Dewar: To return to productivity and the economy generally, will the Minister comment on page 7 of the *Scottish Economic Bulletin,* where there are undoubtedly references to certain hopeful signs, as the Government see them, especially the growth in self-employment. However, it continues:

"it seems doubtful whether the sources of growth will be sufficient to lead to any overall increase in the current year."

The final sentence of the review states

"it is not yet clear how far the changes reflect an improvement in the underlying labour market position in Scotland".

Do those judgments in any way justify the complacency shown by the Secretary of State a few moments ago?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The surveys have been encouraging, especially the Fraser of Allander Institute survey, which has come out today. It states that employment has increased in manufacturing, construction and retailing in the second quarter and that this is likely to continue. Unemployment has fallen by 40,000 and vacancies at Scottish jobcentres are at their highest levels since March 1980. These are encouraging signs.

Local and Health Authority Contracts

7. **Mr. Gerald Howarth** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has as to how many local and health authority contracts have been put out to competitive tender in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Details of the number of local and health authority contracts put out to competitive tender are not available centrally. However, the most reliable figures available show that of local authority works subject to competition under the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980, 58·8 per cent. was undertaken by the private sector. Since 1985, 29 contracts for support services have been let in the Health Service.

Mr. Howarth: Does my hon. Friend agree that that is a pathetically small figure and compares most unfavourably with England and Wales, where savings of 25 per cent. have been achieved, compared with the 10 per cent. saving achieved in Scotland? Is he aware that private contractors wish to bid? Is it not disgraceful that five of the 15 health boards refuse to go out to tender? Will he please ensure that Scotland has the full benefit of Conservatism?

Mr. Forsyth: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who has obviously made a close study of this matter. He will have seen that the recent National Audit Office report concluded that slow progress in contracting out in Scotland was due to a lack of availability of private contractors, strong opposition to the initiative from the trade unions and structural reorganisation within the National Health Service. I can assure my hon. Friend that I shall examine these matters closely in the coming weeks.

Mrs. Fyfe: Is the Minister aware that when the canteen provision at the Glasgow college of technology was recently privatised wages were frozen at £2·20 an hour? Will he undertake to assure Scottish canteen workers in health and local authorities that their pay will be better when privatisation is forced on them?

Mr. Forsyth: It is not my responsibility to ensure that the pay of canteen workers or of anyone else is held at a particular level. I am responsible for ensuring that maximum resources are directed to patient care and our policies are geared to that purpose.

Mr. Norman Hogg: Is it not the case that the best means of providing support services in the Health Service is a matter for the health boards to determine? Is it not also the case that the health boards are appointed by the Secretary of State for Scotland, so are largely Conservative? If the Minister does not accept from me that nobody in the Health Service wants privatisation, will he accept that view from the largely Tory-controlled health boards, about which the hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth) complains?

Mr. Forsyth: First, I take this opportunity of welcoming the hon. Gentleman to the Dispatch Box from the turmoil of the Whips' Office. He asserts that because health boards are appointed by the Secretary of State they must be Conservative-dominated. That will be a considerable surprise, but I note his expectation. I am sure he will agree that all health boards will be committed to ensuring that every penny is directed towards patient care. Therefore, it should not be a matter of conflict between us that if tendering for services results in the best value for money in patient care it should be welcomed on all sides, and certainly by health boards.

8. **Mr. Neil Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what action he proposes to take in response to the publication of the National Audit Office's opinion that expansion of competitive tendering in the National Health Service in Scotland has been too slow.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I shall be discussing progress on competitive tendering of support services with Health Board chairmen in the light of the National Audit Office report and our manifesto commitment. Boards were asked in 1984 to ensure that all support services had been put out to tender by April 1988.

Mr. Hamilton: I thank my hon. Friend for that reply. However, does he agree that, while discussions are all very well, what we want is action? Is he aware that, according to the recently published National Audit Office report, £5·9 million has already been saved by contracting out and in-house services provided under the pressure of the threat of contracting out, but that potential savings of between another £9 million and £15 million could be looked for? Are not the Scottish health boards robbing the taxpayers of the United Kingdom, and those who might otherwise benefit from an improved level of services in their areas? What can be done?

Mr. Forsyth: The only way in which to ensure that we are able to realise all the possible savings is to ensure that the efficiency of in-house services is tested against outside competition. My hon. Friend is right to point out that even the threat of privatisation seems mysteriously to produce savings, and there has been some progress in that respect. To date, savings in Scotland amount to about 10 per cent. In England, they are between 20 and 30 per cent. There is a great deal to be done in Scotland if our priority is to ensure that patient care is maximised.

Mr Galloway: The Scottish people decisively rejected the thieves' charter of privatisation just a few weeks ago. Scottish Ministers have come here today buttressed by the motley crew of English placemen and deracinated Scotsmen to ignore the salient points

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must ask a question.

Mr. Galloway: The question is this, Sir. When will those Ministers, with the green acres stretched out behind them where their Scottish colleagues used to be, come to terms with the fact that 78 per cent. of the Scottish people and 62 out of 72 Scottish Members of Parliament reject them and everything that they stand for?

Mr. Forsyth: I read in yesterday's Glasgow *Evening Times* that the hon. Gentleman was concerned about the provision of kidney machines and that he was going to have a meeting with me about it. I look forward to that, because when he comes to see me I shall point out that the savings that the NAO report estimates could be made from tendering in Scotland of between £15 million and £22 million are roughly equivalent to the cost of the purchase of 1,500 kidney dialysis machines.

Mr. Allan Stewart: Is my hon. Friend aware that some of the Scottish health boards have been up to some tricks, including, for example, the award of an in-house contract at up to 50 per cent. more than private contractors would have charged? In the light of that, will he in the course of his consideration agree to meet representatives of the industries concerned to hear from them what they think are the opportunities and the problems?

Mr. Forsyth: I should be delighted to meet any such representatives to get to the bottom of the problem identified in the NAO report of an apparent lack of interest on the part of private contractors. It is essential that the cost of in-house operations is properly examined, and comparison is made on a like-for-like, apples-for-apples basis. When in-house savings are promised, we must have proper procedures to monitor them, and to ensure that they are achieved.

Steel Industry

10. **Dr. Bray** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement about the future of the steel industry in Scotland.

17. **Mr. Millan** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make it his policy that Ravenscraig steelworks will not be closed during the lifetime of the present Parliament.

Mr. Rifkind: The future of the steel industry in Scotland depends on the health of the British Steel Corporation. I am sure the House will share my delight at the healthy profits announced recently by the corporation.

Dr. Bray: Is the Secretary of State aware that Ravenscraig contributed substantially to those profits? Is he further aware that we are looking, not just for an extension of the short-term guarantee to Ravenscraig as an integrated steel producer, but for long-term investment in modernisation, new products and new processes to take Ravenscraig into the next century as a high-tech steel producer of both plate and strip?

Mr. Rifkind: I agree with the hon. Gentleman that Ravenscraig has contributed in a valuable and important way to the profitability of the British Steel Corporation, and I congratulate the management and work force of Ravenscraig, who have achieved records in both productivity and output. The hon. Gentleman knows that the British Steel Corporation has announced £30 million of varied investment in Ravenscraig. That demonstrates a commitment to the plant. I hope that it will help to ensure a very long and healthy future for the plant.

Mr. Millan: As the Secretary of State has just acknowledged that Ravenscraig is now a profitable plant, with record levels of output and the highest level of productivity of any steelworks in the United Kingdom, why cannot it be guaranteed a long-term future? Why should it have to live from hand to mouth, with only the guarantee of continued existence to August 1988? We want a long-term guarantee for Ravenscraig, with the long-term investment that is so necessary there.

Mr. Rifkind: As the right hon. Gentleman knows, the next stage is for the British Steel Corporation to put forward its strategic plans for the future of the industry. I very much hope that when it puts its proposals before the Government the BSC will take into account the productivity and the output of Ravenscraig and the contribution that it has made to the profitability of BSC.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: In any consideration that the Government give to the investment plans of the British Steel Corporation, will my right hon. and learned Friend undertake to ensure that British Steel is able to produce those quality products, for which there is a demand in Scotland, particularly from the offshore industry, to maximise the contribution of British industry to the offshore industry?

Mr. Rifkind: My right hon. Friend is absolutely correct. I am sure the House will agree that the best guarantee for Ravenscraig and for the other plants in Scotland will be if they are able to produce the types of steel for which there is a demand and a market, thereby ensuring their relevance to the health and prosperity of the steel industry as a whole.

Dr. Reid: Will the Secretary of State take this opportunity to end once and for all the speculation regarding the future of Ravenscraig? Is he aware of the feelings of the people in Scotland? Unlike some of the synthetic Scots who are sitting on the Conservative Benches, is he not aware that Ravenscraig has become a political as well as an industrial symbol? Is he aware that there was further speculation this morning in *The Times* that a statement made by the Industry Commissioner in Europe may result in the closure of Ravenscraig? Congratulations to the workers at Ravenscraig are cheap. The Secretary of State should give them real commendation today by stating that their future is secure. He should give a guarantee today to a work force who have beaten every record in the book that the investment will be there so that their efforts are matched by his guarantees.

Mr. Rifkind: The Government have shown their commitment to Ravenscraig in an unmistakable way. Ravenscraig was kept as part of the British Steel Corporation's activities, even at a time when the British Steel Corporation was making enormous losses because of the failure of the Labour Government to approach the needs of a modern steel industry in an efficient and sensible manner. If the Government recognised the importance of Ravenscraig to the Scottish economy when the British Steel Corporation was making massive losses, I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will agree with me that Ravenscraig's position today must be infinitely healthier, since it is now part, thanks to this Government's policies, of a healthy and profitable steel industry.

Mr. Andy Stewart: Having heard from Ministers about the rosy picture in Scotland, I am almost tempted to return. With the co-operation of south Wales miners, British Coal is to produce coking coal. Will this not protect and ensure the long-term future of Ravenscraig?

Mr. Rifkind: We are naturally interested in any developments that will help to ensure that future

Ultimately, the future of Ravenscraig, as of every steel plant in the United Kingdom, depends upon its productivity and output. Its output must consist of products for which there is a market both at home and abroad. That is the best guarantee, not only for Ravenscraig but for any factory or industry in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Maxton: Has the Secretary of State received a copy of the EEC report which asks the steel industry to cut production by 30 million tonnes and to shed 80,000 jobs over the next three years? If he has received that report, what guarantee will he give to Ravenscraig that it will stay open? Will he ensure that that happens? Indeed, will he put his own job on the line and make it clear to the House that if British Steel closes Ravenscraig, he and his Ministers will resign?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman does not understand the degree of disservice that he does to Ravenscraig. By assuming, as he appears to be doing, that any necessary reduction in British Steel manpower has to be at the expense of Ravenscraig, he serves only to give comfort to those who argue that Ravenscraig is the weakest element of British Steel's activities. If he has Ravenscraig's interests at heart, he should emphasise the advantages that Ravenscraig offers for British Steel and its valuable contribution to British Steel's overall output. So far, his remarks have been positively damaging to the steel industry in Scotland.

NHS (Pay)

11. **Dr. Moonie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has now revised his Department's estimate of the share of the cost of meeting the recent National Health Service pay awards payable by health boards out of their current allocation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No. The additional £35 million made available by the Government on top of the original provision of £1,545 million for the hospital and community health programme will result in a total increase in provision this year of 8·4 per cent. In addition,efficiency measures should direct the equivalent of 1·5 per cent. of revenue allocations into direct patient care. This will allow boards to meet increased costs and to develop services.

Dr. Moonie: The Minister's reply is disingenuous, to say the least. I am fully aware that, for at least one health board, the gap between the Scottish Office's estimate of what will have to be met out of current allocation and the reality is £250,000. Where is the health board supposed to find that money?

Mr. Forsyth: The difference between the £35 million made available and the costs are based on estimates provided by the boards——

Dr. Moonie: They are wrong.

Mr. Forsyth: Well, they may be wrong, but they were provided by the boards themselves. I see no need to revise that estimate or to accept the hon. Gentleman's view that it is wrong. I should have thought that the health boards and, indeed, the hon. Gentleman, would welcome the fact that the Government have made available £35 million extra, as announced in May, on top of what the health boards were expecting in March.

Several Hon. Members: On a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: I shall take points of order after the statement.

Mr. Canavan: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Douglas: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Several Hon. Members *rose*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The House knows that there has been a rule about this matter for some time now.

Mr. Douglas: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Canavan: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Canavan: I spy Strangers.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Canavan: If you will not take my point of order, Sir, I spy Strangers.

Mr. Speaker: I will not take the hon. Gentleman's point of order.

Mr. Canavan: I spy Strangers.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Canavan: I spy Strangers, and they are all on the Conservative Benches, and they were in here for Scottish questions.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must say to the hon. Gentleman that this takes time out of the debate.

Mr. Canavan: I spy Strangers.

Notice being taken that Strangers were present, MR. SPEAKER, *pursuant to Standing Order No. 143 (Withdrawal of strangers from House), put forthwith the Question,* That Strangers do withdraw:—

The House divided: Ayes 41, Noes 161.

Division No. 27] **[3.35 pm**

AYES

Bermingham, Gerald
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Clay, Bob
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, James
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galloway, George
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Heffer, Eric S.
Lambie, David
McAllion, John
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martlew, Eric
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Mowlam, Mrs Marjorie
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Salmond, Alex
Sheerman, Barry
Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Turner, Dennis
Wigley, Dafydd
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Dennis Canavan and
Mr. Bob McTaggart

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Body, Sir Richard
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Day, Stephen
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Emery, Sir Peter
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lord, Michael
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Pawsey, James
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Redwood, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rost, Peter
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Tredinnick, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd.

Question accordingly negatived.

Polytechnics and Inner London

3.44 pm

The Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Kenneth Baker): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement.

In our White Paper on higher education, we gave notice of our intention to legislate to re-establish the polytechnics and certain local authority maintained colleges as free-standing corporate bodies outside local authority control. The White Paper indicated that the new funding arrangements would also apply to certain institutions assisted by local education authorities. We expressed confidence that the local authorities would, in the intervening period before the legislation was enacted, continue to act responsibly in the funding of the institutions due for transfer and the upkeep of their plant. I remain confident that the great majority of authorities will act responsibly, but it has come to my attention that a small number of local authorities are planning or taking steps which would either deprive the polytechnic or college concerned of assets which it needs for effective operation or would seriously encumber those assets.

Regrettably, that makes it necessary for me to take action to protect those institutions. I am not prepared to allow the interests of present and future students to be put at risk in this way. It is neither in the local nor the national interest that damage should be done to the education these institutions do and still continue to provide. I therefore propose to seek Parliament's approval in the forthcoming legislation to a measure whereby my specific consent will be required for all disposals by local education authorities of land or interests in land, including buildings, used or held or obtained for or in connection with the purposes of these institutions. These are the ones which I intend to be freestanding corporate bodies together with those institutions which are presently assisted by local education authorities and which I intend should become funded by the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council. The names of the institutions are set out in my separate written answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Altrincham and Sale (Sir F. Montgomery).

The disposals of land or interests in land requiring my consent will include outright sale, granting or otherwise disposing of any leasehold or other interest in land, direct sale and leaseback, any mortgage or other charge designed to raise capital on the security of the land. It will also include any disposal which is made in return for the supply of goods or services. In referring to disposals I include entering into any binding obligation to make a disposal of the kind in question.

Similarly, in relation to our proposals to allow inner London authorities to apply to take over from the inner London education authority the responsibilities of the local education authority for their areas, the Government have decided to include provisions within the legislation requiring ILEA to obtain my consent in advance to the following actions. The first is any disposal of land or interests in land including buildings used or held or obtained for or in connection with their education functions. Disposals will be as in the case of polytechnics and colleges. The second is any contract for a consideration having a value in excess of £15,000. In considering whether to give my consent, I may seek the views of parties affected, including any inner London authority with a potential interest in the transaction.

I shall seek Parliament's approval to the provisions both for the polytechnics and colleges and for ILEA having effect from midnight tonight. This statement does not affect enforceable obligations entered into before midnight tonight.

I shall also seek Parliament's approval for certain sanctions where my consent has not been obtained in advance. For the disposal of land or interests in land without my consent, there will be a power of compulsory purchase with a right of recovery from the local authority or from ILEA of any compensation payable. In the case of contracts, including contracts for disposal, which I have mentioned, entered into without my consent, there will be a right of repudiation, and such repudiation will be deemed to be a repudiation by ILEA or the relevant local authority, so that any liability in damages will remain with ILEA or the relevant local authority.

My Department is today writing to all local education authorities which currently maintain or assist polytechnics or colleges affected by the legislation and to ILEA and the inner London authorities to explain how these provisions will be applied.

I shall continue to monitor the activities of maintaining and assisting local authorities, and of ILEA in particular, and shall not hesitate to take whatever additional steps are necessary to prevent the interests of present and future pupils and students from being jeopardised.

Mr. Jack Straw (Blackburn) *rose*—

Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I seek your guidance?

Hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must apply the same rules. I shall take the hon. and learned Gentleman's point of order after the statement.

Mr. Fairbairn: It refers to this—

Mr. Speaker: I shall take it after the statement.

Mr. Fairbairn: But, Mr. Speaker, it is a matter of importance.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure it is. I shall still take it after the statement.

Mr. Straw: The statement is a consequence of a Secretary of State who is trying to govern by gimmick, who acts first and listens only a little and much later, and who is making and changing policy on the hoof. Will the Secretary of State confirm that, last Friday at 4 o'clock, he said that schools that opted out of local authority control could not opt back, and that by midnight he had to say that they could? The Secretary of State complains of the actions of some local education authorities. Since he spoke so eloquently to the Council of Local Education Authorities about his commitment to a partnership with local education authorities, will he say whether he or his officials have have any contact with the local education authorities concerned before the statement, not after?

Will he confirm that some authorities facing genuine difficulties over the division of colleges and polytechnic assets include some Conservative authorities such as Essex and Hampshire? Why is the Secretary of State now seeking retrospectively to control not only the disposal of land by

[Mr. Straw]

ILEA but every contract worth over £15,000? Is that not astonishing even by the Secretary of State's standards of megolmaniac centralisation? *[Interruption.]* Oh, yes.

Will the right hon. Gentleman confirm that that will mean that the Secretary of State will have a veto not only over individual contracts for school meal supplies, books and equipment, but over the individual appointment of any teacher of head teacher earning over £15,000 a year?

What consultation period is the Secretary of State allowing? Will it be the absurdly short period that he is allowing in respect of his other consultation documents? When will the main consultation documents on ILEA be issued? Will the statement not lead to further adminstrative chaos and uncertainty? Does it not show the need for him to withdraw today's proposals and to seek the partnership with education authorities that he says he wants?

On the matter of individual boroughs being allowed to opt out of ILEA, does the Secretary of State not recall that the report of a committee on ILEA, which he chaired, concluded that such opting out

"would leave a rump of poorer deprived boroughs and lead to an increase in administrative costs."?

If he was right then, how can he pursue this completely different policy now?

Is not this Secretary of State rapidly developing a reputation for a lethal mixture of arrogance and incompetence which is worse even than that of the Secretary of State for the Environment? While he is messing around with the education system, will he remember that he is putting children's futures at risk?

Mr. Baker: I welcome the hon. Gentleman to the shadow education portfolio and wish him well with it. He will know that we have crossed swords in the past in relation to Department of the Environment matters, and this matter touches upon such matters.

The Government would be accused of gross negligence if, by the time the Education Bill is presented to Parliament, which has been clearly signalled, polytechnics and colleges were mortgaged or leased. That would be to the detriment of students. In the papers that I have seen there is evidence that certain polytechnics — [HON. MEMBERS: "Name them."] I have talked to the directors of polytechnics, some of whom have not been prominent supporters of my party in the past, who have expressed considerable concern about arrangements that might be being made and about which they have heard. It is right for me to take such action today.

The hon. Gentleman will know how ILEA contracts operate. I intend very shortly to issue a general consent, and it will not be my intention to cover contracts of employment. I hope to be able to give general consents through a wide range. It is not my intention to try to disrupt ILEA's educational activities. We are concerned about any arrangements, contracts or action that could be taken that would carry forward a heavy obligation either upon individual London boroughs that may wish to opt out or upon polytechnics or colleges. Such charges would have to be met before charges for teaching and education. It is a prudent and necessary act.

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): The Secretary of State knows that I oppose his proposals and will continue to do so strenuously as they pass through the House. Nevertheless, although I can understand local education authorities and others seeking to "try it on", it is wrong that they should seek to subvert a decision of the House before it is taken. Is the Secretary of State aware, therefore, that, although I regard the £15,000 limit as far too low, if I were in his position I should have to consider taking very similar action to that which he is taking? If the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) were honest, I suspect that he would have to do the same.

Mr. Speaker: Order. All hon. Members are honest.

Mr. Ashdown: I withdraw that inadvertent misuse of the word, Mr. Speaker. May I use the word "frank"?

Mr. Baker: I thank the hon. Gentleman for the support that he has given to the Government's proposals today. He said that he would probably have taken similar action if he had been in my position; I thought that he had rather higher ambitions than that. As the hon. Gentleman recognised, we have declared our intentions very clearly and are bringing forward legislation, so it would be wrong if action were taken to try to thwart that. The legislation will come before the House. This is not retrospective.

I have not set an earlier date but have declared my intention as from today.

Mr. J. F. Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth): Is my right hon. Friend aware that any exercise in petty spite or asset stripping will be vigorously opposed not just by Members of Parliament but by students and lecturers? Is he aware that his statement will be widely welcomed and will do a great deal to protect polytechnics and to ensure that the quality of the education that they provide remains enviable in this country and elsewhere?

Mr. Baker: I thank my hon. Friend for his support. He is quite right. Members in all parts of the House should take great pride in the polytechnics. They are highly successful institutions of higher education and they have expanded dramatically. As we said in the White Paper, in many cases they are now larger than universities and the number of students — *[Interruption.]* Perhaps the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) will contain himself for a moment. I know that he has a great deal to contain. The polytechnics were established more than 21 years ago and they are highly successful. We have set out the reasons why we believe that they should become independent, free-standing institutions. That is the object of our legislation.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that there has been a remarkable expansion in the number of polytechnic students in recent years and that he envisages a further expansion in the near future? Does he agree that it would be disgraceful and wrong if the assets available to those institutions in terms of buildings, land and facilities of every kind were diminished by the prospect of action by certain Labour authorities? Does he further agree that it is disgraceful that the Labour party in the House is supporting Labour authorities in those evil ambitions?

Mr. Baker: The action that I have taken today seeks to ensure that when those institutions become independent and free-standing they do not carry with them an unnecessarily high level of debt which could be engendered in the coming months. I agree entirely with my hon. Friend, who has great knowledge of education, that these institutions do a remarkably good job and contribute a

tremendous amount to the level of higher education in our country. I wish to ensure that that level of quality continues.

Mr. Tom Cox (Tooting): In view of the Minister's statement regarding ILEA, is he aware that what is really needed now is confidence among parent-teacher associations and among teachers themselves? Will he give an assurance that, in view of the critical decisions to be considered regarding ILEA there will be the fullest consultation with the people involved, rather than a repetition of what happened in Wandsworth in the previous attempt, when the people most directly involved were in no way consulted?

Mr. Baker: I think that I can give the hon. Gentleman that assurance. It is not my intention to interfere in the day-to-day operation of ILEA. As I have said, I intend to issue a series of consents in the next few days to ensure that the general running of ILEA continues. I wish to be assured, however, that obligations cannot be entered into which would be extremely onerous in coming years and would limit and bind individual boroughs which may wish to opt out of ILEA.

Mr. Irvine Patnick (Sheffield, Hallam): Does my right hon. Friend's statement result from the fact that, during the abolition of metropolitan county councils, many councils not only did tombstone funding but prepared for life after death? What powers will he take unto himself to ensure that councils that try to burn the midnight oil are penalised? What action will he take against councillors who do a similar thing? What happens with legitimate sales of polytechnic assets, such as the sale at Sheffield polytechnic?

Mr. Baker: My hon. Friend speaks with considerable knowledge of those matters because he was a member of the South Yorkshire metropolitan county council at the time we brought in legislation to abolish it. He was a strong supporter of that. Since it has gone, hardly anybody has noticed that it was ever there. The same goes for the GLC. My consent will be required as from midnight tonight. If contracts are let or if assets are disposed of — in the case of polytechnics, colleges and ILEA councils — those that vote for disposals of land, and in the case of ILEA, for contracts without my consent should be aware that the sanctions available to the district auditor in respect of unlawful expenditure or loss arising from wilful misconduct may apply.

Ms. Hilary Armstrong (Durham, North-West): Will the Minister acknowledge that the continuing undermining of the relationship between polytechnics and local authorities is directly undermining and attacking the future of continuing education

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): Rubbish.

Ms. Armstrong: — and the opening up of access to a wider group of students, which I know that the Minister has urged polytechnics to become involved in? In many areas, the funding has come directly from local authorities. I hope that he will ensure and urge that the relationship continues, so that that very important aspect of higher education is able to develop.

Mr. Baker: The hon. Lady goes a little wider than my statement. In the legislation that we are preparing on polytechnics and colleges, I want to ensure that those institutions retain strong local links. I agree with her that it is important that polytechnics open up wider access. I am glad to be able to tell the House that, in the past eight years, it is basically those institutes and other colleges of higher education that have increased the numbers of students by 157,000. Many people are now having access to a wider range of training than ever before.

Sir George Young (Ealing, Acton): Does my right hon. Friend remember the tricks that the GLC got up to in the last Parliament? Is he aware of the widespread support on the Government side of the House for the precautionary measures that he has just announced? Can he say what safeguards there will be for colleges such as Ealing that bid for funds and secured them from his Department but where the local authority, as an act of spite, has now decided to switch the resources away to other purposes, denying the funds for the purpose for which the local authority originally sought them and his Department gave them?

Mr. Baker: That is a very bad example of a Labour-controlled authority not acting in the best interests of higher education in its area. I absolutely deplore that.

Mr. Derek Fatchett (Leeds, Central): Whitehall knows best.

Mr. Baker: No. I deplore that and I would have thought that anybody who was concerned with improving higher education in west London would also deplore that. I well remember the various tricks that the GLC and the hon. Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone) got up to. I would like to thank my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) for the help he gave me in those days in the Department of the Environment to ensure that, at the end of the day, the assets were not stripped out of the GLC, which was a real danger. In the same way, I want to make quite sure that the assets of those polytechnics and colleges are protected.

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): The Secretary of State is a member of a Government who came to power proclaiming that they were going to take central Government off the backs of local government. How on earth, in morality, logic or decency, can he defend the sweeping centralisation of powers to him and to Whitehall?

Mr. Baker: Our intention is to set up polytechnics and colleges as much more independent institutions and much more in control of their own destiny than ever before. In my talks with the senior staff and the directors of polytechnics they were virtually unanimous — I think there was one against — in their support and approval of the action that we are taking. That is a measure of decentralisation.

Mr. John Marshall (Hendon, South): Is my right hon. Friend aware that his statement will be warmly welcomed by the students and staff of Middlesex polytechnic, which has suffered from having three local authorities on its governing body, and the inability of Haringey — one of those authorities — to pursue a sane financial policy? He will be well aware that, by the end of June this year, three months into the current financial year, the polytechnic had no budget for the current financial year. Will he give a guarantee that next year he will not allow such financial nonsenses to occur?

Mr. Baker: I am aware of the problem. The delay in the budget is largely due to a dispute over the assets and the attitude that Haringey London borough council is taking. I can assure him that I know the views of the director of Middlesex polytechnic and he strongly supports the Government's policy in this matter.

Mr. David Young (Bolton, South-East): Will my right hon. Friend take on board the concern for the indecision of his Department to raise Bolton institute of higher education to the level of a polytechnic? Does he realise that, because of the dithering of his Department, great damage has been done to Bolton metropolitan borough and council, to the students and to industry in the north-west that support that institution?

Mr. Baker: The Bolton institute of higher education is a distinguished college of higher education and, together with others, it has argued for the status of polytechnic. It was made clear in the White Paper that, as soon as legislation goes through, we do not envisage a change of status of any colleges of higher education to polytechnics. Others besides Bolton have wanted that change. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that the colleges of higher education that do not have the status of polytechnics in many respects are not slighted or worse for that. The quality of the courses and the quality of higher education in Bolton is very high.

Mr. Robert Key (Salisbury): Does my right hon. Friend recall that, during the passage of the Education Bill 1986 those of us on the Standing Committee were the subject of heavy lobbying from polytechnic directors seeking further independence from local education authorities that were constantly interfering politically with the running of those institutions? When will my right hon. Friend give those institutions the chartered independence that so many of them seek.?

Mr. Baker: My hon. Friend is correct. That is exactly why we are bringing forward the legislation. There have been lots of comments from directors of polytechnics which, as I emphasised, have not been strong supporters of the Government in the past or of the Conservative party, who have found the control and the political interference by local authorities particularly irksome in the past few years. The legislation that we are bringing forward later this year will give the independence that was sought in 1976, requested, and we will deliver it.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Does the Minister accept that his statement today concerning the ILEA will be met with consternation throughout ILEA as yet another example of the Government's continuing obsession—it is an obsession—with the destruction of unitary education throughout inner London? Does he not realise that, every time he makes a statement such as this, he increases administrative costs in his Department and in the ILEA; that his promise to break up the ILEA will result in worse education, at a higher cost, with fewer opportunities for the poorest children; and that, in the long term, all he will do is achieve a messy education system in London without the economies of scale or the benefits for the people of London that they have paid for through the building up of the ILEA over the years?

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman anticipates debates that will take up the time of the House later this year. The three London boroughs that have indicated that they wish to withdraw from ILEA—Wandsworth, Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea—are absolutely clear that they will improve the quality of education in their boroughs when they are free from ILEA. The hon. Gentleman should not be surprised if, later this year, other London boroughs that are not Conservative-controlled also decide to opt out.

Mr. John Maples (Lewisham, West): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the vast majority of people in inner London are sick and tired of ILEA's obsession with playing politics rather than providing education and they thoroughly welcome his proposals for devolving power from it? Will he continue to do all that he can to ensure that ILEA cannot frustrate his proposals by the sort of devious subterfuge that we saw in the dying days of the GLC to which he has referred?

Mr. Baker: Yes, and many of the players in the game are much the same, apart from my hon. Friend and me, as those who were involved in the GLC. Many of the people involved in making these decisions know exactly what happened in the dying days of the GLC, and I want to ensure that decisions taken after the House has discussed them fully, and decisions taken by London local boroughs, will not be frustrated or thwarted by action which would imperil or encumber the assets, as could happen. That is why I have decided to take this action.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): The Secretary of State has earned himself a reputation for abandoning every previous principled position that he ever had in local government in pursuit of high office and he is a most unworthy member of the Government Front Bench.

Since the right hon. Gentleman came to the Dispatch Box and made a number of serious allegations about democratically elected local authorities, will he please name those local authorities that he understood were going to act irresponsibly? Does the right hon. Gentleman remember the paving legislation for the GLC and the administrative chaos that resulted from requiring consents to be obtained from the Department of the Environment? How many extra staff does he intend taking on in order to make sure that similar chaos is not repeated in ILEA?

Mr. Baker: I do not accept that there was chaos. The legislation was effective in protecting the GLC's assets. The hon. Gentleman only managed to get his hands on the regalia.

Mr. Banks: I would like to get my hands on your regalia.

Mr. Baker: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that he will not have my consent for that, even after midnight.

I can also assure the hon. Gentleman that the action that I have taken is necessary. Since June, ILEA has been considering what action it could take over its assets. From papers that have been drawn to my attention, there is a clear implication that Nottinghamshire county council is moving against the interests of Trent polytechnic.

Hon. Members: Just one?

Mr. Gerald Bowden (Dulwich): My right hon. Friend will know the warm welcome given by polytechnics to the proposals, since not only does it get the local authorities off the backs of the polytechnics but it ensures that they retain their assets before they achieve independence. But

can my right hon. Friend assure us that those polytechnics—I instance those in London—that are reforming their courses and changing their structure in the interests of efficiency and better performance, and have in train, and wish to take, steps which may involve negotiations, disposals of buildings or the reorganisation of buildings, which are perfectly proper transactions, will not be impeded?

Mr. Baker: Yes, it will not be my intention to cover such transactions. I want to make it clear that I want to ensure that there is an orderly control of assets. There will, of course, be changes of organisation over the next year or 18 months. However, the polytechnics in central London have a rather more distant relationship with ILEA. They are separate corporations. But, once again, if one talks to the directors of those polytechnics one realises why I have had to take this action.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Is the Secretary of State seriously proposing that this draconian action based on legislation yet to come before the House is the result of his understanding from one or two polytechnics? The right hon. Gentleman has not given the House any further information. It is outrageous for him to talk about it not being retrospective legislation because if he is depending on future legislation before the House for his action today, starting at midnight, it must follow that the legislation to support his action will be retrospective. I thought that the Conservative Benches were against retrospective legislation. Is that sort of incursion and trampling of parliamentary powerss what the former Lord Chancellor meant by an elective dictatorship?

Mr. Baker: It is not retrospective. It would have been retrospective if I had said that it operated from a week, a fortnight or a month ago. I have declared my intention as from midnight tonight and I shall be taking powers to implement it. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that directors of several polytechnics have seen me in the course of the past few weeks—[HON. MEMBERS: "Which ones?"]—and have expressed great concern about possible changes in assets.

Dr. Ian Twinn (Edmonton): Is my right hon. Friend aware that all those who have a genuine interest in caring for polytechnics will be disturbed to hear the news that he has brought to the House today of the irresponsible activities of local authorities?

Mr. Tony Banks: Which ones?

Dr. Twinn: Can my right hon. Friend confirm that this is not a vindictive action against local authorities but one which stems from the Government's genuine concern for students because the polytechnics exist in the interests of the students, not the local authorities, or, indeed, the staff, of which I count myself one.

Mr. Baker: My hon. Friend is right. He knows a great deal about polytechnics, having been a lecturer at one. I can assure him that what he has said is right. My interest is to ensure that these institutions, which are very good indeed, are not jeopardised by any action that may be taken.

Mr. Jim Cousins (Newcastle upon Tyne, Central): Does the right hon. Gentleman recognise that many polytechnics are engaged in the economic and social development of their regions, amongy which my polytechnic in Newcastle is a prominent example, and, indeed, is receiving additional resources from the local authority and various Departments of State to support activities such as the fashion centre, the small business centre, the regional technology centre and the development of industrial and technological activities arising out of the work of the polytechnic staff? Therefore, will he name those local authorities that he suspects of acting improperly with regard to the prospect of future legislation, and exempt all the other institutions that he does not suspect from all the restraints, inconvenience and red tape that will flow from his decision?

Mr. Baker: I have visited Newcastle polytechnic twice and I agree that it is a good polytechnic. An authority which has no intention to encumber or dispose of the assets of a polytechnic need have nothing to fear from the consent powers that I am requiring from tomorrow.

Mr. Michael Stern (Bristol, North West): Does my right hon. Friend agree that declaratory legislation of this type is never popular but that the entire polytechnic world will welcome the action that he has announced today in order to protect the future of education in polytechnics? In the light of the cries from Opposition Members to name names, while he cannot name the authorities which might take action in future—[HON. MEMBERS: "Why not?"] because he is not a prophet—is he prepared—

Mr. Cryer: Why can he not name them? He has had all the directors in.

Mr. Stern: Does my hon. Friend agree that there would be a startling correlation between the authorities that he is most worried about and those under Labour control?

Mr. Baker: The directors of the polytechnics and some of the heads of colleges have made it clear to me that they are very anxious indeed about what might happen to assets which have been currently used for their students in their education and general recreation, so it is important that these powers are taken.

Mr. Robert G. Hughes (Harrow, West): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the staff and students of Harrow college of technology have expressed to me some concern about his proposals, but their concern is that they may not be included in his proposals? Can he give me and them any assurance today that they will be included and have the benefits of what he is proposing for the polytechnics today?

Mr. Baker: I do not believe that Harrow college is one of those included in the list that I have given today, but if my hon. Friend is anxious and if education is being placed at risk by any activities, I shall be interested to hear.

Mr. Chris Mullin (Sunderland, South): Will the Secretary of State please name the directors of polytechnics who have come to him to express such concern?

Mr. Baker: I certainly will not, but I can assure the hon. Gentleman that they have not only seen me individually but collectively when I visited their conference earlier this year.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): Does my right hon. Friend accept that the students and staff at Edgehill college of higher education at Ormskirk, and at Lancashire polytechnic will welcome the action that he has taken to

[Mr. Kenneth Hind]

protect them in these circumstances? Does he agree that what he has announced exposes the fact that many of the interests of institutes of higher education, polytechnics and local education authorities do not coincide and that the measure that he has announced today will be seen in many quarters as a preventive measure in the light of many of the activities of Labour local authorities throughout the country, particularly with regard to the abolition of the metropolitan county councils?

Mr. Baker: The action that I have taken today will ensure that when Edgehill college of higher education becomes a separate standing institution it will not carry with it an enormous incubus of debt which could be raised very quickly. That incubus of debt would have to be met before the educational requirements of the students and pupils of that college.

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the irresponsible behaviour of some of those local authorities — [HON. MEMBERS: "Which ones?"] justifies not simply the action that he is taking today but the proposals that he will bring forward to protect the students and customers of the polytechnics from this appalling politicking in future? When are the new proposals likely to be brought before the House?

Mr. Baker: The Education Bill will come forward later this year. One of the advantages of the proposals is that the polytechnics and colleges of higher education, many of which have been subject to political bearing down over the past few years, will become independent institutions. I am sure that that will be a tremendous advantage. They are doing a very good job and they should concentrate on education and not be involved with party or local politicking.

Scottish Business

4.21 pm

Mr. Speaker: I shall now take points of order.

Several Hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall take points of order arising out of the statement first, for neatness.

Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that you granted a request which resulted in a Division which delayed the statement and the questions that we have just heard. That request was made to you by the hon. Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) presumably on the basis that those who represented parts of the United Kingdom were not entitled to be present at or take part in Scottish Questions. As the hon. Member for Falkirk, West sat throughout a statement which does not have and could not have anything whatever to do with Scotland, will you consider taking powers to forbid or punish such perverse humbuggery?

Mr. Speaker: That is not within my power. I shall take points of order relating to Scotland.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): May I first apologise, Mr. Speaker, for some remarks that I made from a sedentary position which might have reflected on your tenacity in terms of ruling, when the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn) was on his feet.

May I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to use the recess, if you cannot do this immediately, to reflect on what is happening in the House with regard to some of your rulings — in particular the ruling that you insist upon now, that you do not take points of order until after questions? You will acknowledge that if there are questions, a business statement and then another statement, many of us who want to hear your words of wisdom and the information and guidance that you want to give us in terms of order might be denied those words of wisdom for some hours. That would be very unfair if there were business statements and other statements — as there are on some days — when on other days there are no statements and points of order are reached at 3.30 pm or so.

When you came to assume the Chair, Mr. Speaker, in this Session of Parliament, you reflected on transmitting the behaviour of the House through the medium of radio and perhaps later television. You should be aware, Mr. Speaker, that Scottish Question Time is broadcast in Scotland.

Mr. Speaker *indicated assent.*

Mr. Douglas: If you are aware of that, I am grateful. [HON. MEMBERS: "Live."] Yes, it is broadcast live; I am indebted to my hon. Friends for reminding me of that.

Therefore, many of us who genuinely want to ask questions table them and they appear on the Order Paper. Because of the imbalance that the electorate in Scotland has inflicted on the Government — I make no apology for that and indeed welcome it — you find yourself in the position, Mr. Speaker, of frequently having to call Conservative Members who may or may not have tabled questions.

While we recognise that you have a duty to adhere to the conventions of the House with regard to minority

parties and a duty to ensure that individual rights are protected, I ask you to reflect, Mr. Speaker, in the recess and make a statement when the House resumes, about the position that occurs when many of us, especially during Scottish Question Time—although it might happen on other occasions — are prohibited from putting our questions and protecting the interests of our constituents because you must call Conservative Members. Indeed, we only reached question 10 or 11 today. I hope that you will reflect on that, Mr. Speaker, and I ask you respectfully to consider it over a period.

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I want to deal with one or two points. First, I thank the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) for his remarks at the beginning of his point of order. I also apologise to the hon. Gentleman for some unscripted remarks of the Chair.

May I just say, a propos Scottish questions, that I am aware that they are broadcast. I took that into account throughout the previous Parliament, and I therefore try to discover what matters are of major interest to Scotland and give a rather long run to those questions. If Scottish Members do not like that method, I shall certainly reflect to see whether we should take questions more rapidly. It would, of course, have the effect of my calling more hon. Members who may have early questions on the Order Paper. However, I point out to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West and to the House that no fewer than 20 Back Benchers from Scottish constituencies were called on supplementary questions today who had later questions on the Order Paper. I link them in my mind, although they may not be linked by the Minister replying. I will certainly reflect on this matter.

With regard to the points of order arising immediately after questions, we have had a number of exchanges on that matter. The trouble about taking points of order immediately after questions is that they invite an extension of Question Time. As I said to the House the other day, I have undertaken a very careful analysis of the matter and I have found that invariably those who rose on points of order were seeking to extend Question Time, usually to complain that, sadly, they had not been called during that Question Time. I believe that the whole House will agree with me that if points of order are genuine, hon. Members will wait for a little later in the afternoon.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): Is not the real trouble that the much heralded and vaunted attack by the Labour party on the Government on Monday night and today has completely failed, and that Opposition Members are trying to take it out on you, Mr. Speaker, rather than on themselves?

Mr. Canavan: Further to the point of order. It was with considerable reluctance that I caused inconvenience to the House earlier by spying Strangers. Perhaps if you took the point, Mr. Speaker, made by my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas), that genuine points of order arising from questions should be taken immediately after Question Time, there would be less inconvenience caused to the House.

The point of order that I would have raised immediately after Question Time is that I made the point earlier, just before your re-election as Speaker, that the Labour party is the majority party in Scotland and as such is entitled to a fair share of Scottish Question Time. I submit that we did not receive our fair proportional allocation of time this afternoon, for the simple reason that, Scottish Question Time was infiltrated by Tory Members representing English constituencies, who normally show little if any interest in Scottish affairs. They deliberately came in to the Chamber this afternoon to disrupt Question Time and to try to minimise the democratic expression of the elected representatives of the people of Scotland.

When several of my hon. Friends objected to that, Mr. Speaker, you said in reply words to the effect that you are entitled to call English Members at Scottish Question Time because Scottish Members are called at English Question Time. There is no such thing as English Question Time and to my knowledge there never has been. Every Department of State in the Government has some influence on Scottish affairs. Therefore, Scottish Members are perfectly entitled to come in on questions to the Department of the Environment, the Treasury, the Ministry of Defence, the Department of Education and Science and so on. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that for you to say that there is such a thing as English Question Time was perhaps a slip of the tongue. Perhaps the House is entitled to an explanation and at Scottish Question Time Scottish Members should have a fairer share in future.

Several Hon. Members: On a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: One at a time, please.

Of course, that was a slip of the tongue. I meant to say that this is a United Kingdom Parliament and that all hon. Members have equal rights. As the hon. Gentleman said, it is perfectly legitimate for Scottish or Welsh Members to take part in Question Time to other Departments. The hon. Gentleman has only to look at *Hansard* tomorrow to see the weight that I gave to Scottish Members at Question Time today compared to the weight that I gave to hon. Members who sit for English constituencies, to know that what he said is not correct.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. It will be within your recollection that during questions to many Departments there are in the House many Members whom I would describe as fairly regular attenders. You will know just who they are. You will also realise that, if they are on the Conservative Benches and asking questions about matters affecting United Kingdom Departments or Departments whose remit is often exclusively English, then, because there are so many of them, they have less chance of getting in. Labour Members during Scottish Question Time find themselves in exactly the same situation. That only occurs in their case on Scottish questions. Those of us who regularly attend find ourselves disadvantaged in that way at almost every Question Time. I have no complaint whatever, Mr. Speaker, about whose eye you catch and whom you call. In very difficult circumstances, you do an extremely fine job.

Several Hon. Members: On a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: I shall take all the points of order and then reply.

Mr. Michael J. Martin (Glasgow, Springburn): It is my understanding that Scottish Question Time is an opportunity for Scottish Back Benchers to highlight

[Mr. Michael J. Martin]

matters that affect Scotland. Of course, English and Welsh Back Benchers are welcome to put down questions. I have noticed before and during Question Time today that several Scottish Conservative Back Benchers were called on several occasions.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): So what?

Mr. Martin: The hon. Gentleman says, "So what?" There are 50 Labour Members in the House representing Scottish seats and there are Members from other parties. We are expected to put up a case for our communities, but we cannot do that if we get only one opportunity at Scottish Question Time, while Tory Back Benchers from Scotland are able to come in two or three times. That is unfair. It causes resentment, and I wonder whether there is some way of ensuring a proper balance in calling Members.

Mr. Forth: Further to the point of order. Can you confirm, Mr. Speaker, that you do indeed preside over a United Kingdom Parliament and that Question Time for different Departments for different parts of the United Kingdom is equally open to all hon. Members? Can you also confirm that a large amount of money from the national Exchequer goes north of the border to Scotland, and that those of us who represent English taxpayers are fully entitled to question the expenditure of that money? Would you further confirm that you would welcome participation in Scottish questions as in all other departmental questions by Members from all parts of the United Kingdom? It would be totally invidious if you were to take part in any distinction or discrimination between Members from Scotland, Wales or England on any aspect of Government policies. As you well know, Mr. Speaker, we all wish to question the Government on their policies and expenditure in every part of the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. Knowing of your own determination to see that a balance is achieved and that Back Benchers are protected, could we remind the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) that Scottish Question Time is broadcast live in Scotland? It is not broadcast to the whole of the United Kingom.

Mr. Forth: It should be.

Mrs. Ewing: Therefore, it is important that the people in Scotland who are listening to our deliberations in the House should feel that the views of the people of Scotland are adequately reflected. Because of the nature of the procedures of the House, it appears that 50 per cent. of today's broadcasting time was given to a party that held on to only 10 seats in Scotland. Many Back Benchers in the Opposition parties commanded the respect of a large number of Scottish people and were not able to participate.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: I said that I would hear all the points of order before replying, but I must deal with this immediately. The hon. Lady is being unfair. She should look at tomorrow's *Hansard* and then perhaps write me a letter about this, because she will find that 31 Members with Scottish constituencies were called. There were two questions on the Order Paper from Members with English constituencies and three other Members from English constituencies were called. I do not think that that is an unfair balance in Scottish terms.

Mrs. Ewing: Mr. Speaker——

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Key.

Mr. Robert Key (Salisbury): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I urge you not to reflect too strongly on this matter in the summer, but to retain your traditional impartiality? I had question 34 on today's Order Paper. My constituency has forestry interests that are very important. By tradition of the House, I have to address those questions about matters in my constituency to the Secretary of State for Scotland. Would not the answer be not to blame the Chair, but to encourage the Boundary Commission to do its work properly and to reduce the number of very small Scottish Labour constituencies?

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. One of the problems with not taking points of order at the end of Question Time is that, whereas my point of order arises directly from an answer given to a question, the wrong Minister has stayed on; we are left with the most inoffensive, innocuous Scottish Office Minister that we have ever had. He would not harm a fly. The Secretary of State knows that, so he leaves him behind and the real culprits escape from the House. I have to apologise to the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), about whom I complain in this point of order. No doubt his parliamentary colleague will carry the message to him.

In answer to a supplementary on question 7 about appointments to health boards in Scotland, the Under-Secretary of State said—I paraphrase—that, although it was right that the Secretary of State made these appointments, he was not aware of the politics of the people that he appointed to these boards. I have in my possession four nomination papers from last year's round of appointments to the Forth valley health board. [HON. MEMBERS: "What has this to do with it?"] It is a very good point of order. All these nominations were signed by the Leader of the House, then the Government Chief Whip; all these nominees are members of the constituency Conservative party of the hon. Member for Stirling and they all live in his constituency. He has misled the House.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman has put his finger on exactly what happens if we take points of order immediately after Question Time. They become an extension of Question Time. The fact that the hon. Gentleman did not like the answer that he received is no reason for him to raise a point of order through the Chair. If he does not like an answer, he should rise immediately on a point of order and say that he will seek to raise the matter on the Adjournment. That is the correct method of dealing with unsatisfactory answers.

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): Further to the original point of order, Mr. Speaker. Are you aware that I had question 16 on today's Order Paper? Although I rose during earlier questions and regularly attend during Scottish Question Time, being born and bred in Scotland, unlike Opposition Members, I make no complaint about not being called, because Question Time has to be seen as a whole and, in the fulness of time, these things probably even out.

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Do you agree that Scottish Office Ministers wield considerable powers over the people of Scotland, and that one of the prime functions of Scottish Question Time is to allow the elected representatives of the people of Scotland to hold those Ministers to account? On several occasions during Question Time, when I sought to catch your eye, Mr. Speaker, I was unable to do so because hon. Members representing English seats, whose constituents have no interest in Scottish Office business, continued to catch your eye to exclude Members like me from putting questions.

Mr. Gerald Howarth (Cannock and Burntwood): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. During questions on Scottish affairs, the hon. Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Galloway), who I understand is a new Member of the House, referred to those of us who represent seats in England as "pressed men" attending Scottish Question Time. I am sure that that is an unparliamentary expression. I am proud to be a Member of this Parliament, which represents the United Kingdom. I am also proud as a Douglas, having close family links with Scotland, to speak alongside my excellent hon. Friends from Scotland for the 713,000 people in Scotland who voted Conservative.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I recognise that an important and significant part of your duty is to protect the rights of minorities in the House. However, I put it to you that perhaps you erred on the side of generosity in going to the lengths that you did today to protect the saddest minority in the House, the Scottish Conservative party, which was utterly gutted in Scotland at the last election and which has only 10 hon. Members in the House. Is it really appropriate to try to protect that tiny minority from Scotland by calling a procession of obscure expatriates from Worcestershire, or goodness knows where else, to make up their numbers? May I invite you, Mr. Speaker, to reflect on that practice?

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I urge you to resist the temptation and the pressure that is clearly being put on you by Opposition Members to extend Question Time beyond 3.30. Conservative Members fully support the stance that you have taken not to extend Question Time in that way and I urge you to pursue that. On the protection of minorities—we all appreciate that that is important—if you were to apply criteria on numbers, for every three Conservative Members that you call, you would call only two Labour Members. Clearly you do not do that for any other business and I urge you to continue with the rule that you follow at the moment.

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have just been reading question 34, which was tabled by the hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key). Do you agree that that question is a blatant attempt to waste time in Scottish Question Time because such a question could easily be put in for a written answer——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must stop the hon. Lady. If the Table Office accepts the question, it is perfectly in order.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I know you have given a great deal of thought to the serious point that was raised in a dignified and helpful way by my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) about the order of business in the House. I recognise that this is not specifically a Scottish problem. It arises right across the range of business in the House. As my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) said, we now have with us the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton), who is certainly not the right hon. and learned Member for Edinburgh, Pentlands (Mr. Rifkind). If there had been continuity from Question Time, we might not have had that disadvantage. I should have preferred the Secretary of State to be here for these exchanges.

On the substantial point, it is clear that there is always a good deal of political fencing around such matters. I accept that that will always be the case and that we shall make our contribution to it. However, at the moment we face a substantial and genuine problem. I must record through you, Mr. Speaker—perhaps it will be noted by the usual channels—that there was not a pleasant atmosphere this afternoon——

Mr. Forth: Rubbish.

Mr. Dewar: Well, that was my view. I put this point seriously and, I hope, in a reasonably constructive fashion. There was a fair degree of smirking and something of a self-satisfied atmosphere on the Conservative Benches. Indeed, it was the atmosphere of a Sunday school outing—or the parliamentary equivalent of it. Outside in the Lobby, I happened to hear the comment, "This has been a splendid operation." [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] It is quite clear that the Whips have been hard at work.

That atmosphere raises serious probems which will exacerbate the genuine difficulty that we face in getting the right balance in the difficult political situation that exists in Scotland. I hope that you will not resent this, Mr. Speaker, but I believe that that makes your job much more difficult. I hope that Conservative Members, who are especially loud in their cries about the importance of and their devotion to the principle of making this a United Kingdom Parliament which works, will consider whether the tactics that we have been watching are not likely to be totally counter-productive in terms of the alleged principles of those Conservative Members. I hope that they will think about that.

Finally, I recognise that this situation throws up sharp and difficult problems for you, Mr. Speaker. We must think carefully about the right balance of contributions in Scottish questions, given the present situation. I hope that you will consider seriously the comment made by my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, West and reflect on them. Perhaps we could return to this matter in a calmer atmosphere in October.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. Gentleman. I shall, of course, reflect on points of order, as I always do. Perhaps the whole House will reflect too on the wise words of the Leader of the Opposition when he said at the beginning of this Parliament that, sadly, no hon. Member can expect to be called always on the day he wants, on the subject he wants and at the time he wants.

State Security

4.46 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On an entirely different point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I raise at the first opportunity a matter relating to proceedings in Parliament ? I tabled a written question to the Prime Minister today to ask

"if she will introduce legislation to amend the Official Secrets Act so as to provide that civil servants who provide information to Mr. Speaker are not open to prosecution in the courts".

I raise this because it concerns the office of Speaker. The reply was that there were no plans to do so at the present time.

In the light of several events, not least the events arising out of the trial of Clive Ponting, and of other difficulties relating to civil servants, may I put it to you, Mr. Speaker, that during the recess you at least consider whether those who go to you in your official capacity as Speaker of the House of Commons and to the Clerk's Department should in some way be protected from actions in the courts? There is nowhere else for those people to go, other than to the press, and that would be most unsatisfactory. If I had gone to the press in the Ponting case, the verdict might have been different. May I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to consider those weighty matters during the recess and to reflect on the way in which proceedings in Parliament should operate?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman has raised a matter which is new to me. I shall certainly reflect carefully on it.

Statutory Instruments (Consideration)

4.48 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The eighth item on the Order Paper relates to the draft European Communities (Definition of Treaties) (International Convention on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System) Order 1987 and will be taken forthwith, pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5). It was considered yesterday in a merits Committee at 10.30 am—merits Committees are open to all hon. Members — and the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments was due to meet at 4.15 pm. Therefore, the merits Committee meeting could not have the report of the Joint Committee. Moreover, the Joint Committee could have decided to take further evidence on the submission from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Committee decided that the matter should be referred to the House of Commons and a report made pointing out that the instrument appeared to make an unexpected use of powers.

Because the matter is to be decided forthwith, perfectly properly, the matter cannot be discussed. The merits Committee could not possibly have the decision of the Joint Committee because the latter had not considered the matter and was to do so later the same day. Since both Joint and Select Committees are obliged under Standing Order No. 115 to report matters to the House for the House to make a judgment, will you, Mr. Speaker, bring to the attention of all the parties concerned the fact that, if a Select Committee is to be useful, every effort should be made by the usual channels, with your help and guidance, to ensure that Joint and Select Committees on statutory instruments have the opportunity to consider an instrument before a merits Committee, so that when we decide forthwith it is because every aspect has been considered in Committee?

Mr. Speaker: That is an important matter. The hon. Gentleman's remarks will have been heard by the Patronage Secretary who is in his place. If the motion is put tonight, it is open to the hon. Gentleman to vote against it. However, I am sure that what he has said will be noted by the Patronage Secretary.

BILL PRESENTED

SCOTTISH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Mr. Secretary Rifkind, supported by Mr. John Major, Mr. Ian Lang, Lord James Douglas-Hamilton and Mr. Michael Forsyth, presented (under Standing Order No. 48 (Procedure upon bills whose main purpose is to create a charge upon the public revenue)) a Bill to make provision with respect to the limit on sums borrowed by, or paid by the Secretary of State to, the Scottish Development Agency and its subsidiaries, on sums paid by the Treasury in pursuance of guarantee of loans to the Agency and on loans guaranteed by the Agency or its subsidiaries: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 140].

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS &c.

Ordered,

That the draft Welfare of Calves Regulations 1987 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Social Security

4.51 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. Michael Portillo): I beg to move,

That the draft Pensioners' Lump Sum Payments Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 7 July, be approved.

I understand that it will be for the convenience of the House if we discuss at the same time the following motion:

That the draft Supplementary Benefits (Requirements and Resources) Amendment Regulations 1987, which were laid before this House on 9 July 1987, be approved.

In passing, I wish to congratulate the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) on retaining her portfolio and to wish her well in her renewed stint as her party's social security spokesman.

The order provides for the payment of the £10 Christmas bonus. The regulations put into effect the amendments to the supplementary benefit regulations dealing with the payment of benefit to people in residential care and nursing homes which were announced on 7 July in a reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames). They also uprate for the purpose of assessing the amount of benefit payable the element in the student grant that can be disregarded because it is intended for books and equipment.

I shall deal first with the changes to the supplementary benefit regulations relating to the payment of benefit to people in small residential care homes. As the House will know, people living in private or voluntary residential care homes registered with a local authority under the Registered Homes Act 1984 can get supplementary benefit to help with the fees that they have to pay. The amounts payable are subject to national limits ranging from £130 to £190 depending on the category of care provided by the home. Small homes with three or fewer residents cannot register with a local authority. Nevertheless, people living in these homes can get supplementary benefit up to the same limits as registered homes.

The intention was that this should happen only where the care given was clearly equivalent to that given in a registered home. However, there is doubt whether the current regulations actually achieve this aim. Recent legal advice is that if any amount of personal care is provided, help with the fees can be given up to the registered home limit even if the home has inadequate facilities and provides a low level of care. That would clearly be unsatisfactory. There has also been widespread concern that the present benefit provisions positively encourage the setting up of small homes, regardless of the services provided.

The amendments provide a tighter definition of a small residential care home in line with the previous policy intention. As the House will know, there are different ranges of limits for various types of board-and-lodging accommodation: ordinary board and lodging and hostels where the limits range from £45 to £70, residential care homes with limits from £130 to £190, and nursing homes with limits from £175 to £230. Our intention was that the residential care home limits would apply for residents of small homes only where the level of provision and thus the cost of the home would justify those benefit levels. The new definition at regulation 2(b) takes the provision of staff of reasonable calibre as the proxy for additional costs. The residential care limit will apply where the home provides personal care and there are at least two people with relevant experience employed in providing that care. At least one of those people must be available throughout the working day and one must be on call throughout the night to care for residents. Residents must have full access to the home at all times.

The new definition will ensure that rates of benefit bear a defensible relationship with costs. The present arrangements require adjudication officers to make a judgment on whether the standard of care given in a small home is equivalent to that in registered homes before allowing the residential care home limit. The new definition specifies the requirements for the higher limit and should thus be easier to administer and will provide a system which is clearer for adjudication officers, claimants and those providing care.

The House will be concerned about the transitional arrangements. A few claimants in small homes may already be receiving higher rates of benefit, although the level of care would not justify the higher rates under the new provisions. In order to protect the position of those residents, regulation 3 provides that where an adjudication officer has already decided under the current rules that a residential care home limit is appropriate, claimants who continue to live at the same address will continue to qualify for the higher benefit limits.

Before leaving the subject of residential care, I should mention that the amendment regulations also include, at regulation 2(a), a new definition of a "nursing home". This is a technical amendment to make it clear that references to nursing homes in the supplementary benefit requirements regulations are to registered homes, so as to ensure that no payment is made in respect of homes which are not registered, unless the home is specifically exempted from the need to register.

The amendment regulations also deal with a wholly different aspect of supplementary benefit. Regulation 4 reflects the increased rates of student grants for the academic year 1987-88. Within the new rates of grant there is an increased allocation for books and equipment. The supplementary benefit regulations provide a specific disregard for this element of the student grant, and the purpose of this regulation is to uprate that disregard to the new level.

I should explain that this applies to a small category of students. Most students cannot claim benefit during the grant-aided period, since they are on their course and not available for work. However, lone parents and disabled people who are not required to be available for work can claim benefit while studying and their grant is taken into account as a resource against their benefit requirements. The grant is high enough to take most of these students out of benefit, but a few have needs sufficient to qualify them for benefit to top up the grant.

If a claimant has a partner who is a student, the couple's total needs are calculated, any grant is taken into account, and benefit will be payable during the grant-aided period. For these students, and for lone parents and disabled students, it is important that we do not treat their grant for books as a resource, and the disregard ensures that we do not take account of it. Only a small number of students are affected, but for them the uprating of the disregard is wholly advantageous.

The draft order provides for the payment of a non-taxable Christmas bonus of £10 in the week commencing

[Mr. Michael Portillo]

7 December to retirement pensioners and to recipients of the other qualifying benefits specified in the Pensioners' Payments and Social Security Act 1979.

It may seem curious to the House that, in mid summer, we have to debate the Christmas bonus, some six months in advance. I am pleased to be able to remind the House that this is the last time that such a debate will be necessary. From next year payment of the bonus will be made automatically as one of the very welcome administrative simplifications resulting from the Social Security Act 1986.

Mr. Paul Marland (Gloucestershire, West): As this is the last time that we shall debate the Christmas bonus, may I tell my hon. Friend that there is a pensioners' organisation in my constituency which would much rather have an increase in the basic pension than a number of what they see as fringe benefits added to the pension? Does my hon. Friend have a view on that?

Mr. Portillo: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his comments. I have heard that opinion expressed before and I understand what brings it about. Those fringe benefits, as he describes them, are of substantial help to the poorest groups in our society. If we took the route that my hon. Friend and his constituents are proposing, the money would be spread thinly across the total number of pensioners, of whom there are almost 10 million today. I appreciate the point made by my hon. Friend, and I hope that he understands my point.

The order and the purpose of the bonus need little introduction. The annual bonus, payable at first on a discretionary basis, was introduced in 1972, and was made a statutory entitlement by the Conservative Government in 1979. Unlike the last Labour Administration, which failed to pay the bonus at all in two years, we believe that pensioners budgeting for Christmas need the assurance of that contribution to their expenses which this payment provides. This year the bonus will be paid to a record number of pensioners and beneficiaries, at an estimated cost of about £114 million.

Mr. Robert McCrindle (Brentwood and Ongar): My hon. Friend said that this was the last occasion on which we would have to discuss this matter because of the reference to it in the Social Security Act 1986. What opportunities will there be for hon. Members to suggest that the level at which the bonus is paid — its permanence is welcome—may continue to be a suitable subject to which they may turn their attention?

Mr. Portillo: As a relative newcomer to the House compared to my hon. Friend, I hesitate to advise him on when he should raise that issue. I am sure that he will use his ingenuity and raise it on numerous occasions. We certainly look forward to that.

It might be helpful if I set the Christmas bonus in context by considering its relative importance within the whole system of financial help for elderly people. It may also serve as an answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. McCrindle). With total benefit expenditure running at over £46 billion in this financial year, it is essential that we channel resources in the most effective way to those in need. Spending on benefits for elderly people accounts for about £22 billion, almost half of that total, and the overwhelming majority of that expenditure goes, of course, on the day-to-day support which pensioners need throughout the year, not just at Christmas. I feel sure that there is widespread agreement that we should concentrate our resources on regularly paid benefits.

Indeed, I noted with interest from the election manifesto of the Labour party that that is the course that it would have followed had it been elected to office. There is no mention there of an increase in the Christmas bonus. We recognise that, however welcome one-off payments such as the Christmas bonus may be to pensioners and to others who receive them, they are essentially only a minor part of the total structure of help for elderly people. Our record shows that we have been meeting the challenge and putting our efforts into providing what pensioners need and want, a decent standard of living for 365 days of the year. We have maintained benefit levels, despite paying pensions to a million new pensioners since 1978, and indeed we have increased spending on benefits for the elderly by 29 per cent. in real terms since 1978-79. More than that, by controlling inflation we have protected that part of pensioners' incomes that does not come from the state.

Pensioners' incomes grew on average by 2·7 per cent. a year in real terms between 1979 and 1985, a rate of increase that was more than twice that for the population as a whole. That compares with an average increase in pensioners' incomes in real terms between 1974 and 1979 of only 0·6 per cent. a year. Income from state pensions and means-tested benefits increased at much the same rate between 1974 and 1979 and between 1979 and 1985. Those benefits account for about 60 per cent. of pensioners' incomes on average, but lower inflation between 1979 and 1985, and the steady development of occupational pensions, had a dramatic impact in the second period on total income.

Income from savings, which is received by 70 per cent. of all pensioners and 83 per cent. of recent pensioners, decreased in real terms by 3·4 per cent. a year between 1974 and 1979, whereas from 1979 it has increased by 7·3 per cent. a year.

Occupational pensions are now received by over half of all pensioners, compared with only 40 per cent. in 1979, and about 70 per cent. of recently retired couples have them. For those with occupational pensions, the value is on average roughly the same as the state basic pension. Over 5 million people now receive occupational pensions.

If total income is taken into account, pensioners' incomes, on average, are 60 per cent. of those of people in work. Far fewer pensioners are now on very low incomes. The number of those in the lowest fifth of the national income distribution fell from 38 per cent. in 1979 to 25 per cent. in 1985. Even after account is taken of housing costs, which have risen in real terms, there has still been a rise in average real net incomes for the elderly. Net of housing costs, they rose by nearly 2·5 per cent. a year between 1979 and 1985, compared with only 0·4 per cent. a year between 1974 and 1979.

Against that background, the Christmas bonus is necessarily only a very small part of the financial picture for pensioners. None the less, the bonus is something to which the majority of the elderly look forward very much, and I therefore have no hesitation in commending the order to the House.

5.7 pm

Mrs. Margaret Beckett (Derby, South): It is my pleasant task not only to welcome the Under-Secretary of State to his new responsibilities which I do with particular pleasure, because he follows a path that I, too, was fortunate enough to follow, from the Government Whips' Office to departmental Front Bench but to welcome you, Madam Deputy Speaker, to our social security debates. I know your excellent reputation as Chair of many Committees, and I am sure that we shall be very happy to have you presiding over our debates. Whether you will always be equally happy with the exciting nature of those debates is another matter.

I shall attempt to follow the pattern of the Under-Secretary's contribution, and deal briefly, first, with the issue of disregard for students in the requirement regulations. Like the hon. Gentleman, we believe that it is a necessary change, and we welcome the increase that the Government are making. As this is the first occasion on which the hon. Gentleman has presided over a social security debate in his present capacity, and we are being charitable to him, I shall mention only in passing that I seem to recall that the National Union of Students' evidence to the Select Commitee on Education, Science and Arts suggested that the element being dealt with in this disregard has gone up in cost by 65 per cent. since 1968, while the increase offered is about 12 per cent. However, I am sure that it will be more than welcome, and we do not propose to contest it on those grounds.

We can also see the reason for the tightening of regulations for the very small homes, which is the burden of the main part of the requirements regulations, although the root of the problem appears to us to be the combination of insufficient and inadequate public-sector accommodation with a degree of unthinking encouragement of diversification to the private sector, which took place a few years ago under the present Government. Unfortunately, we are all reaping the rewards of that, and elderly people in those homes are among those who sometimes have cause to be concerned about it.

The Minister said that there was doubt in the Department whether the regulations dealt adequately with the position of these very small homes. That may be so, but we doubt whether these regulations are any better in meeting the aim that he suggests they seek to meet. Were it not for the fact that they include the provision for students, which is urgent, I should have suggested to the Minister that he ought to consider withdrawing the regulations and re-submitting them in the autumn when they have been examined more carefully.

Regulation 2(2)*(f)*(ii) stems from a problem that has arisen more than once: whether a home that purports to provide care for a particular type of resident with a particular kind of need has residents who are in a different category. The phraseology refers to

"the category of personal care for which the establishment provides"

such care. It does not seem to us that that necessarily makes any difference, or makes it more enforceable. That may be a tighter definition of the category of care that is provided by the establishment, but whether the individuals living in the home come into that category and need that level of care, and therefore that level of public support, may not be met by the phraseology of this regulation. It is not clear to us that the wording resolves the problem that the Minister has identified.

The Minister also said that the regulations refer to a responsible person being available throughout the day. I was pleased to hear him say that they mean that a responsible person, although not necessarily the same responsible person, has to be on duty throughout the day. That is what we hoped and presumed he meant, but that is not what the regulations say.

We are also a little concerned that the regulation suggests that the person who is on duty or on call should at all times be the person who is predominantly employed to provide personal care. Again, I recognise that the Government are seeking to ensure that those who provide personal care are qualified to do so. Even in a quite small home, those who are qualified to provide personal care may be employed on administration for much of their time. It is acceptable to all concerned that from time to time they should be employed on care duties, but that is not their primary task. It is not, therefore, a question of the regulations being wrong, but of the drafting of the regulations being less helpful than it might be.

Regulation 2(2)*(f)*(i) refers to "personal care" being

"provided by at least two employed or self-employed persons".

Is the Minister confident that a home that is run by members of a religious order will always satisfy that condition? If there is any question about it, perhaps the Minister will be good enough to look into it. We are accustomed to the Department having to introduce amending regulations to correct regulations that have already been introduced. We should seek to be relatively charitable about that, if amending regulations were found to be necessary.

The Minister referred to the fact that decisions will be in the hands of adjudication officers and to the specific requirements that have been set out for their guidance. Their task is to ensure that the conditions are complied with and that they continue to be complied with, but it is not clear to us how they are expected to do that. The definition in the regulations may still leave them open to abuse. I am wondering what checks the adjudication officers are expected to carry out. For example, how will they check that staff have had at least one year's relevant experience? Will they take the proprietor's word for it, or will they employ checks of their own?

Thus far we have been concerned simply with clarity. We assume that the Government's intentions are those that we have identified. However, there are a few aspects of the regulations that cause us concern. The Minister referred to the fact that the intention is to provide transitional protection for those who are now in receipt of benefit but who, through no fault of their own, may not in future be entitled to benefit in exactly the same circumstances.

As we read the regulations, this protection will apply only if benefits have been awarded under the residential care provisions of schedule 1 before 27 July 1987. It will not apply if the claim is made before 27 July but no decision has been reached. Even during the short time that he has been in the Department I am sure that the Minister will have realised that there is great concern throughout the country at the burden that is placed on local DHSS offices and the speed with which they are able to deal with claims. It seems to us to be completely wrong and wholly unjustified that people might lose protection because, although they made their claim in time, delay in dealing with the claim resulted in no decision having been made.

[Mrs. Margaret Beckett]

Similarly, an adjudication officer may reach a decision on such a claim before 27 July, but the claimant may decide to appeal. The appeal tribunal may overturn the decision of the adjudication officer. However, as we read the regulations, even if the tribunal's decision were made before 27 July, it would still be ruled to be incorrect, because the determination ought to have been made by the adjudication officer. Therefore, the transitional protection will still be lost. We do not believe that is the intention, but that seems to be the effect of the regulations. We believe that the date of the original decision on the claim should matter and that it should be possible to overturn it, once the matter goes to appeal, by the decision of the tribunal.

The Minister also referred to the way in which transitional protection will apply. He said that a person will not lose entitlement if he is temporarily absent from the home in question; but when we are talking about homes and individuals who need a fairly high level of care it concerns me—and I am sure that it will concern the House—that people are most likely to be absent from a home for a short period of time through illness. According to the wording of the regulations, that is precisely the circumstance in which they will lose their transitional protection.

I draw to the Minister's attention a case that was brought to me fairly recently. It does not relate to a residential home, but the principle is the same. A 72-year-old lady on supplementary pension was also receiving a central heating addition. The Government abolished the central heating addition last summer but provided transitional protection. At the end of April she went into hospital for 12 days. She has now lost her central heating addition. As she was in hospital, she lost her right to supplementary benefit for those 12 days. Although the Government say that that is not the intention, it appears that somebody who goes into hospital may lose their transitional protection. Furthermore, those who are resident in a small home that is not receiving the full payment for them may find that their right to a place in the home is placed in jeopardy. We hope that that is not the Government's intention, but we fear that that is the effect of the regulations.

As for the Christmas bonus regulations, I congratulate the hon. Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. McCrindle) on spotting what I suspect was a Freudian slip by the Minister, or by whoever drafted his speech. He said that this was the last time that this debate would be necessary, because the only time that such a debate might be necessary in future would be if the Government decided to increase the Christmas bonus. Between 1974 and 1979, when the Conservatives were in Opposition, they said that the Christmas bonus was inadequate. However, they were unable to increase it in the 1979 to 1983 Parliament. They were also unable to increase it in the last Parliament.

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): Will the hon. Lady give way?

Mrs. Beckett: No, not for the moment.

It looks as though the Government have decided, despite their wonderful economic successes——

Mr. Thurnham: The last Labour Government took it away.

Mrs. Beckett: The hon. Gentleman says that we took it away. The Opposition have never disputed that during the lifetime of the last Labour Government, who did not enjoy the benefits of North sea oil, there was the odd economic problem. The Conservative party has just fought an election campaign in which it said that this country has not been so well off for years and that we are rolling in economic success. However, the Minister tells us that the Government cannot afford to increase the £10 Christmas bonus throughout the lifetime of this Parliament and that we shall not need to debate it again. Had it been indexed, the real value of the Christmas bonus should now be £44, not £10. It will undoubtedly become a very minor part of a pensioner's income.

During the election campaign, the Opposition said that the main basic pension, rather than the Christmas bonus, should be the source of remuneration. Even if it were £44, it would still be a minor part of a pensioner's income. We suggested a basic pension increase of £5 for a single pensioner and £8 for a married couple. If that is compared with the 80p that the Government have given in recent years, that is quite generous.

I plead with the Minister not to use the statistics that the Department is delighted to have discovered. They suggest that pensioners' incomes are increasing twice as fast as those of everyone else and that they are increasing much faster than between 1974 and 1979. Pensioners' incomes have gone up so much during the past few years because of the earnings-related pension scheme, and the underpinning that it provided for good occupational pension schemes, which was introduced by the Labour Government in 1975. It is precisely the scheme that the Government spent so many hours last year destroying. State earnings-related scheme benefits have been halved, and the Government have undermined even the basis of good occupational pension schemes which now have to meet much lower standards.

It is a little dodgy for the Government to take credit for something that they have just destroyed. We will treat the Minister gently on this occasion, but it is only fair to warn him that we will not be so kind in future.

Mr. Michael Stern (Bristol, North-West): As the hon. Lady said that the Government are in the process of destroying good occupational pension schemes, could she explain why the providers of pension schemes are not only providing the schemes at a rate as never before, but are looking forward to unprecedented expansion in their industry?

Mrs. Beckett: I have no difficulty in accepting the hon. Gentleman's case. They would be very unwise if they did not take that attitude. They are in the business of providing pensions and making money out of it. They see an excellent opportunity for expanding what are known as personal pensions.

It is within the recollection of the hon. Gentleman—though not of all of his colleagues—that the pension industry was very alarmed and expressed great concern about the way in which the standard and occupational pension schemes are being undermined. It believes that the provisions for personal pensions will cause terrific problems in the future.

Now that the Government are being so unwise as to go ahead, flying in the face of their advice, people in the industry will try to sell as many pension schemes as they

can and try to make as much money as possible. They would be crazy not to do so. But that does not mean that they believed then, or that they believe now, that the Government were wise to do so.

The lump sum regulations are the product of the Government's habitual penny-pinching. That is bad enough, but it is a little dangerous if that becomes more force of habit and the Government assume parliamentary decisions. That, unfortunately, is what has happened here.

The regulation was not in practice what the Government told us it would be in their notes on clauses on the Social Security Act 1986. The notes suggested that the bonus would be paid in the first week of December and referred to the date on which it is currently paid. It means that this year, and I think next year, the bonus will be paid a week later. That is only a minor inconvenience to pensioners, but it is still an inconvenience, and no doubt the Government will make an equally minor saving at the expense of pensioners by way of interest payments on the sums involved. I cannot envisage any other advantage.

Although this is a comparatively minor issue, issuing leaflets which announce the new date without indicating that it is subject to confirmation by Parliament suggests that the Department is getting into the habit of assuming that everything will go through and be OK. Even though the Under-Secretary was in the Government Whips' office, he may have noticed that the Department has occasionally landed itself with the odd problem through just that kind of assumption. That sort of attitude could lead to problems, given the enormous amount of material which should go into primary legislation but which will be put into regulations between now and next April. On this occasion we do not blame the Under-Secretary or the Minister for Social Security and the Disabled because they were not in their present posts when the decisions were taken. However, by the autumn they will have been in the Department long enough to realise that they will have to take the consequences of their actions.

The issues dealt with in the regulations are not major issues of principle but they cause concern and inconvenience, and perhaps point to the Department's attitude. The Department is faced with a mass of legislation and it is worrying to note that these provisions have not been properly drafted, that Ministers' intentions are not properly conveyed, and that parliamentary approval has been taken for granted. Let us hope that after the summer recess, when everybody has had a rest, this kind of thing will not happen again.

5.23 pm

Dame Jill Knight (Birmingham, Edgbaston): As this is the first time that I have spoken since you have been in the Chair, Madam Deputy Speaker, perhaps I may add my name to those who have congratulated you. Perhaps the ladies among us are more pleased to see you there than the gentlemen. [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] I am so pleased that hon. Members came back on that; I hoped they would. I would never make the mistake of calling you a piece of furniture, Madam Deputy Speaker. You are not a chair; you are the Deputy Speaker.

I also congratulate my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State on his first appearance at the Dispatch Box and I welcome his remarks warmly.

I do not want to delay the House, but there are one or two points about which I feel rather strongly. The hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) accused us of being penny-pinching in our expenditure on social security. The amount that we spend is now £46,000 million per annum. If that is penny-pinching, God help us if we ever have a profligate Government. It is important to recognise that we must pay our elderly people what we can afford and ensure that, as the country becomes more prosperous, its elderly people get their share. I believe that that is happening. The Christmas bonus can hardly be described as penny-pinching, as even taken alone it costs £114 million.

Mr. Thurnham: Would my hon. Friend agree that the penny-pinching took place in 1975-76 when the Christmas bonus was not paid and that that was a dreadful thing to do? Would she agree that we should welcome the regulations, which make the payment automatic?

Dame Jill Knight: I agree absolutely. I warmly support the Government's proposals and I am amazed that the Opposition should have the bare-faced cheek to talk to us in such terms about the Christmas bonus.

However, I am always a little concerned when money is spent on all pensioners. I should prefer public money to be directed to those in real need. Some elderly people do not need the Christmas bonus. Some millionaires living in large homes get the Christmas bonus, although I suppose that we must derive some comfort from the fact that they pay tax on it.

I suggest to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State that, now that he is embarking on his career in the Department, which I hope will be a long one, he should re-examine supplementary benefit limits and the way in which they work. I am sure that I am not alone in being troubled by the fact that many people who fall a copper or two over the point at which supplementary benefit is payable lose so much. Many other benefits flow from supplementary benefit and it is rather hard on someone who finds that, because he is not quite at the limit at which supplementary benefit is payable, he cannot get glasses, coal or other help.

I have always thought that it would be worth considering a system of graded help for those whose incomes are just a little above the level at which supplementary benefit becomes payable. Perhaps they should be afforded some of the benefits, with those whose incomes are a little higher receiving slightly fewer. We should not have a sharp cut-off point which means that one gets all or nothing.

In considering help for elderly people, we rightly examine the residential care angle and the fact that it is nearly always better to keep people in their own homes if possible. Home helps, meals on wheels, and so on are important to achieve that, as the Government have acknowledged. Will the Government look at the meals on wheels system in particular? It was organised solely by the Women's Royal Voluntary Service and costs hardly anything because volunteers took the meals around. There are still some volunteers, but recent figures show that the service could be extended if there were more voluntary helpers. This may be too far-reaching an idea, but, in making help available to those who need it, it is crucial to recognise that there are people—thank God for them—who are prepared to work voluntarily taking meals to elderly people, doing their shopping, and so on. If we looked more towards bodies such as the WRVS, we might be able to make the service available more widely because of the savings which would be made.

[Dame Jill Knight]

Old people are very conscious of the problems of law and order. They talk and write about them a lot. They worry about the dangers they face when going out. It is not just a matter of increasing the number of police and neighbourhood watches, although that scheme is important and has helped many elderly people. I should like to tell the House about one of my constituents, an 84-year-old lady who was going into her flat when a young man came up to her, said that he did not have his security key and asked whether she would let him in. To a certain extent, people would say that she was to blame, but the young man looked reasonable and trustworthy, so she let him in. He took her into the lift up to the top and raped her. Theat is a terrible thing to happen to any woman, and one can only imagine what it was like for a frail elderly person. I plead with the Government to recognise that old people are at risk in tower blocks and to introduce a system that might help.

I am proud to be part of a Government who consistently try to ensure that pensioners are never in need. The days when they were have gone, thank God. I despair at some of the publicity launched against us — for instance, comments that pensioners in this country do worse than in any part of Europe. That story came out recently in the *Daily Mirror* and was proved false because the article did not compare like with like. It did not mention the extra pensions—for example, from the state earnings-related pension scheme — received by our elderly people. The article added those benefits or similar ones to European benefits to try to prove that European pensions were better, but did not compare like with like. When that type of story gets out, many people are aggrieved and feel that they are not fairly treated. That is not true. One of the major jobs of my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State in his new task will be to make more widely known and understood exactly what is available and how it compares with countries on the continent.

5.33 pm

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): I listened with interest to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight). I understand what she means when she says that making all benefits universal is a policy which is too expensive. There are admittedly problems in meeting the cost of universal benefits but, if I followed the hon. Lady correctly, she went on to argue that the selective system of giving help to those on supplementary benefit was unfair as it affected those whose incomes were only slightly above the level at which it was payable. May I gently suggest that she is trying to have it both ways. With a universal system, one gets around the second problem. With a means-tested benefit, one does not have the first problem.

Dame Jill Knight: I do not think that the hon. Gentleman's remarks follow from what I said. I was trying to say that when benefits are automatically universal many well-off people get the scarce Government help. Surely the hon. Gentleman can see the difference between that and not having such a sharp cut-off point. I am talking, not about millionaires receiving supplementary benefit, but about the poor people who earn just a penny or two over the level at which it becomes payable. There is a difference.

Mr. Kirkwood: I do not think that I misunderstood the hon. Lady. My interpretation of her remarks stands, but I do not want to make an issue of the apparent contradiction.

A new Treasury Bench team is looking after social security. I join in the welcome given to the new Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State and the new Minister for Social Security and the Disabled. The Minister will have his work cut out to match the promotion enjoyed by previous incumbents of his office, one of whom is now Chief Secretary to the Treasury a hard act to follow. I wish the hon. Gentleman well. I hope that the House can take some comfort and succour from the fact that a couple of fresh and active minds have been brought to consider the thorny problems of social security. Those intractable problems have taxed bright brains in the past. I, for one, hope that Ministers will take the opportunity to consider in depth some of the principles behind the social security system. They are very technical. Although there were some changes in the Social Security Act 1986, I hope that the Minister, who will be charged with the responsibility of implementing some of them, will consider some of the longer-term problems and underlying principles behind the issues. That would be to the benefit of everyone.

I understand that the notional element of the student grant is attributable to books and equipment and that disregard is awarded in calculating entitlement to supplementary benefit. That has been the system for some time. The figure is regularly revised and the draft regulations increase it from £187 to £210. In so far as it goes, we welcome the increase. I am told that the books element is not increased in accordance with the index of book prices, but that the Department of Education and Science carries out a technical exercise every so often to attribute this so-called notional element of the student grant to various items for social security and other purposes.

We have had the advantage of the 1968 Brown report. Given the evidence submitted by the National Union of Students and the Department of Education and Science to the Select Committee on Education, Science and Arts when it considered students awards, there is a case for looking at the possibility of indexing some of the disregard elements. As the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) said, the increase required to bring the books, equipment and materials disregard in the student award up to the level recommended by the Brown committee in 1968 would be 68·5 per cent., instead of the present 12·3 per cent. There is evidence that the system of periodic reviews and investigation of the indexation of those disregards should be put on a more regular basis, or inevitably the books, equipment and materials element of the student grant will fall below the disregard portion of supplementary benefit.

It is a long time since I was at university, but to try to cover books, equipment and materials for a course such as mine — an applied science course in pharmacy at Heriot-Watt university — with £187 is a figment of the imagination of the DES. I have just paid £12·95 for a copy of the book by the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), which I do not consider to be of particularly good value, although it is an interesting book. However, if his book cost £12·95, what chance does one have of obtaining a decent scientific textbook for half that price? I hope that the Department will consider that point.

Will the Minister say what the cost of this change will be for forgone expenditure and social security? I do not think that it will cost very much, and I appreciate that it is not possible to calculate the amount this afternoon, but I should be grateful if somebody would drop me a note and explain the long-term cost of this change to the Exchequer.

The statements that were made by the Minister's predecessors about how the order would mitigate some of the other cuts in student grants rang slightly hollow. Student grants have been suffering severely and, although this increase is welcome in so far as it goes, those students who are diligently trying to do their work and equip themselves properly will still experience difficulties.

I shall now deal with regulations on residential homes. I noticed in an article in *The Guardian* last Saturday that there is a problem, of which the Department is well aware, with regard to the financing of residential care. I understand that to debate that matter would be to take the point wider than the regulations, but I hope that the Minister will consider the financing of residential care and the relationship between the private and public sectors and that between the DHSS and local authorities. We should take an early opportunity to debate at some length the longer-term policy implications of those issues.

I am worried, as is the hon. Member for Derby, South, about transitional protection. I hope that the number of people about whom we are talking with regard to transitional cover is not great. Does the Minister have any figures of how many people will be covered by the transitional protection? I should like an assurance from the Minister that they will be properly looked after.

I understand the necessity for introducing the regulations to clarify the legal position, and I welcome the amendment in so far as it is necessary. I am aware of some evidence of abuse of the system, which I think was localised. It is perfectly proper for us to guard jealously the public purse as much as possible. If the Department is making changes to prevent such abuses in the future, that is welcome.

With regard to what is happening in social work homes in south London, we must be careful that we do not accept that local authorities are the be-all and end-all of oversight. We are giving local authorities the power to oversee private residential accommodation, of which I approve, but there is evidence that some local authority homes—part III homes in England and Wales and part IV homes in Scotland—may require inspection. Who will police the provisions that are made by the local authority?

The Department of Health and Social Security should recognise that we are asking local authorities to undertake quite a lot of extra work to ensure that these new homes with four places or fewer are properly looked after. I hope that that will be taken into account with regard to the facilities that are made available to the local authority social work departments and social services departments. The Under-Secretary of State will be aware that regulations north of the border are governed by the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. Those regulations are quite different, because we have never had a restriction or deregulation of homes that have fewer than four places. The experience that has been gained in Scotland since 1968 is instructive and would bear examination. The Minister's Department would benefit from the lessons that we have learnt.

Let me now deal with the Christmas bonus. I am puzzled by the expenditure provision under the Christmas bonus head in the expenditure White Paper, Cmnd. 56-II, which was published in January 1987. I think I heard the Under-Secretary say that the total cost of the Christmas bonus this year was some £114 million. For 1987-88 the provision in the White Paper is £108 million, but it falls in 1988-89 from £108 million to £100 million, and it stays at that level for 1989-90. I cannot understand why the provision in the White Paper should fall, unless people are coming out of benefit and therefore there are fewer claimants. I hope that the Minister will explain that matter, because I cannot understandt why that should happen.

The Minister would be well advised to take the opportunity of coming fresh to his office to look back at the 1972 debates. The Government were pressed by high and spiralling inflation rates into a difficult position. I was reading the debates this morning, and I noted that some hon. Members were claiming that that position was due to the imminence of the Sutton and Cheam by-election. The Minister will know that area well because of the location of his constituency, and he will be aware that the Government lost that by-election. The position at that time was that the measure was an earnest of the Government's good intentions, that it would be a one-off payment and that it was designed to secure a prices and incomes policy with the TUC and the CBI. The 8 million people who qualified for the payment in 1972 cost the Government £80 million. It is instructive to note that in 1987 the cost is still £114 million, if that is the current figure. That speaks volumes about the way that the value of the Christmas bonus has been eroded. The figures that were supplied to me by the Library show that the value of the Christmas bonus, compared with 1972 prices, is £2·26. One cannot go very far on £2·26.

If that amount were valorised according to the retail prices index at today's prices, the Christmas bonus would amount to £44·29. That would be a significant sum of money to have and it would be welcomed by pensioners at Christmas. That is why at the last election we tried to persuade the Government to double the payment of the pension for Christmas. I realise that that would cost some £370 million in addition to the £114 million that the Government are spending, but if the payment is to be made it should be of an amount that is worth having and not the rather derisory figure of £2·26. If the Government do not take active steps to increase that amount it will simply wither on the vine and become valueless.

I remind the Under-Secretary that under the Pensioners' Payments and Social Security Act 1979, which makes the payment compulsory, the Government have the necessary power. Section 4(3) says:

> "If it appears to the Secretary of State that, having regard to the economic situation in the United Kingdom, the standard of living in the United Kingdom and such other matters as he considers relevant, the sums . . . should be larger",

he has the power to provide accordingly. There is an argument for saying that the economic situation and the standard of living in the United Kingdom call for that power to be used and for the increase to be made.

Although nobody in the House, least of all the Under-Secretary, is looking for debates on social security statutory instruments, we will lose the opportunity of rehearsing the arguments about the value of the Christmas

[Mr. Kirkwood]

bonus after the provisions of the Social Security Act 1986 come into effect and the increase is made automatically. Therefore, we should consider doubling the pension in the first week of December, rather than merely giving the amount that is provided for by the order.

I agree with the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South——

Mrs. Beckett: Derby, South.

Mr. Kirkwood: I apologise to the hon. Lady; that is a monstrous insult.

I agree with the hon. Member for Derby, South that, on the face of them, the order and the regulations do not contain heavy principles. However, I hope that I have been able to persuade the Minister that there are important underlying strands of principle that go to the heart of our social security system that require his continuous and continuing urgent attention so that we get the provisions for the under-privileged groups right in the future. I hope that he will study the remarks that have been made from both sides of the House during the debate, reflect on them and take appropriate action.

5.50 pm

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): I welcome the statement by my hon. Friend the Minister, not only for its content but for the opportunity it provides to debate all that the Government have done for the elderly, not only with pensions but with increased spending on the National Health Service and law and order. It also gives us an opportunity to contrast the Government's record with the poor record of the Labour party when it was in power, supported by the Liberal party. The Labour party indulged in the penny-pinching and did not pay the Christmas bonus at all in 1975 and 1976. The hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) glossed over that by saying that the then Labour Government had had the odd economic problem. It was because the Labour party had those economic problems that the electorate came to the conclusion that it did in 1979, 1983 and again with such resounding success in June this year, when it returned the Conservative party with such a large majority.

The economic problems cannot be glossed over. Every section of the community is equally concerned about them and will not forgive the Liberal party for having supported the Labour party when it was in power and kept it going for a year longer than it need have done.

This is an important debate. There is a record number of pensioners in this country: 10 million in total. We have the second highest proportion of elderly in the population in Europe. The figures show that there are about 15,000 pensioners in my constituency.

I understand that the cost of this measure will be £114 million. The £10 bonus was introduced by the Conservative Government in 1972 and it is to be welcomed. The promises that were made by the Labour party are hollow. It promised £5 extra on the pension for a single person and £8 for a couple. That seems to be nothing but a cruel deceit because it did nothing to enhance the prospects for the poorest pensioners who are dependent on supplementary benefit and would not have benefited by an increase in the basic pension. It showed a failure to understand the importance of controlling public spending and targeting it on those who are most in need.

Surely this Government's provisions are right. The standard of living of pensioners should depend not on the basic pension alone but upon occupational pensions as well. I remind Opposition Members that over 50 per cent. of pensioners now have occupational pensions and in the future we can expect that figure to rise to 70 per cent. or more as it relates to the current position of pensioners who have just reached pensionable age. Surely it is better to target any other funds on those who are most in need by ensuring that they have sufficient supplementary benefit.

There has been an increase in the level of benefit and the real standard of living of the poorest in our population. The figures quoted by my hon. Friend the Minister show that pensioners are no longer the poorest in our society to the extent that they were. We can take great comfort from the fact that the Government are targeting resources so that we can see the increase in the standard of living spread throughout the community.

We know that pensioners have benefited more than any other section of the community in their standard of living. It was wrong of the *Daily Mirror* to print an article that seemed to suggest that this country's pensions were the lowest. In fact, our spending on the elderly is the third highest in Europe, after France and Denmark, and we should have a table printed, at least in *The Sun* if not in the *Daily Mirror*, which makes that clear to as many people as possible.

I should like to echo the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight) who referred to law and order. Spending on other areas is important to pensioners. The latest figures I have show that 13,000 people aged 60 or over were victims of attempted murder, wounding, assault, rape, robbery or theft from the person. It is important that the Government make adequate provision in that area. The size of the police force has been increased by 10,000 officers already and there are plans to recruit a further 3,000 officers over the next few years. I press the Government on the importance of implementing those plans and ensuring that we have 3,000 more bobbies on the beat.

Our record contrasts strongly with that of the Labour party which presided over a police force whose morale as well as its numbers was collapsing. The officers just sat in panda cars and did not go out on the beat.

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): That is a remarkable diatribe from the hon. Gentleman. He has to face up to the fact, even if he wants to play party politics, that we have a serious crime wave in this country. Many of the victims are elderly people. If we take politics out of the issue and start talking seriously, the hon. Gentleman would do far better by urging his Front Bench to look at it as a real issue and not sit back complacently and pretend that something realistic is being done. Crime has doubled under this Government.

Mr. Thurnham: I am surprised at the hon. Gentleman making such an intervention. He should be addressing his remarks to the Manchester city police committee, which has done nothing but damn the neighbourhood watch schemes that have been introduced so successfully in other areas. I press him to see that more neighbourhood watch schemes are introduced in Manchester. It has been shown that they are of great benefit and comfort to people. They not only help with the reduction of crime and provide a greater feeling of security and safety; they also bring

people together and introduce neighbours to one another in a way that can be particularly helpful to senior members of the community.

I should like to draw attention to Government spending on the NHS. A total of 40 per cent. of the spending is for old age pensioners. There has been a considerable increase in the number of operations relating to elderly people. For instance, the number of cataract operations has risen from 38,000 in 1978 to 55,000 in 1984, with a target of 70,000 for 1990. I am pleased to see that in Bolton many of the operations are now being conducted in the private sector, paid for by the NHS, because they are done more cheaply in the private sector. Similarly, the number of hip replacement operations has increased from 28,000 in 1978 to 38,000 in 1984, with a declared target of 48,000 for 1990. That shows how much the Government are doing in making extra provision for the elderly.

Mr. Peter Pike (Burnley): We seem to be moving away from the subject of the debate. How can the hon. Gentleman explain the situation in a health authority not that far from his constituency — Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale? It is closing hospitals and transferring work to the private sector, to a private hospital called Gisburne park hospital, which has made a loss—

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. We are straying far from the terms of the debate. I ask hon. Members to keep to the terms of the debate, of which they are perfectly aware.

Mr. Thurnham: Spending on the NHS is up by 26 per cent. in real terms since the Labour party was in power. That is evidence of the care that the Government provide for the elderly.

The provision of occupational pensions is a valuable feature of what is being done by the Government to ensure that the standard of living of pensioners is high. That is why we are not simply calling for pensions to be increased across the board. With 10 million pensioners, the cost of doing that would be absolutely prodigious.

I much prefer to see spending targeted at those who need it most, including the disabled for whom spending has been substantially increased, and an increase in the number of home helps. My figures show that the number of home helps has risen by over 14 per cent. since 1979. That is the way in which the elderly can be kept at home where they want to stay. They will not be made to leave home because of a lack of care, facilities and personal social services. Since 1979, spending on personal social services has risen in real terms by over 20 per cent. For those who are unable to live on their own, there are now over 220,000 places in residential homes, compared with only 180,000 in 1979.

The figures show that the Government are spending and caring more for the elderly. The people were right to elect the Government to care for the elderly and not pay attention to the Opposition's false promises.

6 pm

Mr. Michael Stern (Bristol, North-West): It is always a pleasure to follow my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham), given our knowledge of the work that he has done for the handicapped. It is equally pleasurable to follow the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood). He reintroduced one of the dottier ideas that surfaced briefly during the recent election campaign. No doubt he has said a fond farewell to it before it is buried in the graveyard that is specially reserved for Liberal policies that are tried out and shot down as quickly as they appear.

The idea that anyone on benefit should receive an extra week's payment instead of a fixed amount of Christmas bonus seems to be designed to appeal to nobody except the administrators, who would clap their hands in glee at the extra jobs that would be created for them. It should be clear that a fixed payment to a discrete group will be rather easier to administer than a variable payment of about 100 or so different rates that, in the case of some pensions, would start at 5p per week. I wonder what a pensioner will say when he is told that his £10 annual payment will be replaced by 5p. We will end up with a system that benefits virtually no one other than administrators but is designed to be seen to be doing something different.

The hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) accused the Government of being penny-pinching. We frequently hear Opposition Members make that accusation. Just as the hon. Lady chided my hon. Friend the Minister—and all of us are delighted to welcome him to his new post—I briefly chide her. She should be wary of sounding too much like her senior colleague the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) in greeting every social security announcement that is made by the Government with a cry of woe and disaster, saying that it is the last straw that will destroy for ever the hopes of all pensioners.

The hon. Lady accused the Government of penny-pinching because they recognise the need for a calendar. If an annual payment is made on a particular day of the week, we shall allow it to slip back one day, or sometimes two days, per year. If we do not correct that, we shall end up with a Christmas bonus being paid in August. Alternatively, we must take the action that the Government have proposed, which is periodically to step in and correct the malfunction in the calendar.

It is unfair to accuse the Government of penny-pinching. That accusation has been made twice today. This morning I saw it in a newspaper, the name of which I shall not quote because I should not want my constituents to know that I read that newspaper. In ringing terms, it made the accusation that the sole purpose of adjusting the date of the Christmas bonus was for the Government to save money. That accusation needs to be looked at in more detail. The Christmas bonus, whether it be paid on 3 or 10 December, will either be saved or spent by pensioners. If it is spent, pensioners will lose nothing. Indeed, experience of previous Christmases shows that very often the later that money is spent, the better the the value that is received, as many shops attempt to cash in on Christmas trade by lowering prices just before or after Christmas.

Let us assume the worst case: that a pensioner decides to save his or her Christmas bonus. At that point, one may say, "The Government are penny-pinching because the Christmas bonus is being paid a week later." Where is the vast loss to pensioners? We are talking about a sum of £10 that is paid one week late. If we assume that that money will be invested at an average rate of 10 per cent. a year, by having that money a week later, the loss to each pensioner is 2p before tax.

Mr. Tim Boswell (Daventry): Does my hon. Friend agree that the global calculation also shows that the maximum possible loss to the Government will be one

[Mr. Tim Boswell]

week's interest on the total £114 million that is paid out, which, in turn, on any realistic assumption, comes to well under £1 million?

Mr. Stern: My hon. Friend is entirely right. We are still dealing with an Opposition who would rather accuse the Government of crime upon crime — that is, saving money—than look instead at sensible administration of the social security budget at virtually no cost to anybody.

My hon. Friend the Minister is right—indeed, there is broad all-party agreement on the matter—to welcome the regulations relating to supplementary benefit for small residential care homes. I am sure that he will agree that it is a small step in a minefield that still needs a great deal of attention. The relationship between residential homes —it is irrelevant whether we talk about publicly-owned, privately-owned or voluntary residential homes — patients, and various aspects of the benefit system is complex and mistakes are frequently made.

In my constituency, an excellent voluntary home called Cherry Orchards is run by the Camphill Community. I have a great deal of admiration for it. Unlike many homes in the public and private sectors, it has a niche in the provision of care of patients who are so physically and mentally disabled that it is almost impossible to fit them into any other similar home. Such organisations are to be praised for taking on the most difficult task in that respect. That community home found itself in an impossible position in terms of benefits. For totally valid reasons— I do not wish to be seen in any way to be denigrating the highly professional work of the Department of Health and Social Security in the county of Avon—it could not pick up the benefits to which many of its patients were entitled because it was not able to work through the bureaucratic elements of gaining the necessary registration and, therefore, being eligible under the regulations for the payment of benefit.

I urge my hon. Friend, during the fruitful period that he will spend in the Department, to look again at many of the regulations that affect the relationship between all sectors of residential care and the benefit system to try to find ways to publicise the benefits that are available and the ease of access to them so that we can make sure that the will of Parliament is not frustrated by over-complex regulations that ensure that benefits are not available when they are needed.

I remind my hon. Friend of another case about which I am currently in correspondence with the Department and which makes the same point in a different way. In this case, which relates to attendance allowance, a respected pillar of the community is about to be sued by the Department as a result of an entirely understandable mistake in relation to the regulations. I appeal to my hon. Friend the Minister to stop the damage before it is too late.

With regard to the student grant disregard, there can be no greater praise for the Government's proposal than the fact, cited by the hon. Member for Derby, South, that the National Union of Students disapproves of the change. In welcoming the order, I remind my hon. Friend the Minister of the very much greater task that awaits him. It has been common policy throughout the House for a long time that in considering student support we should be moving away from dependence on benefit towards a knowledge of the income to which a student is entitled. I hope that the order is but the first stage in the rationalisation of provision for students promised by the Government in the course of this Parliament — a promise that was universally attacked by the Opposition parties in the general election.

I hope that this will be one of the last orders to be considered in relation to benefit payments for students, not because students should not receive benefits but because the benefit system was never designed to deal with student support. The quicker we move away from the benefit system acting as part of student support, the easier it will be to achieve the much-needed rationalisation of student support and of the benefit system.

6.12 pm

Mr. Tim Boswell (Daventry): I begin by joining in the plaudits to my hon. Friend the Member for Enfield, Southgate (Mr. Portillo) on his maiden appearance at the Dispatch Box. I use the term "hon. Friend" advisedly, as he and I had the honour and privilege of serving the Government some years ago as special advisers. To mix metaphors a little, my hon. Friend may feel that he has leapt from the boiler room into the frying pan.

During my election campaign in a widely scattered and mixed community, I was surprised at the large number of small residential care homes and activities, in addition to those of which I knew already, which form an important part both of social provision in the area and of the economic life of the rural villages. Indeed, that type of activity may be a more appropriate use and creator of employment in small settlements than, for example, small industrial estates.

My second and substantial point in this regard is that tightening the regulations for supplementary benefit in homes below registration level may, by a side wind, achieve the improvement in standards that we all wish to see. In my view, therefore, it is a move forward.

I am pleased to refer to the Christmas bonus, for two reasons. First, Conservative Members can do so with a clear conscience because, ever since 1972, when we introduced the bonus, whenever we have been in power with the opportunity to pay the bonus we have done so. As is well known, the Labour Government failed to do so on two occasions, whatever excuses the Opposition may advance today. Secondly, I was a prospective parliamentary candidate in 1972. The House may consider that I have finally reached this place after a rather long resting period. I was foremost in pressing for the introduction of a Christmas bonus to meet a social need. In that regard, I merely comment that if one casts one's bread on the waters, it may return after many days.

With regard to the substance of the order, I hope that Ministers will not rest on their laurels, as there are important considerations to be taken forward for the future. Whatever the Christmas bonus was in 1972 or has been since, it is no longer the same in effect as it was when it was introduced, because life has marched on. The hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) referred to the powerful impact of inflation. I must agree that if in 1972 we had offered pensioners £2·28 they would not particularly have thanked us.

The value of the bonus is therefore not what is was. Moreover, the absolute and unchanging level of the bonus has been accompanied not only by increases in state retirement pension and other state benefits but by the explosion in occupational pension schemes, leading to a

higher general income level for pensioners. The proportionate cost, merit and benefit of the bonus has thus been reduced by that factor, too.

There is also the relentless march of administrative costs. Perhaps my hon. Friend the Minister will give details of the relative cost of paying out this fixed bonus. I believe that there is a strong advantage in its tax status and in the fact that it is a lump sum rather than a graduated amount subject to deductions. Nevertheless, the administrative cost must be rising proportionately year by year. In that context, it is appropriate to consider what might be done about the bonus in the future. The order locks it in for now, but I hope that it will not close our minds to what could be done later.

During the election campaign, the pensioners for whom I felt most strongly and who felt that they were in greatest difficulty were those just above supplementary benefit level. Those who had very small savings or occupational pensions, especially if they retired some years ago, did not wish to plunge into the full cover of supplementary pension, if indeed they were entitled to do so, but they felt that they were under pressure and to some extent excluded from recent developments. A large reason for this has been the Government's success in containing inflation. I suspect that, if the 40p per week had been paid as part of an enhanced Christmas bonus, we might have received more thanks from those quarters.

The costs of pension provision are now so huge that it is only honest for the Government to commit themselves to the realistic target of maintaining a link with prices. On my calculation, which may be shaky, the increase of a million pensioners since 1979 has contributed an increased annual cost to the Treasury of some £2 billion in retirement pensions alone. In other words, if the numbers had not increased, pensions might have been increased by between £4 and £5 per week. That must be a powerful consideration for anyone making sweeping proposals for a major increase in the weekly pension.

The Christmas bonus provides a useful opportunity for flexibility. If we are saying that pensioners get protection from prices through their retirement pensions, it may be appropriate in the future to consider giving, through the medium of the Christmas bonus, some kind of bonus or social dividend reflecting the increase in prosperity in the country in due course restoring it to a more appropriate level. Therefore, it becomes not a problem for us but, I hope, an opportunity.

In the light of the changes that have taken place since the benefit was introduced in 1972, I argue that the Government Front Bench should consider, in cricket parlance, either hitting out or getting out. In my experience, those who are prepared and go out and hit usually succeed in getting the ball to the boundary.

6.20 pm

Mr. Portillo: We have had a most interesting debate and I would like to thank the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) for her kind remarks and for treating me with kid gloves on my first outing. I also thank other hon. Members from both sides of the House for their kind remarks. I would particularly like to welcome my hon. Friend the Member for Daventry (Mr. Boswell), who is new to the House, and thank him for his kind remarks. I have noticed that in five weeks he has already spoken perhaps more than some Members speak in five years. We have certainly heard some of his eloquence today, and he will make an important contribution here.

I will try to deal with the points that have arisen under the three headings that we are debating—student grants, residential care and the Christmas bonus. I deal first of all with those points that were made about student grants. The hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) asked me about the method by which the disregard in respect of books and equipment is calculated, and why we chose to increase it from £187 to £210. At the risk of appearing to shuffle the question off to another Department, I am informed by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science that the amount of the grant which it is reasonable for the Department of Health to regard as paid to help with the purchase of books and equipment and the precise level for that element of the grant are matters for the Department of Education and Science. I am sure that officers in his Department will be interested to read my hon. Friend's remarks.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, North-West (Mr. Stern) was concerned about proceeding with the aim of removing students from benefit. I remind him that the review under my hon. Friend the Member for Wantage (Mr. Jackson) on that subject continues. Doubtless he will be interested to read the conclusions of that review. It is likely that there will be cases—for example, students who are married to supplementary benefit or income support claimants—where it may be necessary to have some disregard in respect of books and equipment such as we have been discussing today.

I turn now to the subject of residential care homes, which attracted the largest number of questions today. The hon. Member for Derby, South was concerned about the categories of client and whether the adjudication officer would be drawn into making judgments in those matters. The best I can say to her is that inevitably adjudication officers will be drawn into making judgments that will be difficult for them to make. However, what we are doing today improves the situation. It at least gives a clear basis on which the adjudication officer can begin to make some of those judgments. I hope that she will recognise that, although we are not moving into a perfect world, at least we are improving on where we are today.

I congratulate the hon. Lady on the diligent way that she researched those orders and regulations and found all sorts of points and queries to raise. She also wanted to know whether it was intended that the transitional protection would apply only where a decision had already been made by an adjudication officer and what would happen if it was under appeal. The whole intention is to protect people who are already receiving money and who would therefore suffer some loss from the application of the rules from a particular date.

Where the award has not yet been made or is under appeal, the money has not been awarded and there is no loss of income. We are concerned that people do not lose financially. We do not want people, as it were, turned out on the street. That is our prority in all this. I would also ask her to share the thought with me that, if we insist that care should be provided in residential homes with fewer than four residents, that in itself is a considerable step forward. It is not quite apparent to me that allowing people to slip under the net, as it were, would be of benefit to the residents.

[Mr. Portillo]

The hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire was concerned that changes in respect of small homes would mean extra work for local authorities. That is not quite right, because what we are talking about is the work that is done by DHSS adjudication officers. They are the people who are concerned with making judgments as to whether payment should be made in respect of the care received in a small home. As I said in answer to the hon. Lady, we are making their work simpler, not more difficult.

I had a feeling that the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire was raising a more general point—whether we should now bring small residential homes with fewer than four residents into a registered system. That is debatable. There is certainly an argument for that and I know that a number of hon. Members believe that quite strongly. If the hon. Member is concerned about the work load on local authorities, there would be grave implications in bringing small homes into a registered system. At any rate, it cannot be the intention or the effect of supplementary benefit regulations to bring about a registration system, by proxy, as it were. That is really what we are debating today. If standards are to be laid down for small residential homes, they should apply to all small homes and to all residents, not just to homes with residents who claim supplementary benefit—who are the only people that we can address through the regulations today.

A practical point is that adjudication officers do not have the necessary expertise to make judgments about proper standards of care, which is what would be involved if we tried, through the regulations, to impose a registered system. I explored that with the hon. Member for Derby, South. We shall have to await further developments. We are today laying in the Library the conclusions of the joint central and local government working party on supplementary benefit and residential care. That report, which may be of interest to my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, North-West, recommends a simplified form of registration to be introduced for small homes. However, those recommendations need to be considered in turn by the community care review being undertaken by Sir Roy Griffiths, so we may need to hold our horses in that respect.

Another point made by the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire was that the House should have an opportunity to discuss the long-term arrangements for the financing of residential care. My hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, North-West was very close on that point. I think that they will both find the report laid in the Library today of great interest.

Mr. Kirkwood: Will we debate it?

Mr. Portillo: The hon. Gentleman will doubtless find an opportunity to bring that about, should he wish.

The hon. Member for Derby, South made a series of interesting points of detail. I shall try to respond to as many of them as I can. She asked whether, if people went into hospital, that would affect their benefit. It is intended that there should be no loss to them provided that the person's stay in hospital is only temporary. In addition, they may get a retaining fee while they are in hospital to enable their place in the home to be kept free. The definition of "temporary" is normally up to one year, but again it would be up to an adjudication officer to judge the circumstances that apply in a particular case.

I fear that I am unable to help the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire about how many people will be affected by the transitional arrangements. We intend to go back to the original policy. We think that most small homes which are currently regarded as equivalent to a registered home will meet the new requirements, which would tend to show a fairly small effect.

The hon. Member for Derby, South made an interesting point about religious orders. The answer seems to be that for these purposes we would regard those in religious orders as being employed or self-employed. I am grateful to the hon. Lady for raising that point. The adjudication officer would then wish to judge whether the person, whether in a religious order or not, had the relevant experience.

The hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire raised a point of great topicality when he asked who polices the local authority provision for the elderly. The local authorities have the statutory responsibility for monitoring and ensuring adequate standards in their homes. In limited circumstances the social services inspectorate has powers of entry. We are in discussion with representatives of local authorities about the social services inspectorate's programme of work designed to help authorities to improve the standard of care in homes.

Dame Jill Knight: Some local authorities are not particularly sympathetic to the point made by the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) about religious homes. They will tend to cut grants if the home takes, say, only Roman Catholics. If a person is in need of care——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I do not see how that arises under this order.

Mr. Portillo: My hon. Friend makes an interesting point, none the less, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has heard it.

Let me offer a word of apology to the hon. Member for Derby, South. She has apparently uncovered a leaflet which refers to the date for the introduction of the £10 Christmas bonus. I have also discovered that leaflet, because I have, I hope, done my research as diligently as she has. It should have said that that was subject to parliamentary approval. I apologise to the hon. Lady and the House.

The hon. Lady has made much of the point in this morning's newspapers and during the debate that we are in some way penny-pinching by changing the date. I do not wish to embarrass her, but let me read out the record during the period when she was in office. She reminded us that she was first a Government Whip. In 1975 and 1976, nothing was paid. In 1977, payment was made in the week beginning 5 December and in 1978 payment was made in the week beginning 4 December. There cannot really be a great point of principle between paying it in the week beginning 5 December, as under the previous Government, and paying it in the week beginning 7 December, as is proposed today.

The hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire raised two points about the public expenditure White Paper on which I should like to help. The £108 million figure which he quoted covers paying the bonus to

retirement pensioners only; it does not include the additional sum for the other categories who receive it, including war widows, recipients of invalid care allowance and so on. The £100 million figure which he mentioned is because for future years the estimates are rounded to the nearest £100 million, so that is not a significant figure. We are expecting the number of beneficiaries to increase, so the sum of money will rise correspondingly. However, the figures for future years are calculated to the nearest £100 million.

My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight) treated the debate broadly and interestingly and set the £10 bonus in its context. For example, she mentioned the meals service. I am pleased to be able to tell her that the number of meals served has increased substantially since 1979, to nearly 43 million at a cost of £32 million.

I take it that the hon. Member for Derby, South accepted my figures showing the increase in pensioners' living standards, but she said that that was all due to the introduction of SERPS. I must dispute that strongly, because it does not seem to hold water. The hon. Lady will know from her constituency experience that the contribution of SERPS to pensioners' living standards is, for the moment, small. She was resting her case upon the effect of SERPS on the occupational pension sector. Even so, it is early days for such an effect, if there has been one, to come through. She must face the fact that the increase has been largely due to the increase in the value of pensioners' savings as a direct result of the lower rate of inflation, which has been the big contrast between the period when she held office and the period since 1987.

In a moment of tremendous candour, the hon. Lady said that the Christmas bonus had not been payable under Labour because the country was broke. She did not actually use that expression, but that was the general flavour of what she was saying. None the less, she seemed keen that we should have kept SERPS in a unreformed state, presumably to guarantee that by the year 2030 or 2050 the country would again be broke and unable to pay the bonuses.

Mrs. Beckett: I am glad that the Minister made that point. He is quite right that, with not only candour but accuracy, I acknowledged that there were substantial economic problems when we last held power. Unfortunately, the remedy of North sea oil was not available to help us to tackle those problems—a remedy which has existed for 95 per cent. of the Government's tenure of office. Given all that has been said during the recent election campaign about how successful the economy now is, why have the Government not only not increased the Christmas bonus since 1979 but said—in his words in this debate—that they have no intention of doing so in the lifetime of this Parliament?

Mr. Portillo: Britain's prosperity is based on much more than North sea oil. That is borne out by the fact that, since the value of North sea oil has fallen by half, Britain's prosperity has continued to grow. It is the increase in revenue from a variety of taxes, reflecting the better performance of the economy, that has enabled us to do so well and to increase the benefits paid to the elderly by 29 per cent. in real terms since we came to office. I was at some pains to explain in my opening remarks that the total condition of the elderly and their income and receipts is the relevant factor, and we do not regard it as the best use of public money to increase the Christmas bonus. As far as I know, the hon. Lady is of the same opinion because the Labour party's manifesto contained no proposal to increase the Christmas bonus. I thought that we were in agreement on that, and I see some nodding of heads.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): A few moments ago my hon. Friend reminded the House of something that the Labour party did not do in December 1976—it did not pay a Christmas bonus. But does my hon. Friend recall something which the Labour party did do in December 1976? Was it not on 15 December 1976 that the famous letter was written by the then Chancellor to Dr. Johannes Witteveen promising a continuing and substantial reduction in public expenditure, a promise which was forced

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Be that as it may, it is nothing to do with the order before the House.

Mr. Portillo: I take it that my hon. Friend was simply speaking in support of the hon. Member for Derby, South in her point about the country being broke in 1976 and 1977.

My hon. Friend the Member for Edgbaston made an interesting point, which is frequently made, about those just above supplementary benefit level who find that the sudden cut-offs are a disadvantage. I do not believe that the situation is exactly as my hon. Friend described. People can receive help for prescription and dental charges and for their spectacles even if they are not on supplementary benefit. In the new proposals for income support we have tackled the question of the capital disregard and my hon. Friend the Member for Edgbaston would approve of that. That reduces the cliff-edge distinction between one level of income and another.

During the debate we have heard a certain amount about what the Labour party would have done if it had been in office. The most important contribution that the Government have made to helping pensioners has been our success in controlling inflation. It was therefore very sad and distressing, especially to elderly people, when last month the Labour party and the alliance went to the electorate offering nothing less than a return to the high inflation rates of the 1970s.

Mr. Kirkwood: No.

Mr. Portillo: The hon. Gentleman may protest, presumably because he remembers that the alliance was hard to pin down on that point. It commissioned a report from Coopers and Lybrand on the effect of its economic policies, but that report conveniently ignored the effect on the rate of inflation. Fortunately, another respected City firm, Cazenove, informed the debate with its independent forecast of 12 per cent. inflation by 1990 as a result of alliance policies.

The Labour party proved itself indifferent to the level of inflation. The Leader of the Opposition said on "Panorama" that there would be a "temporary surge" in inflation taking the rate up to "say, 7 per cent."

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. This has nothing to do with the order before the House. I hope that the Minister will confine himself to the order.

Mr. Portillo: I was trying to put the £10 bonus in the context of the cost of living which pensioners must face

[Mr. Portillo]

I remind the House that more than 70 per cent. of pensioners have an income from savings, while more than half have occupational pensions. Since 1979, the average value of pensioners' incomes from those savings has increased by more than half. Nothing in decades has done as much harm to pensioners as the inflationary surge that occurred under the previous Labour Government. Nothing is more important to the financial welfare of retired people than what the present Government have done to bring down inflation to its lowest level for 20 years. Against that background, and in that context, I commend the order to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Pensioners' Lump Sum Payments Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 7th July, be approved.

SUPPLEMENTARY BENEFIT

Resolved,

That the draft Supplementary Benefit (Requirements and Resources) Amendment Regulations 1987, which were laid before this House on 9th July, be approved. — *[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

Hovercraft

6.42 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Peter Bottomley): I beg to move,

That the draft Hovercraft (Civil Liability) (Amendment) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 9th July, be approved.

I am sure that the House would like to know that I am a great expert on hovercraft. I travel on them, and most of my family seem to operate, service or own them.

I trust that the order will be non-controversial. Its purpose is to increase the limit of liability for operators of hovercraft, as currently prescribed in the Hovercraft (Civil Liability) Order 1986, in respect of claims made against them arising from the death or personal injury of passengers carried by hovercraft. The hovercraft liability regime is somewhat different from that for ships. However, the maximum for passenger liability for death or personal injury is derived from the Athens convention. The draft order seeks to increase the present liability limit to £80,009, in line with the increase introduced on 1 June under the Athens convention for ships. In that respect, the order restores parity between the two types of transport.

The terms of the Athens convention have been applied under United Kingdom law since 1977 and the convention entered into force internationally on 28 April this year. The tragic loss of the Herald of Free Enterprise on 6 March brought the convention into sharp focus. The Government subsequently announced their decision to use the right given in the Athens convention to increase the limit of death or injury liability for sea passengers carried by United Kingdom carriers to £80,009. As the House is aware, that increase came into effect on 1 June.

It is appropriate that this revised limit should be extended to hovercraft to maintain the link with vessels. The draft order does no more and no less than that.

6.44 pm

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): This will be a short, but important, debate. As the Minister has explained, we are still living very consciously with the memory of the disaster at Zeebrugge. While the order simply brings parity between hovercraft and shipping, and to that extent the Opposition do not disagree with the principle, it allows us to examine more generally the principles upon which compensation is based.

Compensation is important for the victims and the relatives of victims of disasters whether involving hovercraft, ships or any other form of transportation. There is a fair degree of inconsistency at the moment between different forms of travel and the levels of compensation available. There is an issue of principle there.

There is a wider-ranging issue which involves the reasons that lie behind imposing a limitation upon the liability of carriers. An argument can be put—and I will advance it—that levels of compensation for shipping or hovercraft are lower than is necessary or acceptable. We all recognise the need to drive for ever-increasing safety. Safety on hovercraft or on other forms of transport cannot be achieved simply by imposing financial liabilities on the carrier, although we accept that it is important that there should be an adequate number of marine surveyors. Indeed, the Opposition argue that we do not have enough

of them. It is also important that there is adequate trade union representation on hovercraft. That issue is in dispute at the moment between the National Union of Seamen and Sealink. The existence of some system of liability is important to ensure that financial penalties are imposed on carriers if they do not conform to acceptable safety standards. That is important as a means of reassuring the public, especially when a perception arises that recently profits may have been put before the lives and safety of passengers.

We do not in any sense disagree with the view that compensation liability should exist. The difficulty lies in deciding what limits we should impose. The Athens convention, as I understand it — I am sure that the Minister will correct me if I am wrong—remains at the lower level of £38,000 with regard to foreign carriers transporting United Kingdom passengers in United Kingdom waters. The higher level of £80,000 has been introduced only for domestic carriers. At that level, we accept that we must approve of the principle that brings hovercraft into line with shipping. We agree with the Government there. However, the difficulty lies in deciding whether the limit of £80,000 is enough.

In a debate in Standing Committee in March this year, the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport informed the Committee that he intended to go to the International Maritime Organisation and pursue a demand that the legal committee should examine and increase the limits on liabilities. Will the Minister tell us what happened at the June meeting of the IMO? It is important that we are told that adequate representations were made to increase the limits. If the Minister has the information, can he tell us how the United Kingdom compares with other countries in western Europe and the United States in terms of liability? Will he examine the question why we need to impose limitations at all? I accept that we have ratified the convention, that we are stuck with it, and that it states that we must impose the limits set out in the convention.

More generally, in relation to compensation, if, for example, I were to walk out of the House and were run over by a motor car, I would have an opportunity to sue through the courts. It would then be for our courts to determine the level of compensation, not in an arbitrary fashion, but on the basis of the principles that govern compensation claims and damages. The court would examine the circumstances, needs and entitlements of the victim. In the long run, is that not the system that we ought to pursue?

The position now is that, whatever level of compensation is laid down as a limit, it is open to challenge. Air travellers find themselves governed by international conventions and limited to a figure roughly the same as that for shipping – about £80,000. At least there is parity there. I can understand the logic of the £80,000 figure in bringing shipping and hovercraft to the same level as aircraft. However, in international conventions on rail travel, the limit on compensation is £56,108. It is totally separate and arbitrary. Under protocols for road traffic, the figure is £66,795, although the protocols are not yet in force. Again, those figures are literally plucked from the air.

I hope that the Minister will accept my next point as a serious one. In the British courts we have recently seen an award of damages of £1·2 million to a young man who suffered injury and was able to sue those involved in the medical profession. Whatever argument we advance about acceptable levels of compensation, the fact is that awards of £200,000 or £300,000 are not uncommon. The limit of £80,000 for compensation for those who are severely injured or for the dependants of those who are killed in accidents of the kind that might take place on hovercraft is punitive relative to the compensation that might be obtained through the British courts. There is a serious anomaly there and I should like to hear the Minister's views on whether we ought to pursue unlimited compensation under international conventions.

I accept that as signatories to the present convention we are bound by the limits, but it is important to accept that we should pursue limits considerably higher than those that operate at the moment. The Opposition do not disagree with the Government about the limit to be applied to hovercraft. There is considerable sense in making sure that hovercraft are tied to the same protocols and limitations as apply to shipping. The argument is not that hovercraft should be treated as a special case, but that the whole area of levels of compensation is important for victims and dependants. As things stand, those levels are not high enough. I ask the Minister to place on record his own views on those issues.

6.53 pm

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I thank the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) for his welcome of the draft order. He raised a number of issues, some of which I do not want to go into in detail. It is worth saying that international conventions generally lead to uniform regimes that have the effect of guaranteeing users and, in particular, employees standards of protection and compensation. They also give a degree of assurance to operators that the expenses and other difficulties that they have to meet in achieving those standards are also faced by competing ship owners or operators in other countries.

Although I accept the common sense of the hon. Gentleman's points about unrestricted liability, having a restriction on liability makes it more likely that people will have the insurance cover required or will be able to face claims arising out of the sort of incidents that we witnessed recently in shipping and that we see occasionally in aviation. We have also seen such accidents involving hovercraft, but on very rare occasions.

The point worth making about international comparisons is that we are the only country to classify hovercraft as a distinct type of vehicle. Most other countries using hovercraft classify them as ships, but in fact most other countries do not operate hovercraft. We have a slightly mixed regime for hovercraft because of the way in which we classify them. I am sure that if we were starting from scratch we might argue, as the hon. Gentleman suggested, for rather greater natural uniformity between different forms of transport. However, given the way that international conventions have grown over the years, the hon. Gentleman will understand that it is not necessarily the best return for effort to try to get all the people involved in the conventions for aircraft to come together with the people involved in the conventions for shipping and, perhaps, to try to get others who do not operate hovercraft to come in as well. Perhaps a greater return for effort comes from taking the opportunities that we have on domestic liability – the point that the hon. Gentleman was asking about.

[Mr. Peter Bottomley]

The hon. Gentleman asked about the International Maritime Organisation. When my hon. Friend the Member for Worcestershire, South (Mr. Spicer), then Under-Secretary of State for Transport, announced the decision to increase the limit for United Kingdom carriers, we said that we intended to ask the International Maritime Organisation to undertake an urgent review of the Athens convention and the related 1976 convention on the limitation of liability for marine claims. The recent council meeting of the International Maritime Organisation responded immediately to our proposal, and it was supported by a number of other member states. The IMO has agreed to an early review of the Athens convention and related issues. That is welcome.

On behalf of the House, I thank the hon. Gentleman for allowing us the chance of this short debate. Other issues go slightly wider than the order, but the House may be able to return to them. We are doing well in this instance by raising the limit of liability for travellers in the United Kingdom-operated hovercraft.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved

That the draft Hovercraft (Civil Liability) (Amendment) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 9th July, be approved.

Telecommunications Technology

6.58 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate and Consumer Affairs (Mr. Francis Maude): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of European Community Document Nos. 5876/85, 5876/85 Add 1, and the Department of Trade and Industry's Supplementary Explanatory Memorandum of 30th September 1985, and No. 10277/86 on Community research and development in the field of telecommunications technologies (RACE); and supports Her Majesty's Government's intention to agree to the early adoption of Community legislation with a view to stimulating co-operation at Community level in the field of telecommunications technology.

This debate is timely. I am pleased to be able to inform the House that today political agreement to the Community's five-year research and development framework programme has been reached on the terms proposed by the Prime Minister at the June European Council. I understand that the programme is likely to be adopted at the Budget Council tomorrow. RACE, which we are now debating, and, indeed, other major initiatives such as the second stage of ESPRIT, which are also part of the overall framework programme, are therefore set to move forward very soon. The reason for this debate is to enable the final decision on the main phase of RACE to be taken before the House reassembles.

The full title of the RACE programme is research in advanced communications technologies in Europe. Its goal is a system communications link based on optical fibres for both home and office, and it can be used for broadcasting or communications, or, indeed, for both together. It would move us forward into the era, some time in the mid-1990s, when telecommunications and broadcasting technologies converge on a common delivery method.

The programme was initiated by the Council of Ministers in 1984 as a key element of the Community's response to the worldwide technological revolution in telecommunications. It reflected a belief among all member states that action on long-term research and development in telecommunications at the Community level was needed if the industry was to be able to meet the challenges of the digital age in the 1990s and beyond and match competition from the USA and Japan.

The research and development effort and the level of funding necessary to develop, and get into the market place, which is important, low-cost high quality equipment to meet telecommunications needs in Europe until the end of the century, given the growing complexity of technological options, are beyond the capacity of even the biggest national telecommunications equipment suppliers in Europe acting on their own. Moreover, it would clearly not make commercial sense for either network operators or equipment manufacturers to commit themselves on their own to such large investments in long-term projects, some of which, in the nature of things, will fail to produce a worthwhile return or, in some cases, any return at all.

Therefore, RACE is directed towards pre-competitive research and development. Its aim is collaborative research through Europe in advanced telecommunication technologies to pave the way for the integrated digital telecommunications networks of the 1990s. The objective is to strengthen the Community's equipment manufacturers and network operators by encouraging them to

invest now in the research and development that will be vital to their future success in meeting world competition in this fast-moving area. Only with such investment now will operators be able to offer users in Europe the access that they will demand to advanced, but competitive, services. The availability of such advanced telecommunications technology and the assurance that Europe can keep pace with the rest of the world are crucial to European economies.

RACE was set in motion by a decision of the Council in July 1985. Details were given in explanatory memoranda which were laid before the House. They explained that the aim of the RACE programme should comprise two phases. The first was the definition phase, to establish clear objectives and priorities. The second was the main phase, in which the R and D would actually be undertaken, and then evaluated in readiness for commercial applications.

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): Will the Minister be kind enough to enlighten the House as to when that decision was first taken? What was the time scale, and what was the date at which it aimed to have phases 1 and 2 in operation?

Mr. Maude: The aim was that the definition phase would last until the end of 1986, as it did, and that the main phase of RACE would start as soon as possible thereafter.

Mr. Ashdown *rose*—

Mr. Maude: If the hon. Gentleman will be patient I shall deal in due course with the aspect that I suspect he is about to raise. If I do not deal with it, I shall give way later.

The first part of the main phase is scheduled to run from around the end of this year until 1992. The second part of the main phase will follow on.

The definition phase began with analytical work, carried out mainly by the network operators in Europe, to formulate an outline specification for Community-wide integrated broad band communications, commonly known in the business as IBC. It would then be possible to explore the various options which would need to be pursued in depth to achieve the most cost-effective solutions and to identify the standards which would be necessary.

IBC will enable subscribers throughout Europe to be supplied by means of a single connection with all available telecommunications services, for example, telephone, two-way video services such as the videophone, high definition television, and a variety of data services would become available. Particular emphasis is put on significantly reducing the cost of optronic components for the local loop to make it an economic proposition to transport the whole range of high-quality services along a single optical fibre channel to ordinary residential and small business customers.

The definition phase work then went on to analyse and evaluate specific topics. This was done on a project basis. It drew on existing R and D, including the ESPRIT programme of research into information technology.

Particular care was properly taken not to duplicate work already being carried out under ESPRIT. Participation in projects was open to all companies of whatever size, universities and research establishments. The main criterion was that proposals had to be collaborative, involving at least two independent partners in member states.

There was a strong response to the definition phase from European industry. Firm proposals were submitted by some 80 consortia, 32 contracts were eventually placed, and I am delighted to say that British companies were lead contractors in 14. There was a British presence in 26 and, of 192 participants in the various consortia, no fewer than 52 were British. British companies received more than 30 per cent. of the total Community support available for the definition phase. These excellent figures augur well for the involvement of British firms in the main phase and underline the importance which British industry attaches to the European R and D programmes such as RACE. The outcome of the definition phase was extremely positive. It clearly confirmed that there was scope for Europe-wide IBC on a commercial basis, and that a significant Community effort to prepare for it was, therefore, justified.

That brings us to the main phase of RACE. Proposals for this have been before the Council since last year, and the original intention was a five-year programme to begin on 1 January 1987. For various reasons, including lengthy debate within the Community on the R and D framework programme, the programme, which was optimistic from the beginning, could not be met.

Much has been done in the intervening period. We have pressed for, and obtained, improvements in the structure, priorities and cost-effectiveness of the programme. We have removed from it less necessary or duplicative work in order to ensure that the money is well spent. There have been added, largely at our insistence, verifiable objectives and a procedure for the independent evaluation of projects, both of which are crucial to ensure value for money. Even if the main phase had been adopted by the Council last January, that work would still have been necessary before the programme could begin. There is absolutely no point in spending money just for the sake of it. We must ensure in projects such as this that the money is properly directed and well spent.

Mr. Ashdown: My point is crucial, as I am sure the Minister will understand. Is not the reality — the Minister has hinted at it coyly — as I shall explain in a moment, that RACE is one or two years behind its schedule in a highly competitive area in which others are moving fast? The Minister has failed to say that the British Government have been responsible for that delay. Perhaps he will explain why. In the light of that fact, for fact it is, will the Minister also explain how the Government felt able to say in their motion that they are in favour of the early adoption of the Community legislation, when they have been the instrument of its delay?

Mr. Maude: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman has sought to introduce a combative note into a debate on a subject on which there has generally been agreement. I shall spell out to him again, as I have done previously, — it is for other hon. Members to judge whether I did so coyly — that the work that has been going on between 1 January and now would have had to take place in any event, irrespective of when the programme started. I am not sure whether the hon. Gentleman is suggesting that we should have gone headlong into the main phase of the programme without building into the system proper evaluation to ensure that value for money was obtained.

Mr. Ashdown: How much delay?

Mr. Maude: I have told the hon. Gentleman twice that there is no delay because the work would have been essential before the projects could have got under way. I am sure he will understand that it follows clearly from that that there is no delay.

The main phase will be divided into three parts. The first concerns the development of IBC and strategies for its implementation. There will be work on the development of functional specifications, the definition of proposals for IBC standards and to establish interoperability for IBC equipment and services. It is envisaged that much of this work will be funded by the European network operators, who have a strong interest in a successful outcome. British Telecom is very much at the forefront of European work in this area.

The second part is the research phase proper and is aimed at the development of IBC technologies. It will entail co-operation between enterprises in different member states of the Community and, exceptionally, enterprises in other Western European countries. This is the biggest part of the RACE programme and will be carried out under shared-cost contracts with the contractors jointly bearing at least one half of the total expenditure and the Community providing the remainder. There is a real opportunity here for European industry to achieve the economies of scale that will enable it to compete both within Europe and in wider international markets.

Dr. Jeremy Bray (Motherwell, South): The Minister referred to the industry's contribution being "at least one half." Is he suggesting that the Government have given up their proposal that industry should contribute three quarters?

Mr. Maude: I understand that the proposal for the main RACE phase is clearly that the Community will provide one half of the cost of the project. Therefore, industry must provide at least one half. Although in certain circumstances it may provide more, that will not necessarily be a requirement.

The third part of the main phase will consist of co-operation between member states to assess operational concepts and experimental equipment, with the objective of validating specifications and proposals for standardisation arising from the work in the earlier parts of RACE. This plainly lies a few years ahead.

I should finally say a word about finance. The Commission's original proposal envisaged that the Community's total expenditure on the RACE main phase would be 800 million ecu, or about £560 million. During extensive negotiations in Brussels, in which we played a prominent part, this figure has been substantially reduced as the programme has been refined to cut out duplication and unnecessary work. *[Interruption]*. I hear the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) sniggering to himself in a contemplative sort of way. I am not sure whether that means that he would have preferred a programme that included duplication and unnecessary work. There is no point in spending money for the sake of it. It must be spent to achieve a purpose. Our work and the prominent part that we have played in the negotiations were directed to ensure that that happened and that money was not simply poured down the drain for the sake of it.

Mr. Ashdown: The money was reduced.

Mr. Maude: It was ensured that the money spent was on work that had value, and that is what is important.

The final figure is now likely to be about 500 million ecu. The Government believe that this will enable the programme fully to meet its objectives, but the objectives must be kept under constant review, and the Community's legal instrument has built into it provision for annual reviews to evaluate the work done and to consider whether work on particular aspects of the programme needs to be continued. The Government will be vigilant in ensuring that the funding for RACE is spent effectively and that there is full and proper evaluation and re-evaluation of objectives.

British firms which did so well in the definition phase are keen to grasp the opportunities which the much larger main phase offers. I am confident that British enterprises will win a worthy number of contracts and that this will prove of great importance to them in the long term as the European market develops. I am also confident that RACE will prove to be an effective European response to the technological challenge in this key sector of telecommunications and I warmly commend the motion to the House.

7.11 pm

Dr. Jeremy Bray (Motherwell, South): I was glad to see the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State opening the debate, but it drove me to look at the list of ministerial responsibilities and to ponder on the reasons for the absence of his colleague the hon. Member for Coventry, South-West (Mr. Butcher), who is listed as having responsibility for this area. We are used to having a tremendous turnover of those with responsibility for industry in the present Government and later I hope that the hon. Gentleman will say whether his arrival on this scene, which is welcome, is permanent or fleeting.

The news that agreement has been reached on the framework programme is important and I hope that it will be ratified at the budget meeting tomorrow. It is long overdue. The general feeling in industry and the research world is that the delays in reaching agreement on the framework programme, for which the Government have been largely responsible, have been substantially damaging because many depositions depend on the particular arrangements made in RACE.

Relations between European and United Kingdom programmes are most important. Last week at the review meeting of the Alvey programme the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster was extremely bearish about the prospects of Government support up to the levels proposed in the IT86 report. The practical effect of that has been to switch the priorities for and preparation of research proposals heavily from the United Kingdom scene into ESPRIT. That is good in so far as there will be strong British participation in the ESPRIT programmes and no doubt some Ministers will boast about this in future, but the work will be undersupported on the United Kingdom side in terms of the matching research necessary within a purely United Kingdom context.

That confusion between the balance of British and European work has been a casualty of the delays. It has not been helped by the fact that, although industry has been strongly supportive of RACE and feels that it has been a useful European initiative, the Government have not made it entirely clear that their misgivings about the management of the research in Europe have related not so

much to the RACE or ESPRIT projects as to the joint research centres and the stops needed to tighten management there. It would be much better if the Government would more frequently in the House, and certainly elsewhere, make it clear what their considerations are. To make the research budget of the whole of the framework programme a pawn in the general argument about European Community finance is to take our industrial future far too lightly.

The European Commission has now sent out a call for expression of interest in RACE to be received by 4 October. These will be considered and the awards made in time for work to start early in the new year. Perhaps the Minister would confirm that timetable.

The papers referred to in the motion are rather old. One more recent paper is relevant to considerations in this area —the Green Paper on the development of the Common Market for telecommunications, services and equipment, published on 30 June, but to which no explanatory memorandum has yet been attached. It is Com(87)290 for hon. Members who may wish to look it up when reading *Hansard*.

The framework programme speaks of telecommunications as the lifeblood of the large market. In its range of applications, in the rate of technological change, in the social consequences and in the volumes of economic activity at stake that is certainly true. The RACE programme states:

"It has been estimated that during the next decade about 500 billion ecu . . . (corresponding to 500,000 jobs in average) will be invested in the Community in telecommunication infrastructures, services and terminal equipment and in the next 20 years three times as much . . . More importantly, however, it is estimated that for those leading in offering advanced information services the employment benefit may be 10 times as large. For Europe's employment prospects the creation of favourable conditions for new and enhanced services is the most significant employment aspect of advanced telecommunications services. Based on these estimates the overall employment at stake may be as high as 5 million by 1990."

That was written in 1986 and the time scale may be a little optimistic. The order of magnitude seems much more firmly based. We are talking about 5 million jobs in Europe if we make a success of this compared with only about 500,000 if we make a mess of it. In terms of employment in the United Kingdom it would be the difference between 1 million more jobs and only 100,000. Therefore, the stakes for being at the forefront of offering advanced information services are high.

In order to pull that off, we need to succeed in RACE and to see the programme, first, in the context of the regulatory regime in which the results of that technology will be exploited and, secondly, in the development of applications which will provide an economic justification for the technological developments. Those are most important considerations. In so far as the Government have run into rough water in the management of RACE, they are open to much more serious criticism on the question of the regulatory regime and the effort put into application development.

I shall follow the Minister in considering the lessons from the RACE definition phase. The committee of management concluded that the integration needed is integration for freedom of access. That is a useful concept. It is not an exlusive or monolithic integration. If one goes into the system in any one place, one may have access to any other place but one wants to go in freely anywhere. The physical integration is less important than coherent and compatible network operation, with efficient, dynamic use of the overall transmission capacity. That is important also in that it brings the idea of IBC — integrated broad band communications — much more into the present era, with the early prospect of direct broadcasting by satellite and the even earlier prospect of the full exploitation of the substantial digital capacity of the twisted pair of our present telephone system. The data transmission side is capable of much fuller exploitation than it now receives.

The third lesson drawn from the definition phase is the importance of OSI — open system interconnection standardisation. That, too, can hardly be exaggerated. It is most important that the very useful lead established by this country — which Europe is building up — in terms of the impact on American and Japanese standards, and the influence on their equipment design, should be maintained.

The economies of scale have been fully borne out, and certainly on the human side it has now been well established that research teams can work happily across national frontiers. As for the financial side, the Under-Secretary may feel that the sums in Europe are large. On a European scale, they may even be diseconomies in co-operative research. However, the cost of our having to do all that alone in the United Kingdom would be absolutely out of the question.

Again, economies of scale in production are such that we shall probably have to move very soon into much fuller consideration of the question of industrial structure in this country. If in the United States the principal semi-conductor manufacturers conclude that they can operate economically only if between them they build a single silicon foundry, how much more true is that of the United Kingdom — or, indeed, of Europe? Ian Mackintosh's book "Sunrise Europe" shows that there is probably scope for only two European designers of a wide band switch, which effectively means only to major prime telecom contractors in Europe. Where does that leave us in terms of United Kingdom industrial policy and the issues raised about the future of GEC and Plessey?

A further lesson was that broad band can greatly improve the cost performance in handling the narrow and medium band services. If we want a higher quality telephone service or an efficient electronic funds transfer from points of sale linking banks, shops, homes and so on, it is far more efficient to do that within a broad band service than simply to try to pile on separate narrow band links. There is the potential for enhancing the traditional carriers; there is also the importance of an evolutionary approach that builds on the systems that we have and deepens the applications. However, perhaps the most important lesson is that there are grave uncertainties in integrated broad band communications about cost performance and user acceptance of the services that it will be possible to provide.

If those are the lessons, the work plan anticipated in RACE and set out in the proposal document seems a bit limited. The material seems to confine itself too narrowly to the technology. Emphasis is rightly placed on the importance of the reference models, the description of the typical consumer and of the typical local switch, and so on. The systems analysis and specification are obviously essential, as are implementation and planning and the

[Dr. Jeremy Bray]

development of the enabling technologies. The Under-Secretary referred to fibre optics and opto-electronics. The very important software side of the huge programmes that will have to be written to handle the wide-band switches, the user technologies, the sub-systems, the customer facilities, user access, network functions and trunk exchanges for transmission are all essential. But where is the consideration of the market?

Let us start with regulation. The Government's view is that the market can be left to look after itself. The experience in Japan with the integrated network system, which is held up to us as a tremendous threat and bogey that we must meet, has been severely restricted in its pace of development by the reluctance of consumers in Japan to go digital. There is a big increase in telecoms traffic in Japan, but the bulk of it is simply facsimile transmission, with well over half the total facsimile transmission in the world taking place between one office in Japan and another.

There is considerable consumer resistance to the keyboard and to the absorption of digital systems. We can put that down in this country to the particular script that the Japanese use, but I think that that would underrate the nature of the problems that we face in the market place. What are the dangers if we fail to put adequate work into the development of the market? One of the dangers is that we shall do all the donkey work in the creation of the communications infrastructure, and overseas suppliers will be able to come in with whatever is the equivalent 10 years from now of the computer game, the personal computer or high-definition television and swamp the markets in the United Kingdom and in Europe. There simply is not a market for IBC. It will have to be created, and special steps are needed to create it.

The Green Paper is an important element of that scene. The application development, about which the Government have not yet talked, must be another. The Green Paper makes some proposals in its figure 3. Those proposals are broadly acceptable to Opposition Members. They aim to combine the integrity of the system with the financial viability of the prime network operator, along with a competitive regime of value-added services. Are those principles acceptable to the Government? Is the financial integrity of the prime system operator to be met only by sacrificing the quality of services? That is a threat about which we have heard much from British Telecom customers and in the House in recent days. Do the Government offer a commercially viable path of development for the recabling of Britain? Is the apparatus of the Cable Authority licensing local cable networks going to proceed at anything like a fast enough pace to exploit the opportunities that RACE will open up for us?

The present indications are that the cable operators are just waiting until 1990, when they hope to be given freedom to provide voice telephone services on local cable networks. If that is used as a means of destroying the integrity of the necessary national network, the Government will have destroyed the possibility of our exploiting the opportunities that we are opening up in the RACE programme.

It is not good enough to wait until 1990 and then leave it to Oftel to review the provision of telephone services. The Green Paper that deals with the exclusive provision of special rights for telecommunication administrations regarding the provision and operation of the network infrastructure says:

"Where a member state chooses a more liberal régime either for the whole or for part of the network, the short and long term integrity of the general network infrastructure should be safeguarded."

It is not good enough for the United Kingdom to be the only country in Europe that is going down this route. If we wait until 1990, the inevitable conclusion of Oftel will be that we do not have the evidence or even the basis for the right decision, because steps should have been taken much earlier to develop and explore the market possibilities.

Within the European Commission there is, according to one of its appalling acronyms, SOG-T in GAP. That is the sub-group of the senior official group for telecommunications in the group d'analyse et prévision, which I believe is an analysis and forecasting group. I do not know who those officials are, but I am told that they come from the Department of Trade and Industry. I question whether that group has the necessary background to tackle the huge application and development problems that need to be faced.

I shall give three examples. First, there are two large organisations for medical records. One has the unfortunate name of VAMP. It provides computers free to general practitioners in return for information on patient prescriptions. Already it has on record the prescription records of 500,000 patients. Within a year it expects to have 5 million prescription records. One sees why that is a valuable market research tool for the pharmaceutical companies, but it is a monstrously inefficient and potentially dangerous way of handling medical information for research purposes. Should there not be a much firmer grasping of nettles to make sure that the tremendous possibilities that are opening up in health care by the use of telecommunications are properly developed, in the fullest interests of the patient and in the light of the best medical practice?

Secondly, the Dutch Government recently published the report of a committee, under Walter Zegfeld, on the potential market for wide band communications in the Netherlands. It concluded that if we make all the allowance in the world for tele-shopping, on-course transmission to betting shops, electronic funds transference from the point of sale, and so on, the growth of such markets is unlikely to make integrated broad band communications commercially viable. The committee anticipates that the main growth of applications will be, curiously enough, first in health care and then in education. That surprises me a little, but the Dutch may be a nation of hypochondriacs. However, its educational applications do not surprise me.

If one visits the Inter Active Video Centre near Euston, which is supported in part by the Department of Trade and Industry, one sees there a brave, struggling, but hopelessly underfunded, effort to explore the potential of RACE technology in education. There is concern about the quality of education. There is readiness to put effort into curriculum development. There is also readiness to look at innovation, in terms of the responsibilities and the funding of schools.

If schools were offered £1 billion to put themselves on line in a wide band cable system, they would say, "No, thank you. We have greater priorities than that." If,

however, we found that by developing these services we could open up the possibility of very much wider use of wide band information services in society as a whole, it is perfectly conceivable that the education system would get the wide band cable service free. That would stand on its head this Government's strategy. They think that value added services can come on the back of entertainment and the proliferation of local cable networks. They may be wrong. We may first need to develop the educational applications by the delivery of well-organised, first-class curriculum material to schools, after which the other markets might grow in this country.

Thirdly, in preparation for the big bang, the City invested a great deal of money and hardware in very simple operations, such as transferring the price of particular stocks, shares and currencies from one bank to another or from one part of the world to another. The main service is provided by Reuters, but the sophistication of the subsequent processing of that information for dealers is minimal. If Reuters is asked why it does not do something with the information, it says, "What benefit would it provide?" The obvious answer of economists is that it would help to stabilise the markets. "In that case," says Reuters, "we're agin it, because we make our money out of the instability of markets." Do the Government want to make their money out of the instability of markets? Would they not prefer a more stable exchange rate regime? Such questions are out of the depth of the DTI officials who sit on SOG-T in GAP. That is a woefully inadequate way of developing an applications philosophy.

The tremendous talent and ingenuity of people in this country could be fruitfully employed in the development of wide band services and facilities, but crucial decisions will have to be taken during the lifetime of this Government. That is a sobering thought for the Opposition. Industry should be assured that a stable regime will be maintained for the necessary long-term developments and programmes and for the investment that needs to be made in the infrastructure and in wide band applications. We are ready to explore with the Government the differences between the two sides of the House that relate to the principles on which wide band will be developed in this country. Those differences of emphasis are not unbridgeable.

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): I have followed my hon. Friend's speech with great care, but many of my colleagues and I are concerned about the fact that this Government appear to have no overall policy for information technology or for the use of satellites for broadcasting. Does my hon. Friend agree that if the French Government can issue hardware to vast numbers of small business men to expand information technology, this Government should come forward with a much more precise plan?

Dr. Bray: I agree with my hon. Friend. The problem is that the major dispositions will be made in the next five years. With the prospect of coming into power at the end of those five years, we have to think about how the industry can be given a reasonable assurance of continuity to make possible long-term developments. I think that my hon. Friend will agree that some of us on both sides of the House think that those integrated services are possible, if only we can get ourselves properly organised.

That overall view requires a consideration of the regulatory regime, and certainly the broadcasting considerations in which my hon. Friend the Member for Crewe and Nantwich (Mrs. Dunwoody) takes such a great interest. The matters to be considered include the research programme with which we are dealing. We shall need continuing and wide consultation with the researchers, the industry, the broadcasting authorities, the telecommunication authorities, British Telecom and Oftel. We are certainly prepared to take part in such consultations to ensure that there is the strongest possible national agreement about the overall regime in which the industry and applications developers can get on with the work.

Meanwhile, the Labour party is glad to confirm its full commitment to the RACE programme and to wish it every success. We encourage the British partners to participate in it to the fullest extent so that we can benefit from it fully.

7.31 pm

Mr. Richard Page (Hertfordshire, South-West): The House will be delighted to hear that I do not intend to speak for very long or to follow the hon. Member for Motherwell, South (Dr. Bray) by going through all the aspects of the programme and endeavouring to double-guess it. I welcome the news that the programme is to go ahead, because it represents our only way of being in with a chance to match the billions of dollars put into the technology by the Japanese and the Germans. This represents only one aspect of European co-operation in which I believe we need to develop our contacts. As manufacturing technologies expand, we shall need more and more co-operation in Europe if we are to supply products at the right price to reach the gradually expanding markets of the world.

I do not welcome the delay; I believe that the main phase should have started on 1 January, although I do not take the hysterical view of the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown). While the delay is unwelcome, it will have been vital if it results in all the parties in Europe adopting common standards, aims, and evaluations. Let me produce a poor parallel: we need to get everyone to agree to drive on the same side of the road before we start making motor cars and rushing down it in them. If the delay results in the establishment of common standards in optical communications equipment, the time will have been well spent.

To get anywhere near producing the components at prices that will stand a chance of survival in the world market, we shall need this common research. In turn, we shall be faced with increasing amalgamations between British and European companies. There will be thorny problems ahead when British and European companies face amalgamations with or takeovers by the American and Japanese companies endeavouring to buy the technology that has been accumulated. We shall have to examine that problem carefully when the companies come under threat.

I welcome the measure, because it represents a chance — probably our only chance — of surviving the competition. I conclude by asking my hon. Friend the Minister and his Department to press on—and press on very quickly — so that the telecommunications equipment industry in Great Britain and Europe has a chance for the future.

7.34 pm

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): I was glad to hear the hon. Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page)

[Mr. Paddy Ashdown]

say that he believed that the programme was important because it would help us to match the enormous funds being poured in by the Japanese and the United States. I agree with him. However, one must ask oneself how that aim is to be fulfilled if the Government reduce the funds available to us. That will inhibit the very activities that the hon. Gentleman seeks to encourage.

I welcome the Under-Secretary of State for Corporate and Consumer Affairs to his post. He is a welcome addition to the Front Bench. However, as the hon. Member for Motherwell, South (Dr. Bray) said, it is interesting to note that the Minister responsible for these matters is not here. It was noted that he was not present at the Alvey conference—at least at the beginning of it. Perhaps the Government's neglect of new technologies is now to be increased — or at best will continue. That neglect, in the past and the future, is very sad. Nevertheless, I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on his elevation to the Dispatch Box. He has learnt the slippery arts of Ministers and their way with weasel words extremely quickly.

Mrs. Dunwoody: It is inherent.

Mr. Ashdown: As the hon. Lady says, perhaps it is inherent. It appears that, as soon as an hon. Member arrives on the Front Bench, those gifts are showered upon him.

When I asked the hon. Gentleman the reason for the delay, he said, "What delay? There is no delay." The programme was due to start in January this year. It will not be starting for 18 months or two years, but the Minister says that that cannot be described as a delay. He did not say what it could be described as, and I shall happily give way if he can find another suitable word from the armoury with which he has been equipped as a Minister of the Crown.

Mr. Maude: If the hon. Gentleman compliments me too much, he will damage my career. I made the point that the work on getting the research and development under way, which is what we are concerned with here, will not be delayed. The fact that no formal decision could be made before a certain time because a number of countries wished to debate the matter further does not mean that the work has been delayed. As I explained, all the work and all the activities of the intervening period would have had to be undertaken even if RACE main phase had been decided on 1 January, which it could not have been.

Mr. Ashdown: I shall return to that point in a minute because there are different views on it. Whatever the Minister says to the contrary, the start of the programme planned for this year has been delayed. The Minister has given his reasons for that. He said that a number of countries were involved. Let us call a spade a spade: the programme has been delayed, for whatever reason. I presume that it does not hurt the Minister to accept that. We now need to establish the reasons why.

The resolution says that the Government are in favour of the early introduction of Community legislation. I have been looking into the Government's record on the early adoption of Community legislation. I do not need to use my own judgments on that. I shall take an independent judgment such as that of the *Financial Times* or *The Independent*.

An article in the *Financial Times* of 5 June 1985 said that the European nations had overcome the objections towards launching the framework programme within which RACE sits but stopped short of giving a formal blessing. A few days later, that appeared to be an optimistic judgment, because the programme had not got off the ground. It had not got off the ground because the United Kingdom Government—not the Governments of other nations as the Minister would so obligingly have us believe—had put up a block to further development of the programme. By the end of 1986, the RACE project had run out of money and was held up — no doubt, the reason for the delay.

Mr. Page: I thank the hon. Gentleman for giving way. I accept that there has been a delay, but I hope that I made the reasons for it clear. I respectfully suggest that the hon. Gentleman cannot put the reason for the delay solely on the United Kingdom's doorstep. Germany and France were equally to blame while the negotiations were taking place. The hon. Gentleman is flogging a dead horse if he tries to blame the United Kingdom Government in such a matter. There must be agreement, especially between the two main partners, because there is no point in having a haphazard research programme.

Mr. Ashdown: Those are not my words—they are the words of the *Financial Times*. *[Interruption.]* The comments of the *Financial Times* should at least be paid a little more than the scant respect that the hon. Gentleman has paid them, especially as that newspaper is not well known for accepting Opposition views.

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde): I remind the hon. Gentleman of the final paragraph of the quotation from the *Financial Times*, which says:

"The hiccup on final agreement came when it emerged that France could not approve another part of the combined package".

I believe that that supports the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page).

Mr. Ashdown: The hon. Gentleman has been careful not to give the date of the article. I do not believe that he was referring to the article of 5 June 1985.

Mr. Jack: I was.

Mr. Ashdown: Then let us look a little further. I do not deny that at various times certain other European nations have been prepared to join us, but the one nation that has been constantly holding this project up has been the United Kingdom. If France was with us in 1985, it had resolved the position by 1986. By the early part of 1986, the West Germans had joined us.

On 9 April 1987, the *Financial Times* reported that the United Kingdom alone

"needs more time to consider".

I quote verbatim from the article of 9 April 1987. The statement is clear and accurate:

"All this has exposed Britain to a chorus of complaints from the Commission, the European Parliament, industry lobbies and other member states".

On 22 April 1987, *The Independent* ran this headline:

"Britain maintains block on European Research scheme".

On 21 May 1987, the *New Scientist* said that the scheme was

"being held up largely because Britain refuses".

On 24 June, the *Financial Times* said that Britain at this stage was

"close to a final decision".
We understand that, by 10 July, there had been a turnround. The *Financial Times* of 10 July said:
"the ambassadors have failed to resolve the deadline"—
Conservative Members might like to note—
"between Britain and the rest".
Contrary to the motion's words, the United Kingdom Government have been constantly holding up progress towards the institution of this programme.

Mr. Page: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Ashdown: All right.

Mr. Page: I again thank the hon. Gentleman for the courteous way in which he has given way to my few humble inquiries. I hope that he will accept the words of the European Parliament's rapporteur on the RACE programme. I believe that he contacted quite a few hon. Members. He said that, until April, France, Germany and the United Kingdom had been holding up the programme and that from April until 14 July only Britain had held it up. That is the position accurately.

Mr. Ashdown: The hon. Gentleman has made his point in a different way. Of course, from time to time, other nations have joined us, but the constant barrier to the development of this programme and the framework programme has been the United Kingdom Government. In the light of that incontrovertible series of facts, it is strange, and an example of newspeak of the first order, that the Government claim to commend themselves for the early adoption of Community legislation.

The Minister said that this was all about getting "better value for money". We have heard that expression used all too frequently as cover for the fact that the Government of the day wanted to reduce the amount of money to be put into a programme. That is exactly what has happened on this occasion. This move may well have been conducted under the cover of seeking better value for money, but the truth is that the amount of money which we were prepared to see committed to this great programme was reduced.

Why was the amount reduced? Is there any logic for that? No, because Europe's position on telecommunications is good. This is one of the remaining aspects of new technology in which we can claim to have at least parity with the best in the world. Indeed, in certain respects, we are ahead of the rest of the world. This is a real opportunity to develop something that Europe has been good at and could be good at in future. It is an opportunity to be competitive. That is what is at stake and is being threatened and delayed.

Is there any need for these measures? Yes. The latest figures for 1984 show that, despite the protection of Europe's position, and indeed what was uniquely Britain's position, there has been a massive deficit in the importation of telecommunications goods into Europe. In 1984, United States telecommunications imports into Europe were worth $565 million, whereas European exports, despite a healthy industry, were worth $307 million, giving a deficit to the United States alone of $258 million. The position was even worse in respect of Japan, with imports worth $134 million and the imbalance rated at about 1 to 34 in its favour.

Is it the case that Britain was not going to benefit from this programme? Certainly not. Britain has benefited significantly from the investments that the Government were prepared to make. For every £18 that Britain is prepared to put into EC research and development, it gets £22 back — a net profit of £4 from this type of development. This is happening in the face of a research budget which has been cut appallingly.

Research in Britain is seriously threatened in the long term. What the EC has been doing for British research has been beneficial not only to Europe but to Britain. It has been enormously to our advantage not only in pure monetary terms — which, as we all know, is the way in which the Government judge these matters — but in terms of what British firms are doing. With this programme alone, a significant proportion of work has come to some of Britain's foremost firms. A number of outside commentators have said that Britain holds a lead in pressing forward developments in telecommunications and common systems such as RACE. We could do even better.

Mr. Jack *indicated assent.*

Mr. Ashdown: I see the hon. Gentleman nodding. He is right.

The British firms include those that one would expect to be involved, such as GEC, Plessey, STC, Thorn EMI, British Telecom, and firms that one would not expect to be involved, such as the BBC, the IBA, MARI and Pilkington, which have gained a significant amount of work from this programme. But the Government have been the chief instrument in reducing the amount of money going into the programme. University college, London, the university of Strathclyde, Imperial Software Technology and so on have been involved. Meanwhile, other firms have had parallel technologies and developments from which they too have benefited. Developing test systems for communications standards has been the work of bodies such as ICL, Olivetti and BAe.

In short, the United Kingdom has a lead and could have benefited enormously from a more progressive Government view. Instead, in this matter as in so much else, we have a Government who know the cost of everything and the value of nothing. If they had invested a little more progressively, we could have got this programme off the ground in a way that would have benefited Europe and at least ensured that we kept pace with the competition. It would have returned to Britain a direct benefit in economic costs, monetary terms, jobs and opportunities for the future.

According to the rhetoric of the Government, that appears to be what they would have liked to do. The former Minister for Information Technology, the hon. Member for Chertsey and Walton (Mr. Pattie), spoke at the Esprit conference in Brussels on 1 October 1986. He said:

"I have no doubt that our success in the industrial exploitation of information technology is a basic requirement for achieving more competitive European industries."

That is correct, but it is a pity that he did not follow those words with some action.

On 1 July 1986, the Minister spoke to British companies. He said:

"I do not regard support for international collaboration as a substitute for supporting research and development at home."

As we know, research and development in Britain has been cut and damaged. Its future has been put in jeopardy. Research and development in Britain is now facing a crisis on a broader scale. This is at a time when the Government gave away £3 billion in the Budget. The research and

[Mr. Ashdown]

development that was being carried out by the research councils in Britain was brought to a grinding halt due to the lack of about £9 million to £18 million. A thousand scientists a year are leaving Britain's shores because the opportunities for research in this country are not as good as those elsewhere.

The Government are removing resources from universities. One wonders whether the Government have a policy on information technologies, other than one that ensures that in the long run those technologies will continue to decline. British high technology industry is growing at a rate which is half that of the world average. In the future we will face a massive balance of payments crisis in new technologies due to the narrow-minded, mean-spirited attitude that the Government have so clearly displayed.

We had another example of that attitude very recently. The National Economic Development Office unit which was dealing with information technology has been abolished. Some Neddies have been retained. It is interesting to note that the Neddy that deals with knitting has been retained, yet the one that deals with information technology has been abolished. Perhaps that is a reasonable comment on how the Government see the future of Britain. They do not need assistance with information technology, but they will keep the knitting committee going. Britain is allowed to knit in the future, but it cannot develop a decent high-technology industry.

Mrs. Dunwoody: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would not want to underplay the role of knitting. Whether it is done by hand or machine, it is an industry which in the past has earned us a great deal of money. It would be sad if we lost those skills under this Government, which is likely to happen.

Mr. Ashdown: I am sure that the hon. Lady would agree that, although the maintenance of an ancient industry such as knitting is important, British industry must begin to develop new technologies for the future so that they can be applied to traditional industries, including knitting and textiles. The extent to which that happenss depends on the Government's attitude.

The shame and sadness of this matter is that the commodity for the future development of our industry is not any particular piece of hardware or raw material but information. That is what will make our industries of the future run. Just as our Victorian forebears laid down an infrastructure that was capable of transporting coal, steel and iron around the country for their industries and jobs, so in future we will need to lay down a modern infrastructure for the transportation of information. That is a key requirement and it is where the opportunity presented by RACE is so important. We are on the verge of a massive breakthrough in industry and society.

Two things are now technically possible. It is technically possible for the Government to know everything about everybody all the time; it costs a lot of money, but it is technically possible. It is technically possible for the Government to deliver to every house in the nation—the French have made a commitment in this regard—all the information that is known in the world.

There are two completely opposite directions in which to go, but there is a massive difference in the sort of society that we would achieve, depending on which of those routes we follow. We are currently following the first of those routes. That is not unnatural for a Government who believe in centralising everything. We have 53 million names on the DHSS central computer and we have about 30 million names on the Inland Revenue computers——

Mrs. Dunwoody: They cannot find most of them.

Mr. Ashdown: That may be true—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. John Mark Taylor (Solihull): What about the membership of the Liberal party?

Mr. Ashdown: If the hon. Gentleman wishes to intervene I shall happily give way to him, or is he maintaining his usual practice of intervening from a sedentary position?

Mr. Taylor: What about the merger?

Mr. Ashdown: The hon. Gentleman should observe the convention of not intervening from a sedentary position.

The population of this country are on national data banks that are in the hands of the Government.

There is an alternative route. Some Governments, notably the French, as the hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich (Mrs. Dunwoody) said earlier, are following a progressive policy and making a commitment to deliver a decent, national broad-band computer communication network which is capable of reaching every house. Would it not be better if we had that not only on a national scale but also on a European scale?

The hon. Member for Motherwell, South has done some research into that matter and he tells me that such a computer communications network in Britain would cost £6 billion. I am told that that is about 50 per cent. more than British Telecom intends to invest, but what a national investment that would be. Would that not turn round our industry in the future? Would it not offer new opportunities for enterprise? Would it not generate the sort of jobs that the hon. Member for Motherwell, South mentioned?

It would not end with industry, for it would revolutionise the nature of our society. It would give breath and new life to our democratic systems. It would give the opportunities to deliver education into every home and create a totally decentralised and more responsive network for our welfare and health systems. It would revolutionise the nation in which we live and the nature of our society. We would move to becoming a modern nation that is capable of facing the demands of the future.

I strongly suspect that the post-industrial democracies that will survive and prosper will be those that are capable, able and brave and imaginative enough to make that investment. That is why the RACE project is so important. It offers an opportunity to achieve that, not just for Britain but for a European network. For the Government to have treated this project in the narrow-spirited, mean-minded way that they have by delaying, cutting and holding it up wherever possible is an act of folly not only for the future of our industry but for the development of our future society.

I plead with the Minister and his Government: here is an opportunity that should not be missed. The Government have held back the project and reduced the funding that has gone into it, but they should grab the opportunity that is available. If they do so it could set Britain and Europe on a path to the kind of society that

could establish the basis for a modern industrial system that is capable of challenging those who are dominating the sector, such as the United States and Japan. That is the opportunity that is before us, but it is one that, sadly, the Government have missed.

8.8 pm

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde): I am pleased to be able to speak in the debate, and I am glad that the motion asks us to take notice of various European documents that are concerned with telecommunications.

Sadly, in many of the debates that I have attended in this Chamber I have heard a negative view from the Opposition Benches. I shall briefly deal with one or two of the points that have been raised. Part of the alleged delay on this project may have been due to a small but not insignificant event called the general election. I am glad that the Government have had the courage—certainly in the sector of telecommunications and advanced communications technology—to unleash the forces of invention and investment by the privatisation of British Telecom. Without a doubt, that has speeded up the pace of technical development and we certainly would not be as pre-eminent in Europe, if not the world, in fibre optic technology had we not been able to do that.

I believe that commercial companies, with their inventiveness and perception of the market place, have a major role to play in providing the future equipment that telecommunications and data transmission require. Equally, they have a role to play in co-ordinating our effort within Europe. I am glad to see so much unanimity within the House about the RACE project.

I am not a telecommunications expert. In fact, I am very much a layman in these matters, but my interest in the documents and the debate was aroused because within my constituency of Fylde we have a classic example of good European co-operation with the work that is being done on the European aircraft programme, hopefully leading to the European fighter aircraft. For British Aerospace, international communication of data will be vital. Therefore, the developments that come from a project such as RACE could have long-term implications for companies such as they.

In looking to the background of the RACE project, I am concerned about the attitude of the telecommunications industry in this country. I should like to quote some remarks made in the magazine *Computing* by Ken Hoyt, the marketing director of Plessey Telecommunications and Office Systems, in which he talks about the need to ensure that the RACE project and its objectives have a strong commercial drive built into them. In other words, it should produce products that the market place requires. He said:

"There are many real obstacles. We have to convert all this"—

meaning research—

"into real products sold to real people. The companies have to agree over marketing and intellectual property rights and there are many companies who are not used to working together who will have to look at each other more seriously as commercial partners."

That point has been alluded to. That presents Europe, certainly Britain, with some fundamental problems. If a company such as British Telecom can be pre-eminent in fibre optics, that is a commercial advantage and it is something that it would wish to hang on to. Obviously, there is the question of sinking one's differences for the joint European benefit.

I should like to deal with one or two other areas of concern. I support European co-operation in this vital area, but I hope that developments that come from RACE will not be deemed to be a form of technological protectionism. We are not dealing just with a European communication problem, whether it be of data, voice or information: we are dealing with a world problem. There are many powerful American and Japanese companies which have participated indirectly with RACE which would be interested in the development, eventually, of a world communications network. We should not forget that, although much of our business goes to Europe, a large amount goes across the Atlantic to the United States and other parts of the free world. Who knows what we may see in the far distant future in terms of worldwide telecommunications with other parts outside the free world.

It presents some delicate and difficult problems in striking a balance between national interest and European interest. As I said, I should not like to see RACE developed as a barrier to a world communications network. I believe that RACE offers significant opportunities for British companies to take advantage of technological developments to obtain orders. The hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) listed a number of companies which have already identified such opportunities. That is the positive part of the development, and one that I am pleased to support.

8.14 pm

Mr. John McWilliam (Blaydon): I begin by delcaring my interest as a Member sponsored by the National Communications Union, engineering section.

I do not wish to follow the line taken by the hon. Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack), but I assure him that there now exists a world communications network. The dirty bit is about who gets what within it. That is what RACE is all about and that is what we are supposed to be talking about now.

Before I spend too much time on RACE, I should say that I welcome the EEC Green Paper on telecommunications policy. I hope that the Government welcome it as much as I do because they have gone further down the road than the Green Paper suggests and have fallen into one or two of the pitfalls that the Green Paper suggests could be fallen into by telecommunications administration. However, that is not what we are debating tonight and I do not want to spend time on that.

One of the things that one learns as an old-fashioned telephone exchange switching systems design engineer like me is that the rate of change of technology is logarithmic. Obsolescence of the existing equipment is a reality and it is happening now. We are talking not about the next set of technology, but the set after that. We have to look at that in a world context. Japan and America are determined to try to dominate the world market. They have not succeeded in dominating our market, the French or the German markets, but they have succeeded in dominating many other markets within Europe.

There has been a convergence between computer technology and communications technology. If one looks at that and at multinationals such as IBM, one will see that there is a simple choice ahead. We can compete with each other within Europe and be destroyed by the Americans and Japanese, or we can co-operate and compete for the world market. That is what RACE is about and that is why

[Mr. John McWilliam]

I support it. It is simple. We can spend as much as we like on research and development in telecommunications technology as can the French, the Germans, the Italians and other Europeans. However, separately we cannot compete in the race. Collectively, if we play our full part, not only can we compete, but we can produce a product that is as good as or better than that produced by anybody else in the world. That is what RACE is about and that is what we should be doing.

Postes, Telegraphes Telephones, the trade union in Europe concerned with telecommunications, supports fully the RACE programme. We believe that we have the research expertise. We have the basis upon which we can put together a programme that will enable us to produce the equipment that Europe and the world will want to buy in the 1990s. However, we can only do that collectively. We cannot afford to do it separately. Therefore, it is vital that RACE is supported fully. It should be fully supported by the Government.

I will not follow the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) in his argument because he put the case more adequately than I could as to why delays have happened. However, delays certainly did happen. I am not certain that the Government are prepared to put their money where their mouth is. I look to the Minister tonight — we are much more familiar with looking at him outside the Division Lobby doors than across the Chamber——

Mrs. Dunwoody: He lurks in the Lobby.

Mr. McWilliam: He did in 1979. We are much more familiar with him in that context.

I look to the Minister for a clear undertaking that the Government will not just say that RACE is a good idea but will wholeheartedly embrace it and put money into the research that is desperately needed. At the end of the day, if the Government do that, they will provide jobs. If they do not put money in, they will not. The jobs will be in France, Germany or, much more likely, in America or Japan.

We have seen the market projections for telecommunications equipment and for the employment that will be generated by such market predictions. I want those jobs in Britain. The only way in which such jobs will come to Britain is by the House wholeheartedly supporting RACE and putting in the money that should be put in. The Government do not have a good record of putting money into European research projects.

For the benefit of all those in the telecommunications manufacturing industry and the people who install and otherwise look after telecommunications, I need a commitment that the Government will not be stingy, that they will play their full part in the programme and put money in. If they do that, they will create not only the jobs that we need but the basis of technology that will take off in other directions as well. The argument about conversion technology works the other way. If computers are now telephone exchanges, telephone exchanges are now computers. Research and development will also spark off jobs in other directions. Unless we are prepared to play our full part and compete effectively within Europe, we will not succeed, and we will not be entitled to do so. I hope that the Minister will give a full commitment to put in that money.

8.22 pm

Mr. Maude: The debate has been helpful. Telecommunications debates attract true believers and people with a frightening degree of expertise. The hon. Member for Motherwell, South (Dr. Bray) spoke with a great deal of knowledge and information about the subject. He commented on the fact that a careful scrutiny of the list of ministerial responsibilities does not demonstrate that telecommunications figure high among my responsibilities. However, we are all Ministers from the Department of Trade and Industry. We all like to think that we keep a working knowledge of all the matters within the purview of the Department. I would not say that we are all renaissance men, but we like to keep our hands in on all matters. I hope that the hon. Gentleman does not consider that I have made too bad a fist of doing something that is not entirely my direct responsibility.

We have had a good debate. The issue is important, and every hon. Member who spoke in the debate has recognised that fact in full measure at every stage. The United Kingdom has fully supported the research and development framework programme. We must decide the important part that it has to play in promoting the competitiveness of European industry. Resources must be targeted at that objective — not on large, across-the-board increases in spending just for the sake of spending. The agreement that we have reached on the framework, based on the terms that were proposed by the Prime Minister in June, will ensure that such a well-targeted programme can be satisfactorily funded within available resources. I repeat: there is no point in spending money for the sake of spending money or of being able to boast that 1 million ecu or £1 million has been spent. We must show that we are getting value and results for that money.

Mrs. Dunwoody: What thought has been given to firms in this country that are taken over by basically Japanese or American manufacturing units? Has any consideration been given to what would happen if technology were transferred from companies in this country and the purpose of the research were to be diffused?

Mr. Maude: The hon. Lady has mentioned a proper point. She is quite right: the purpose of the programme is to enhance and develop European industries. If such a development were to take place, it would need to be considered carefully.

The Labour party's response to the debate has been more measured, informed and sensible than the response from the Liberal Benches. The hon. Member for Motherwell, South raised many serious issues that deserve serious consideration. They will be considered. He said that his party will be keen to be involved in any discussions to emphasise to our partners in Europe the consensus that exists in this country on the importance of such development.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page) characterised the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) as hysterical. That is going a bit far — tetchy, perhaps, and a little excitable — but one understands that there is a certain amount of stress on members of the Liberal party at the moment. In all seriousness, I say to him that it is an important subject and he should not allow party political rancour to intrude. The hon. Gentleman attacked the overall research budget. He talked rubbish. From 1981 to 1985 the Government's

research and development expenditure increased in real terms to £4·6 billion. Industry has an obligation to do the same. Frankly, we are not always satisfied that industry has done the same, but it must do likewise if it is to keep up. If the hon. Gentleman were to vent his spleen on trying to persuade industry to do the same as the Government are already doing, it would be a more worthwhile use of his vocal power.

Mr. Ashdown: The case that the Minister seeks to make is that there is no crisis in research and development. One wonders whether he has read any of the articles or the pleas and cries from the heart of universities and others involved in research over the past two or three months. It appears not. Why not? If everything is so wonderful in research and development, why must the Prime Minister take the crisis into her own hands to resolve?

Mr. Maude: For the simple reason that it is an important matter and it deserves attention at the highest level. That is why the Prime Minister is dealing with it in that way. Certainly in my memory—it is not quite as long as the hon. Gentleman's—there has not been a time when there have been no complaints from research establishments and universities about inadequate funding. It is almost a natural condition of life. There is nothing particularly new about that. However, that is not to downplay the importance of research and development. The fact that we regard it as important is well illustrated by the fact that the Prime Minister has taken a high profile on the subject.

Dr. Bray: I do not wish to push my luck with my colleagues or with the Minister, but he will be aware that, in the White Paper published this week, the Government said:

"The Government recognise the importance of increasing civil R & D as a share of public R & D, and are taking action accordingly by restraining the real level of defence R & D."

The most distinguished electronics defence research laboratory in Europe is the Royal Radar and Signals Research Establishment at Malvern. Will the Minister give an assurance that the immense potential of that laboratory and of the Ministery of Defence generally will be switched into important research programmes such as RACE?

Mr. Maude: I cannot possibly deal with that kind of detail at this stage, but the Government already spend more on research and development than the United States and Japan. Our record is by no means bad, but we are not prepared to rest on our laurels.

My hon. Friend the Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack) spoke with knowledge and concern. He made the valid and forceful point that all research of this kind must be closely geared to getting equipment on to the market. There is no point in spending money contemplating our own navels. We must ensure that something solid and marketable that people wish to buy will emerge at the end. The main emphasis of the programme must therefore be on the companies themselves in collaboration, proposing projects and seeking approval for them.

The Government have been strong supporters of RACE since its inception two years ago. The Department of Trade and Industry has devoted a great deal of attention to ensuring that information about RACE has percolated down to industry—to large and small firms alike. I pay tribute to the work done by the Telecommunications Equipment Manufacturers Association to assist in that process. We have also done our best to ensure that the programme itself is structured and funded in the most effective and beneficial way. British firms did well in the definition phase, which ended last year, and I am confident that they will do as well, if not better, in the main phase which is soon to begin.

The Commission estimates that by the year 2000 up to 7 per cent. of the Community's GDP will result from telecommunications, as against only 2 per cent. today. As a number of hon. Members have pointed out, that is a remarkable rate of increase, and we must ensure that the increased employment that will certainly flow from it accrues to this country as much as to anywhere else. It is to that end that the programme is aimed. One has only to consider the City, which falls within my direct responsibility, to see how important the rapid growth of telecommunications in business can be. Increasingly sophisticated and cost-effective communications are an engine for growth in the economy as a whole, with all the attendant benefits of wealth and job creation entailed by such growth. RACE provides Europe with the opportunity to keep pace with other major world economies in this key enabling sector of telecommunications. I commend the motion to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of European Community Document Nos. 5876 85, 5876 85 Add 1, and the Department of Trade and Industry's Supplementary Explanatory Memorandum of 30th September 1985, and No. 10277 86 on Community research and development in the field of telecommunications technologies (RACE); and supports Her Majesty's Government's intention to agree to the early adoption of Community legislation with a view to stimulating co-operation at Community level in the field of telecommunications technology.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.).

Agriculture

That the draft Meat and Livestock Commission Levy Scheme (Confirmation) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 27th April, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

Housing

That the draft Grants by Local Housing Authorities (Appropriate Percentage and Exchequer Contributions) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 8th April 1987, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

Consumer Protection

That the draft Bunk Beds (Entrapment Hazards) (Safety) Regulations 1987, which were laid before this House on 7th July, be approved.—*[Mr. Durant.]*

Question agreed to.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOCUMENT

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 102(5) (Standing Committees on European Community documents).

TREATIES

That the draft European Communities (Definition of Treaties) (International Convention on the Harmonised

[Mr. Maude]

Commodity Description and Coding System) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 25th June, be approved. *—[Mr. Durant.]*

Question agreed to.

CONSOLIDATION, &c., BILLS *(JOINT COMMITTEE)*

Ordered,

That Mr. David Ashby, Sir Richard Body, Sir Nicholas Bonsor, Mr. Nicholas Brown, Dr. Charles Goodson-Wickes, Mr. Robert Litherland, Mr. William Cash, Mr. Barry Porter, Mr. Gary Waller, Mr. A. R. Williams and Mr. Peter Pike be members of the Joint Committee on Consolidation, &c., Bills. *—[Mr. David Hunt.]*

MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Ordered,

That Mr. Robert Adley, Mr. Graham Allen, Mr. John Bowis, Mr. W. M. Campbell, Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours, Dame Peggy Fenner, Mr. Peter Griffiths, Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith, Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson, Mr. Rhodri Morgan, Mr. Tom Pendry, Mr. Ernie Ross and Mr. William Shelton be members of the Select Committee on Members' Interests.—*[Mr. David Hunt.]*

PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION

Ordered,

That Mr. David Ashby, Mr. Jack Aspinwall, Sir Anthony Buck, Mr. Ronald Fearn, Mr. Frank Haynes, Mr. George Howarth, Mr. James Pawsey, Mr. Michael Irvine and Mr. Ron Campbell be members of the Select Committee on the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration. — *[Mr. David Hunt.]*

House of Commons Commission

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That Mr. A. J. Beith, Sir Barney Hayhoe and Mr. Peter Shore be appointed members of the House of Commons Commission under the House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978.—*[Mr. David Hunt.]*

8.36 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): I shall not detain the House long, although I understand that some people thought that I intended to do so. The motion is fairly narrow and I do not wish to quibble at the appointment of the three Members named in the motion. Indeed, I look forward with relish to them undertaking their tasks.

The House of Commons Commission is appointed under the House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978. Section 4(3) gives members of the Commission, in conjunction with Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the House and a Member nominated by the Leader of the Opposition, the power to allocate functions to the various House Departments.

I suggest that the three Members named in the motion should consider the possibility of including in the annual report, which the Act requires them to present to Parliament, an examination of the work and activities of the professional lobbying organisations to see that no undue lobbying takes place. As a result of their experience, the three people named in the motion are also eminently qualified to consider the activities of all-party groups. Circulars that I have received from some all-party groups bear strange addresses, including the addresses of commercial lobbying organisations. I should like to know more about the relationship between the commercial lobbying organisations and the all-party groups.

The three Members named in the motion should be prepared to undertake that task as the whole House must be anxious to ensure that all-party groups carry out the tasks for which they are eminently suited—for instance, examination of areas of agreement in relation to the disabled—with a measure of success and interest. I do not quibble about all-party groups of that kind, but I am concerned that professional lobbying organisations, paid by outside commercial interests, are providing the secretariat for some all-party groups. I am concerned at the removal of some all-party groups from the normal endeavours in which, by and large, they have a fair amount of good will to commercial marketing and lobbying organisations by virtue of the fact that they are serviced by organisations paid so to do. I believe that the three Members concerned might well spend some time considering these matters within the terms of the Act under which they are appointed.

Mr. John Mark Taylor (Solihull): The hon. Gentleman is developing his argument very skilfully and I am sure that he has the support of many right hon. and hon. Members. He will be interested to know that a letter was written on House of Commons notepaper on behalf of an all-party group during the Dissolution.

Mr. Cryer *rose——*

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. I remind the hon. Gentleman that, as he said at the beginning of his speech, this is a fairly narrow motion dealing with membership of the House of Commons Commission, not with additional powers that he may wish it to exercise. I

am sure that the hon. Gentleman will follow his own advice and restrict himself to the fairly narrow terms of the motion.

Mr. Cryer: I am most grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for not allowing me to be led astray by the suggestion that an all-party group has been distributing notepaper as though it were a commercial organisation, although I should not regret it if a little time were spent considering such matters.

To conclude my contribution to this fairly narrow debate, the three Members named in the motion are appointed by the House under an Act of Parliament to carry out, by and large, the running of the House of Commons. That includes the running of the House Departments — the Department of the Clerk of the House, the office of the Speaker, the Department of the Serjeant at Arms, the Department of the Library, the Administration Department and the Department of the Official Report. I suggested that, among those important tasks, those three people should consider the allocation of functions to any House Department. I suggest that they should be able to discuss extending the scrutiny of those all-party groups and organisations by the Department of the Serjeant at Arms to the Speaker and Deputy Speakers.

In not opposing the measure, I want to say that the three people concerned are being approved by the House in a resolution that would normally go through quickly and easily. I hope that they will exercise their functions with diligence, as I believe they will, but just a bit wider than they have in the past. The House of Commons Commission runs all those functions on behalf of Back-Bench Members. There was a struggle to set up the Commission and for it to have a solely House of Commons function. I am just putting down a marker in the hope that the Commission will look a little wider and consider what it can do about some organisations that should be under much closer scrutiny.

I support the motion, but my support cannot be guaranteed in future unless the Commission produces the results that I have talked about.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That Mr. A. J. Beith, Sir Barney Hayhoe and Mr. Peter Shore be appoined members of the House of Commons Commission under the House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978.

Availability for Work Test

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Durant.]*

8.41 pm

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): Some time in the autumn of last year it became clear that my constituency was being used as a trial ground for an extension of the Government's views on how the social security system ought to operate. It is important to realise that underlying most of the decisions that are taken on social services by the Government seems to be the unspoken assumption that if one drives people into narrower and narrower fields, rather like sheep going through a dip, in the end they will automatically come out with jobs that they have created. It does not matter whether we are talking about self-employment, the long-term unemployed or YTS schemes, which frankly are never evaluated, for they become different YTS schemes. The Government seem to be firmly convinced that one reason why many people do not work and do not find work is that they are fundamentally determined to be on the dole.

When I was apprised of the new scheme, I began to take a considerable interest in it because a number of my constituents who are long-term unemployed and who, in some instances, had been recalled for interviews and in other instances had voluntarily gone for restart schemes discovered that they were asked a series of questions about their availability for work. Hon. Members will realise the implications of this. If one is not available for full-time work, one's benefit can immediately be put at risk

I began to ask questions. I particularly wanted to know how many referrals to adjudication officers there had been from the restart counsellors since October. I asked that question in February. I was told by the then Paymaster General and Minister for Employment:

"No one can lose their benefit entitlement solely as a result of the restart programme. Under long-standing legal rules",

and I emphasise the word "legal"—

"people can lose their entitlement to benefit if they fail to attend an interview, are not available for work or refuse an offer of suitable employment."

That sounds perfectly straightforward and reasonable, but when one goes into the numbers concerned one finds some interesting things. Between 10 October and 11 December 1986, restart schemes officers referred to unemployment benefit officers 21,454 cases of claimants who had failed to attend restart counselling interviews, 8,057 cases where a doubt about availability for work was identified and 153 cases where claimants had refused suitable employment.

One of the difficulties about the whole scheme is that claimants are faced with the "Have you stopped beating your wife?" type of question. If one is a woman and one wants to go into full-time work, one is asked whether one is ready immediately to start work. Honest women, of which there are many, tend to say, "Well, I shall have to arrange for the kids to be looked after," or, "I have to find some form of transport." They are immediately told that they are considered to be not available for work or that they are considered to have difficulties.

The answer that the Minister gave is instructive, so I shall continue with it:

"independent adjudication officers actually disallowed benefit in the cases of 9,506 claimants . . . 644 claimants considered

[Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody]

not available for work and 42 claimants who had refused suitable employment."—[*Official Report*, 3 February 1987; Vol. 109, c. *600*.]

When I had questioned what had happened in my own constituency, I was told:

"Between 16 June 1986 and 19 September 1986"—

a very short period—

"all claimants at the Crewe office reaching their sixth week of unemployment were asked to complete a questionnaire. Questionnaires were issued to 770 claimants and this resulted in 138 claims being referred to the independent adjudicating authorities. Of these, 20 were disallowed on availability grounds and 118 were allowed." — [*Official Report*, 5 November 1986; Vol. 103, c. *458*.]

Those figures are revealing. A total of 138 people were told that they must have their right to benefit referred to an independent adjudicating authority. Only 20 were disallowed, and 118 were allowed. However, in the period in which people are being referred for some kind of adjudication on their benefit they are not entitled to support. My local citizens advice bureau became increasingly concerned about the number of cases where payments were being suspended, on what it suspected, and I must say that I increasingly agree with it, were grounds that probably did not have a proper legal basis.

We know that claimants must be available for work, be actively seeking work and must not put undue restrictions upon the work that they will accept. All those concepts are based on the Act, on the unemployment benefit regulations or on case law. However, we cannot find any law that justifies suspension in the circumstances that I have mentioned. The CAB, through my local office, drew attention to "LO Circular Code 7 Availability Testing", which sets out certain procedures for the staff and said:

"However, circulars are not the law and decisions made without a grounding in the Act, or the Regulations or in Case Law may be unlawful."

It is very easy for the House to get caught up in initials, acronyms and synonyms. We sometimes forget that those terms can mean hardship to people who may be faced with the everyday workings of bureaucracy in a way that they are unable to deal with.

I will mention a number of cases, but I will not mention names unless the Minister would like them privately. Those cases illustrate what I am talking about. One lady, whose benefit had been suspended, was told that she failed to attend an interview with the claimants adviser. A number of young people were endeavouring to get some training and were told that they were not available for work.

On 7 November Mr. A was called into the jobcentre for a Restart interview. He explained to the interviewing officer that he was a student at Danebank college, studying A-level history and English. He said that he studied for only 12 hours a week and considered that by doing that he was increasing his prospects of employment. He explained that he intended to go into higher education and that he still went down to the jobcentre to look for full-time work. His reasons were apparently accepted by the interviewing officer, who not only wished him well but accepted that he was available for work and was obviously trying to improve his chances of obtaining a job.

However, on 31 March Mr. A became mixed up about the signing days and did not attend until the following week, when he discovered that his claim had been closed. He had received no communication from the unemployment benefit office asking why he had failed to sign. For example, he could have been on holiday. He was just told to make a fresh claim and then he had to complete the availability questionnaire. He was immediately suspended and was told that there was a question about his availability and that his case was being referred to the adjudication section in Stockport. He was not asked to give a full account of his circumstances, and two and a half months later he had a telephone call confirming that he had been suspended because he was not available for work.

In the meantime, Mr. A. had no unemployment or supplementary benefit. He was paid only for urgent needs and, as that does not cover housing costs, he lost the flat in which he was living. There is still no detailed decision in that case. When there is, there will undoubtedly be an appeal.

We must ask the Minister why there were so many extraordinary happenings. Why was the claim cancelled so readily? Why was Mr. A not asked to give a full account to the insurance officer? Why has it taken two and a half months to obtain a decision? Even if there is an appeal, it will take nine months because the adjudication section in Stockport is so slow. There is an outstanding appeal awaiting submission from Stockport which was lodged on 23 September 1986. It was only last week that the office of the chairman for social security appeal tribunals in Bootle, which made it clear that it lays the blame fairly and squarely on Stockport, notified appeal dates for appeals lodged on 7 November 1986 and 1 December 1986.

It may be said that there are some awkward cases and that there is a large problem with the number of people unemployed and so the authorities cannot always be sure but are prepared to look at individual cases. However, let me tell the House about some others, because such cases are not uncommon, and the problem in Crewe and Nantwich is probably reflected throughout Britain.

Mrs. B works outside the Crewe area. She has a three-year-old child who was looked after between 7.15 am and 5.30 pm while Mrs. B worked by her 69-year-old mother. When Mrs. B became pregnant again and was on maternity pay she gave notice because her mother said, not unreasonably, that she could not cope with two children between those hours. The lady then began to look for other childminders, but it became clear to her that they were not available except between 9 am and 5 pm.

The unemployment benefit office suspended Mrs. B on the ground that she had failed to avail herself of a reasonable opportunity of suitable employment. The case is covered by case law, which, in similar circumstances, found that work starting before the childminders were available was unsuitable. In my constituency there are several good play groups and nurseries, but they have long waiting lists and do not work the sort of flexible hours that fit in with the employment in what is still, thank God, fundamentally a basic manufacturing constituency. Therefore, that was not only a reasonable case to put, but it was unanswerable.

Mr. C was a sub-postmaster and a self-employed agent for the Post Office. He decided that he wanted to go into full-time education. The Government's attitude towards those who want to go into full-time education is worrying. They seem to feel that it is crossing the Rubicon. Mr. C applied to Crewe and Alsager college to do a BEd degree in business studies, after which he wanted to teach. He

wanted to sell his business and go to college, with no need to claim benefit. He put his business on the market, and in June 1986 a buyer was interested. He had hoped that the transaction would be completed by August. However, the deal was not completed until February 1987. He missed the 1986 intake and is going to college this year.

Mr. C's wife suffers from multiple sclerosis and the long hours in the post office were affecting her health. All those circumstances were entirely beyond the control of the people about whom I am talking, so in what way could he possibly be said to be voluntarily unemployed? Yet that was the decision that was reached in his case.

I have another case, which concerns a woman who worked as a machinist for five years. She trained as a flat-bed machinist. On 20 June 1986 she left to have a baby. The baby was born on 21 August and she received maternity pay for 12 weeks after the baby was born. She did not return to work, as her parents were unable to look after the baby and she was breast-feeding. She was suspended from benefit and her case was referred to the adjudication officer. During that suspension she received a letter asking her availability questions. She then said that she would work full-time and she started to receive unemployment benefit.

That continued until she made the fatal mistake, because she could not find a full-time job, of taking part-time work. She was called in and questioned and told that to take part-time work meant that she was not available for full-time work. She is still actively seeking work and goes regularly to the jobcentre. The only jobs as a machinist available in the area are as an overlocker or buttonholer, for which she has not been trained. She has applied for several jobs, but no one has bothered even to answer her letters. How can a stop-gap measure of part-time work mean that she is no longer seeking work? The "full extent normal" rule may be applied to her in six months' time, but the claim of non-availability can be no more than tenuous.

Those are the sorts of cases that I hear about every time I have a surgery. I have gone into considerable detail because we must be clear about several points. It is perfectly legitimate, when the state is paying for those who are unemployed, to make sure that those who are in receipt of benefit are entitled to it and are not lounging around refusing to find some employment or are among those who, for one reason or another, find themselves happy to remain on the general unemployment list.

It is unreasonable to keep jigging the rules around, putting people into an untenable position so that whatever they say they are wrong. I have been through such questions in considerable detail, and they almost instinctively catch those who may not be completely articulate but who are 100 per cent. honest, who, faced with a question such as, "Would you be prepared to work outside your travel-to-work area?", will wonder whether there is a bus and what their fares will be. Their instinct is to say that they want to work within their travel-to-work area, but they have to think twice before they leave their family and work outside that area. That perfectly reasonable answer does not mean that people will not take employment. Such an answer means that people are realistic enough to say, before they go dashing off, that they want to consider where they will live, how they will get back and what will happen to the family. That kind of answer debars people from benefit.

I am told that I am being extraordinarily unreasonable if I think that people will be debarred from benefit. I am told that those people are simply being referred to an independent adjudicator. That adjudicating panel will then decide on the person's legitimate right to receive benefit. If that is all that is involved, the Minister has a responsibility and he should answer tonight. If people are to be debarred, even temporarily, from benefit, we must be satisfied about the circumstances in which those people will exist until that benefit has been properly adjudicated upon.

Secondly, if people are to be referred, there must be some machinery to make that a rapid process. I do not believe that it is acceptable to say, as we say to many people at a most difficult time in their lives, "Oh well, you have been referred and with any luck you might get called within six months, or possibly it could be a little longer. Do not worry, because if you are entitled to benefit you will get the arrears." That is fine. If they are still alive, they will get the arrears. Meanwhile, they must live on something. They have to pay for their flats, they must eat and clothe themselves and generally they must keep body and soul together.

The Government had better get their priorities right. I read the other day about insider dealing, which results in enough money being made to keep all the unemployed in my constituency in considerable comfort. I read that insider dealing is a victimless crime and that very few people need to be brought to court because, dear Lord, they are probably doing the fine male chauvinist thing and making as much money as they can by using a sharp ear and a rapid terminal. At the same time, people are existing on a rotten benefit. People are genuinely looking for work and they do not want to have to exist on the pitiful sums that they receive in benefit. If those people are long-term unemployed, they are told that they must come in, answer questions and demonstrate that they are entitled to receive benefit.

Sometimes we can get it wrong. A letter appeared in my local paper today. I did not send it; it was sent by a highly respected Liberal councillor. In the letter she says:

"Like many students at this time of year I have recently registered for Unemployment Benefit following the end of the present academic year . . . I must bring to the attention of the public the appalling treatment that is being dealt out to people . . . at the unemployment benefits office."

She goes on say that she made her first claim on 1 July and was told to return on the following Monday.

On 8 July this lady received a letter stating that her benefit was to be suspended because of the restrictions that she had placed on her availability for work. She writes:

"From recollection I had filled in the form stating that I was available to work Monday to Saturday from 9 am to 5 pm and was able to start work at 24 hours notice. I did however state that as I had two children under four years of age I was restricted - for example I would find it hard to undertake night work. If this is the factor suspending my claim I despair of the system."

She continues in her letter to explain what happened when she had the temerity to present herself at the local office and ask for assistance, and the way in which she and other claimants were treated.

I know that the Government treat civil servants like dirt, and I know that since they came into office they have set out to undermine the Civil Service. I know, too, that many civil servants operating in the DHSS are in receipt of family income supplement because they are so poorly paid. I know also that we cannot consistently expect

[Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody]

people at the sharp end to have to explain absolutely unacceptable rules and put up with the insults, savagery and desperation of the people who come to see them. Over 20 years in the House I have learnt that there is a kind of desperation about people who have gone beyond the point at which they can hit back, and we see that in those who are long-term unemployed.

I have seen good people destroyed by long-term unemployment. I have seen people who, no matter what the brilliant television adverts say, know very well that we have created a society that really cares only for those with money, and cares nothing for those with skills. At the moment we see the complete snarl-up of bureaucracy, the inability of many genuine claimants to receive their entitlement and the punitive attitude of the Government, who seem to believe that the long-term unemployed who receive benefit must come in and be cross-examined and in most cases be deprived of benefit for long enough for the Department to decide whether they are entitled to receive anything.

If that is the Government's attitude, the result is not just to fiddle the figures, although that is certainly one effect because it takes people off the unemployment benefit for long enough to have their cases looked at before they are returned to benefit. However, what it does to people in the meantime is absolutely abhorrent to anyone who lives in a civilised society. We are not talking about ciphers, about people who are born cheats and who know how to get the best out of the system. We are talking about people who desperately need benefit.

I hope that the Minister has the kindness and the understanding to say that the Government will look at the way in which the system operates. I hope he will say that if what is happening in Stockport is happening in other adjudicating centres all over the United Kingdom he will instantly do something about it. He should say that he will appoint more staff, make sure that there is a specific speed-up and look at the reason why this is happening.

If the numbers of people being deprived of benefit in Stockport is a reflection of what is happening elsewhere, it means that two thirds of people who are entitled to benefit lose it. Many of them get it back, but in the meantime they have to cope without any support whatever. If the Minister says that there are difficult cases but that they are very much the exception, I shall tell him that, based on conditions in my constituency, I do not think that that is the case. Many of the long-term unemployed are being put through a wringer, and that is wholly unacceptable.

That may not be the intention of the Government, but that is what they are doing. They are demonstrating double standards, because people at the bottom of the scale are being squeezed, while at the top of the scale, as long as they are operating in the City of London, people seem to be able to get away with murder. That will not do and I do not think that the Minister would want to be party to that kind of behaviour. I ask him urgently to go away from the House and find out what is happening under his own system. If he is not satisfied with it, he must change it, or the House will have something to say.

9.6 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. John Lee): Perhaps I might first genuinely congratulate the hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich (Mrs. Dunwoody) on raising this important subject and giving us the opportunity for this brief debate. While inevitably I do not agree with many of the points itmade by the hon. Lady, I know that she has been concerned about the operation of the availability for work test in her constituency. There has been considerable correspondence between the hon. Lady and my Department. Therefore, I am glad to have this opportunity to discuss the issues involved.

The first point that I must make is that the availability for work test applies not just to Crewe and Nantwich but to the country as a whole. Therefore, it would be useful if I were to remind the House of the reasons behind last year's changes to the procedures. First, let us be clear on the law. This says that unemployment benefits are payable only to people who are available for work on every day for which they make a claim. The law is contained not in any statute passed by this Administration but in the Social Security Act 1975. That is an important point, because it is often alleged that the changes introduced last year tightened the law on availability for work. That is not so. Indeed, the basic requirement to be available for work as a fundamental tenet of receiving benefits while unemployed has existed virtually unchanged since the passing of the Unemployment Insurance Act 1935.

The changes introduced last year were solely concerned, therefore, with the administration of this existing requirement. Until last year, the enforcement of this condition depended in practice on a single question asked of all claimants when they first made a claim to benefit, namely: "Will you take any job which you can do?" To that question 99 per cent. of all claimants answered yes. It does not need great vision to see that this was hardly an effective check on those claimants who might not have been fully available for work. Indeed, during 1984, the Comptroller and Auditor General's National Audit Office, in examining the way benefits were assessed and paid to unemployed people, pointed out that a claimant could easily deduce what answer was required in order to qualify for benefit.

The people in the Audit Office were not the only ones to arrive at that conclusion. The all-party—I emphasise "all-party" — Public Accounts Committee, in its 30th report published in September 1985, was also unhappy with the existing arrangements. The Committee said:

> "We are concerned about the weakness of the formal test of availability for work and welcome the DHSS's decision to consider whether more effective tests are practicable".

It was in the light of these concerns, which the Government had also come to share, that we decided early last year to set up a number of experiments to see whether a more satisfactory procedure could be devised.

Twelve unemployment benefit offices took part in the experiments, with a further 12 offices gathering statistical information for comparison purposes. Crewe UBO, in the hon. Lady's constituency, was one of the offices taking part. The experiments consisted of issuing a questionnaire on availability to all claimants. The results showed that more comprehensive questioning of claimants in this way had the effect of identifying the number of people who were not genuinely looking for work. Between 3 and 4 per cent. of claimants did not pursue their claims once the requirement to be available was brought to their attention and a further 2 to 3 per cent. had their benefit disallowed. It also identified others who, while not available for work,

were entitled to different social security benefits and helped unemployed claimants towards job vacancies or training and enterprise schemes.

However, the experiments also showed that the questionnaire could not be applied in a simple, mechanistic way and that claimants often needed guidance on other benefits to which they might be entitled and about labour market opportunities in general.

The results of the experiments led us inevitably to the conclusion that the availability questionnaire, supplemented by interviews with claimant advisers, when helpful, should be completed by all new claimants to unemployment benefit. We accordingly informed the House to that effect on 28 October last year. Indeed, I venture to suggest that, had we not moved to introduce the new procedures nationwide, we would have left ourselves open to justifiable criticism from the Public Accounts Committee and others that we were failing properly to safeguard the use of public funds and the national insurance fund.

Inevitably also the new procedures have been criticised on a variety of grounds—not least that they are in some way oppressive or that we are asking trick questions. The procedures are not oppressive. The questionnaire does not ask "trick" questions, but rather perfectly straightforward ones.

Mrs. Dunwoody: Will the Minister tell me three things —has he read the form; how would he answer some of the questions; does the PAC know the type of form that is used at present to take people off benefit — because that is what it is doing?

Mr. Lee: I have indeed seen the form, and I have a copy of it with me tonight, but I am not prepared to go through it in detail in terms of the way in which I would fill it in. However, I shall be happy to discuss it in the Tea Room later with the hon. Lady.

Mrs. Dunwoody: I know what the form says.

Mr. Lee: I, too, know what it says.

Those claimants who are genuinely available and seeking work will have no difficulty in satisfying the requirements. Rather, the questionnaire helps us to identify the minority of claimants who seek to abuse the benefit system, and those people who need special advice and guidance with their efforts to find work or to claim the correct benefit. I am surprised that anyone should hold that to be in any way improper.

It may, however, be helpful if I deal with some of the specific criticisms that have been levelled at the new procedures, some of which have been raised by the hon. Lady. I shall deal first with the suspension of benefit while availability is decided.

In the first place, critics have referred to the practice of suspending payment of benefit while a doubt about a claimant's availability is resolved — resolved, I should make it clear, not by Ministers, but by the independent adjudicating authorities who decide all questions relating to entitlement to benefit. Let me make it quite clear that the suspension of benefit in these circumstances is not new. It has been the long-standing practice under successive Administrations and applies not just where doubts arise on the availability for work condition, but in the case of doubts about any of the conditions for receipt of benefit. That seems to be quite right — to pay out benefit to someone with doubtful entitlement while that entitlement is being determined seems a dubious use of public funds.

There is also the alleged criticism of suspended cases that are ultimately decided in the claimant's favour. It has also been suggested that, because a high proportion of the cases put to adjudication officers are "allowed" — in other words, decided in favour of the claimant — that calls our procedures into question. I find this a strange proposition. Just because a case is "allowed" does not mean that it was wrong or inappropriate to have referred it for a decision. Indeed, with cases of availability, adjudicators have always had discretion to give the claimant the benefit of the doubt and review the case at a later stage, which obviously increases the number of cases where benefit is not disallowed.

The hon. Lady raised with obvious and sincere concern the question of hardship while benefit is suspended or disallowed. Questions have also been raised about the effect when benefit is suspended while a question of availability is decided. Let me make it quite clear: it is and always has been the case under successive Administrations that where a person is disallowed benefit because he is found not to be available for work or where benefit has been suspended while the question of availability is being considered by an adjudication officer, benefit is not payable. In those circumstances, the DHSS can nevertheless make an urgent need payment where the situation warrants it. The DHSS has that flexibility.

Moreover, in practice, where a person is likely to be entitled to an alternative benefit which does not require him to be available for work, the unemployment benefit officer will often refer the case to their claimant adviser who can usually help to get the alternative benefit put into effect.

Mrs. Dunwoody: I apologise to the Minister for intervening, but this is important. How long does it take on average for an adjudication to take place? I am not arguing about whether successive Governments have always said that if a person is entitled to benefit he should have it. From listening to this Government, one might occasionally think that that was not the case. How long is it before a case is answered? That must be directly relevant because, as the Minister knows, the urgent needs payment does not meet overheads.

Mr. Lee: I understand from information which has just been made available that it is about eight days. As I have said, the DHSS has flexibility and the power to make urgent payments if the case warrants and justifies it.

The hon. Lady asked about the effect of the test on women with children. Various people and organisations have also raised this question. It seems to me to be a perfectly reasonable expectation that a woman who has children to care for but who is looking for work has made some plans for their care if she gets a job. If she does not, she will hardly be in the position to accept an offer of employment; there must, therefore, be some doubt about her availability for work which it would seem reasonable to put to an adjudication officer for decision. There is no intention whatever that the new procedures should be targeted in any sense towards women and children; but it is equally the case, as it was under the previous Labour Administration, that a married woman, in the same way as any other claimant to unemployment benefit, must demonstrate that she is available for work.

On the register effect, there have been those who allege that availability testing is just a device for reducing the

[Mr. Lee]

unemployment count. Once again, I refute that. This is not the case. The revised procedures were designed to meet the criticisms made by the Public Accounts Committee and others who said that our existing arrangements were "weak". The procedures aim simply at establishing eligibility for benefit and as such have improved our ability to identify people who are not available for work.

Concern has been voiced and criticisms made about the effect of the procedures on students. Obviously, being a basic eligibility condition, availability for work applies also to students who claim benefits. However, if they can show that they are actively seeking work and are both willing and able to take up a job or a job interview, their availability can be accepted. Many students are able to satisfy this condition, but where they are not it is once again the case that they have failed to satisfy one of the fundamental conditions for the receipt of benefit.

I am grateful to the hon. Lady for having given me the opportunity to speak on this topic and to dispel some of the misconceptions about the availability for work condition. The vast majority of claimants to unemployment benefit are actively seeking work and will have no difficulty in satisfying the availability condition. But we cannot and we will not accept that the minority of claimants who do not satisfy that condition should receive benefit none the less. It is to that end and that end alonethat the revised procedures which we introduced last year are directed.

Mrs. Dunwoody: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Lee: No. I have given way on several occasions.

If the hon. Lady would like me to consider specific cases after this debate, and I can do so if they are free from the legal adjudication procedures, I shall gladly do so.

Tourism

9.20 pm

Mr. Timothy Kirkhope (Leeds, North-East): I am very grateful for this opportunity to raise a matter that I consider very important — tourism, particularly in industrial cities in the north of England. However, for the benefit of other hon. Members, I do not want to narrow my remarks. The subject of tourism has not been debated very often in the House. Indeed, I was very surprised to learn how infrequently such an important matter has been debated here: only a handful of times in the past few years. In a debate on 7 December 1984, my hon. Friend the Member for Sherwood (Mr. Stewart), who introduced the debate, said that it had been some 27 years since tourism had been specifically debated.

I regret that the Chamber is not better attended for my remarks on such an important issue — especially by Opposition Members, many of whom represent the very industrial areas in the north with which I am particularly concerned, and to which I believe tourism has so much to give. However, that will not stop me from developing my theme, which arises largely from a question that I put yesterday to my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Lee), the Under-Secretary of State for Employment. I wanted to find out precisely how many tourists had come from overseas to visit this country last year. The answer was no fewer than 13·8 million. That enormous figure is very creditable, and shows a definite increase over the past few years.

The increase has not come about by accident. It is clearly a result of the many initiatives that have been taken. Some have been taken by Government, some by our tourist authority and — this is especially important — some by private individuals, the entrepreneurs who wish the tourist business to be a great success. I think that we should be very grateful to them for the work they have done.

We have done well. We have created many jobs in the tourist industry. If they were present, Opposition Members would no doubt suggest that the jobs created in tourism and the service industries are not always proper jobs. I would say that they are indeed proper jobs. However, they are not only proper jobs, but jobs that allow people to show all the best characteristics of the British: initiative, enterprise and a positive attitude towards hard work. The tourist industry releases that enterprise and initiative, along with the inventiveness of the British people.

In some respects, we have fallen behind some of our European competitors. One of our problems is, of course, our weather. There is very little that hon. Members can do about the weather — very little, indeed, that the Government can do about it. Nevertheless, it is a factor, and it undoubtedly means that people who might otherwise spend their holidays here go elsewhere on the Continent to enjoy the rather better weather that tends to prevail there. That is very sad, but it is a problem with which we shall doubtless continue to live.

The lack of good weather, however, is more than made up for by our heritage—the pure history of our country. Much of that history is to be seen in our buildings, monuments and museums, which show the nature and characteristics of this country to their best advantage.

Sadly, we have tended to concentrate too much on those areas that traditionally have been assumed to be worth visiting—for example, London.

This year we are welcoming many visitors to London, and we hope that they will continue to come here, but from time to time hon. Members find that access to this place from the streets round about Parliament is difficult and that other conditions in London are somewhat oppressive. In no way do I want to dissuade them from coming. I am simply pointing out that, for visitors, London is a focal point. Another major tourist attraction, for obvious reasons, is Stratford-on-Avon, and Oxford and Edinburgh also attract large numbers of tourists.

This country is very small and its road and rail connections are excellent, so it is unnecessary for tourists to concentrate only on a few locations. We should advise tourists to go elsewhere for reasons other than the pure excitement that the capital offers or the beauty of the countryside in the south of England. When advising visitors to go elsewhere than London, it is tempting to suggest that they should visit only rural Britain. However, much of the history and wealth of this nation is bound up with our urban industrial communities.

Inevitably, that leads me to refer to the north of England and to parts of Scotland. I represent a northern constituency. I am proud to represent part of Leeds. It is a very great city. During the industrial revolution it made a great contribution to the wealth of this nation. It has survived successfully the post-industrial era. Inevitably and sadly, jobs have been lost in my city because unproductive industrial plant has had to be closed. However, the city is now thriving and expanding. It is a major commercial and financial centre, and unemployment is diminishing.

The people of Yorkshire are noted for taking up opportunities that allow them to succeed. They wish to share their success with others. There are already tourist successes in Yorkshire. Many people already visit the delightful spa town of Harrogate. Many foreigners on their way to Edinburgh also visit Fountains Abbey, a most delightful spot. Sadly, however, not enough tourists visit Leeds. Were Opposition Members present, I should say to them that some of their remarks about cities such as Leeds and Liverpool do nothing to encourage visitors to go there; many of them are left with the impression that they are unattractive places, full of militants of various kinds.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): They are.

Mr. Kirkhope: Indeed, they are full of political militants, but I hope that visitors do not think that the streets are full of militants generally. Opposition Members give people the wrong impression. People avoid such places because they believe that they are squalid or undesirable, when the reverse is true.

Leeds has many fine buildings and museums, some delightful parks and excellent entertainment facilities. It also has a river and a canal, and it was the canal which brought the city much of its prosperity and carried many of the goods produced, contributing greatly to the woollen industry. Features such as that canal could be greatly enhanced to improve the environment for the benefit of visitors. Leeds has a good railway station, an airport nearby and excellent roads.

How can we best exploit those facilities? When I asked my hon. Friend the Minister a question yesterday, he was most helpful and talked about developments in Leeds. However, I hope for much more. I would not wish too much reliance to be placed on the local authority, although I acknowledge that local authorities with a positive attitude can do much to improve tourism and attract people to places such as Leeds.

I would like to see far more initiative being taken by those enterprising Yorkshiremen — by individuals, companies and entrepreneurs. They are there and waiting and perhaps they just need a little more encouragement to get going. I ask my hon. Friend whether the planning machinery is adequate in that regard. Perhaps it is time to consider some short-circuiting of the processes to encourage such enterprises.

I am sure that the Government are doing much. As I said, one has only to refer to the statistics for the past eight years for tourism, and the increased revenue from tourism, to prove that the Government have been most successful. But are they doing enough? Perhaps my hon. Friend the Minister will tell us. I am not criticising him in any way, but I wonder whether more could be done.

To assist tourism, we must examine areas outside the narrow band that I mentioned earlier. As I said, progress has been made. Bradford, a city near Leeds, has a most excellent museum of photography to which people come from far away. Indeed, it was featured in a Radio 4 programme yesterday. Bradford even encourages visitors to come and look at its cemetery, where many of the leading exponents of the industrial revolution are now at rest. There is also the question of the British museum's Asian collection. I urge that that collection should be encouraged to move to Leeds or Bradford where it would be most welcome and where visitors would come to view it with great interest.

For some time I was a county councillor on Northumberland county council. During that time we saw the development of the Beamish open-air museum, which was an interesting development in County Durham, drawing together much of our industrial history. That is an example of what can be done. I am not sure whether it is a good idea to draw these activities together on one site or whether it is better to retain them on their existing sites and encourage people to see them there, but I should very much like such developments to be encouraged.

It is a matter of the map for tourists. I should like to encourage the tourist authority not just to consider displaying on the front page of brochures pictures of Beefeaters, however attractive they may be, but to give priority, for a change, to the pictures of some of the old Yorkshire mills and industrial architecture in which people are so interested. That is one way in which we might bring about a movement of tourists to the north of England and other areas outside London. Even many of my hon. Friends who represent constituencies which are not in the north feel that London and the north are polarised and that tourists should be advised to look to places other than London.

Britain is not just the Palace of Westminster, the red buses, the London taxi cabs and the quaint soldiers and policemen who smile. It is more — it is an industrial heritage, a part of this country which perhaps has been ignored for too long by tourists and others who care about exploring and finding the country's character. I urge the Government to do whatever else they can to achieve, through co-operation, a greater initiative for tourism in the north.

9.36 pm

Mr. Andrew Hunter (Basingstoke): The circumstances in which a Back Bencher finds himself are infinitely varied and unpredictable. I welcome this opportunity to contribute to this important debate. Clearly, tourism is a subject of interest to many hon. Members, but, alas, not Opposition Members. It is a growth factor in our national economy. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East (Mr. Kirkhope) on finding this opportunity to bring such an important subject to our attention.

My hon. Friend was good enough in his opening comments to suggest that we could widen our debate and not concentrate exclusively on inner cities. It has been my privilege for just over four years to represent the constituency of Basingstoke, and Basingstoke cannot be described as an inner city. But there is an affinity between the position that leads me to seek to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the factors that motivated my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East — how to extend the tourism net. Tourism is a growth industry and it is important that all parts of the country should benefit from it.

In one limited respect, Basingstoke has an affinity with the premise on which my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East began his comments. Much of Basingstoke's growth in recent years has been due to overspill from London and the development which depended on and resulted from it. There is idyllic countryside around us in north Hampshire. Surely, in the last resort, the greatest tourist attraction we have to offer is our English countryside. The area has a number of historic monuments and houses, including the ruins of Basing house, which are graphically depicted within these buildings, and The Vyne.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East asked what can be done. There is pump-priming by central and local government, but is it not essentially a question of attitude? We must be proud of the part of the country in which we live. We must sell that area as a community. We cannot look to central Government for finance or to local government for a rearrangement of priorities. We must be proud of what we stand for and the areas in which we live. We, as individuals and a community, rather than the Government, are the vehicle for tourism.

9.40 pm

Mr. John Redwood (Wokingham): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East (Mr. Kirkhope) for the opportunity of taking part in the debate without too much competition from the Opposition Benches. It is a sadness to many of us that 12 Conservative Members are here on their own to consider how northern towns can be revived and the important role that tourism and leisure industries can play in that revival.

It is no coincidence that if we look at some of the northern towns that are prosperous, such as Beverley, Harrogate and Chester, we discover a conjunction of attractive town centres, the development of tourist sites, lower unemployment and greater prosperity. The tourist industry can act as a magnet for people and spending power. In turn, that prosperity can fructify and improve the built environment and the general surroundings of the towns and local villages.

That model should therefore be applied elsewhere. My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East has made a good plea for more Government attention and assistance to ensure that that magnetic power fructifies in the hard-hit northern cities. At the heart of many of those important cities lie historic sites of which we could make more, because those attractions could be enlarged.

Those policies will work only if they are seen as part of a wider package of measures to regenerate the inner city cores. At the heart of the matter lies the importance of land use and the policies to bring in urban development corporations to ensure that public sector land is better used and returned to wider uses. Those policies will lead to a better built environment, which in turn will make those cities more attractive focuses for tourists and leisure industries.

We must ensure that, as that land use and recycling is occurring, we succeed in making enough green space and leisure use available in the inner cities. At the same time, we must rebuild housing and bring in industry and commerce to produce the prosperity that those inner-city areas need.

Mr. Ian Taylor (Esher): Does my hon. Friend agree that the garden festivals in Liverpool and Stoke-on-Trent have been an eminently good example of the way that derelict land can be made use of for commercial benefit and the benefit of vistors?

Mr. Redwood: That is one example, of many, of the sort of development that can begin to turn the tide in hard-pressed inner-city areas.

An interesting study arrived on some of our desks this week from an independent commission that was set up by housebuilders in this country which considered the problem of inner-city rehabilitation. I give it two cheers because it shows that house builders have progressed from their position of two or three years ago when they said that there was little that could be done to recycle urban land or develop new housing in inner-city areas. They now confess that there is quite a bit of land available and that things are beginning to happen. They are still too pessimistic, and they lack ambition to foresee the chance to revitalise inner-city areas and build more in them to improve the environment.

That is the burden of my message. Tourism and leisure have a vital role to play in inner-city revitalisation. Land use lies at the core of the problem, and we must mobilise the private sector — house builders, the tourist and leisure industry and others—to rebuild those cities, and rebuild them fast.

9.44 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. John Lee): I arose early this morning and travelled to Margate to visit Hornby Hobbies, an excellent firm there. I hosted a seminar under our "Action for Jobs" banner and this afternoon opened a new swimming pool at the Lonsdale Court hotel, also in Margate. I then travelled back to London to participate in the "Come to Britain" trophy award ceremony at the Institute of Directors early this evening and now find myself answering my second Adjournment debate. After all that, I look back with a clear conscience to the vote in which I participated in the early hours of this morning on the increase in Members' salaries.

Having said that, I am delighted that we have an opportunity for another shortish debate on tourism. I

congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East (Mr. Kirkhope) on his seizure of the opportunity to discuss this vibrant issue. It is an exciting industry and it is marvellous to have the support of so many of my parliamentary colleagues from the Conservative party who are committed to the growth and development of tourism.

Mr. Graham Riddick (Colne Valley): Does my hon. Friend agree that it should be put on record that there is not one Opposition Member present and that those people who tell us that they care so deeply about northern areas have not seen fit to listen to this debate or participate in it? It is important that everybody who reads tomorrow's *Hansard* should be made fully aware of the fact that there has not been one representative from any of the Opposition parties present.

Mr. Lee: *Hansard* will record what my hon. Friend has said. I know of my hon. Friend's commitment to tourism and the development of it in his constituency of Colne Valley, which I visited recently.

I shall set the scene in national terms. The Government are spending about £67·5 million on overall support for the tourist industry, excluding help by way of the community programme and urban development grants. The industry's total turnover at present is probably about £15 billion and it is growing steadily. In the three months February to April, overseas visitors were up by 10 per cent. this year. Last year, as has been said, 13·8 million visitors came to this country. This year, we are heading for a record. About 1·4 million jobs are sustained by tourism and that is growing at a rate of 40,000 to 50,000 a year. Yesterday, the English tourist board estimated that by the early 1990s another 250,000 jobs may be created in this dynamic growth industry.

In my region, the north-west, employment in tourism grew by 12 per cent. in the two years to December 1986. The industry is led by the private sector with a degree of pump priming by the Government, as my hon. Friend the Member for Basingstoke (Mr. Hunter) said. The cost for new construction in the industry is running at about £1 billion a year. As I endeavoured to say yesterday at Question Time, there is a complementary relationship between service jobs in tourism and manufacturing jobs. For example, many manufactured products go into the construction of a new theme park or hotel and many building materials are used in the construction of a new conference centre. There is also a need for catering equipment, heating equipment and uniforms worn by the staff.

Historically, tourism in the United Kingdom was centred mainly around our seaside towns, museums, art galleries and sporting events and our national tourist attractions such as Buckingham Palace, the Palace of Westminster, Madame Tussaud's, the tower of London, Stratford-upon-Avon, Edinburgh castle and the idyllic countryside referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Basingstoke.

In recent years, we have seen a wholesale expansion in the range of tourist attractions throughout the regions. Increasingly, we see evidence of how tourism and leisure can make a significant contribution to the regeneration of many inner cities. As my hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (Mr. Redwood) quite rightly said, it can play only a part, but nevertheless it is a significant part.

Tourism development and environmental improvement can unquestionably bring about an improvement in the quality of life for local residents. In turn, such developments can generate encouragement for the industrial and retailing sectors to expand in adjacent areas. Increasingly, particularly in the regions, we see successful tourism-related developments in which there has been a true partnership between central Government, local government and, of course, the private sector. We look nationally at the panoply of schemes throughout our country, particularly in our industrial regions.

I refer to the docklands in London and Albert docks in Liverpool – about 16 million tourists go to Liverpool each year. The garden festivals were referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Esher (Mr. Taylor). Salford Quays is developing adjacent to Manchester and the G-Mex centre is in Manchester itself. I am proud to say that Manchester is my home city. It won the "Come to Britain" award. It has had 1 million visitors this year. The new Grenada studio tours project is coming on stream. It has been helped by a grant from the tourist boards. In London, there is the Royal Agricultural Hall, now the business and design centre, in Islington. In the midlands there is the Birmingham conference centre, which is developing. In Bradford there is the national photographic museum.

In Southwark – back to London – there is the Globe theatre. I was privileged last week to be at the ground-breaking ceremony. There are major theme attractions at Alton Towers, which has over 2 million visitors each year. Tourism developments have been taking place in many smaller north-western communities.

Mr. Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire, West): My hon. Friend mentioned the midlands and Alton Towers. On Monday, he will visit two excellent tourist attractions in my constituency – Gulliver's Kingdom and the Heights of Abraham. Those developments have been done by the private sector and have brought great employment benefits. My hon. Friend is doing a lot of work in his new appointment. We will welcome him to west Derbyshire on Monday to see the new developments.

Mr. Lee: I look forward to being in west Derbyshire on Monday. In fact, I am going there after opening a picnic site in Buxton. I shall take my family with me. We will be a genuine tourist family on that occasion.

I was referring to some of the smaller sensitive developments that are taking place in our industrial regions. I refer specifically to developments such as Quarry Bank mills at Styal, the enterprising, successful Wigan pier development. In my constituency, which is famous for its Pendle witches, an excellent heritage centre draws about 15,000 visitors a year.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East talked about Leeds. Yesterday, I paid generous praise to the contribution that the Leeds city council is making in the development of tourism in and around Leeds. He talked about the number of visitors. Already, Leeds is getting many visitors to existing attractions. I refer to the Abbey house museum at Kirkstall abbey which has about 200,000 visitors. The city art gallery had about 120,000 visitors in 1985, and Harewood house had about 180,000 visitors and Temple Newsom house had about 50,000 visitors in 1985.

[Mr. Lee]

Increasingly, tourists are going to Leeds and new developments are under way. Unquestionably, more visitors will go there.

I conclude by repeating the areas on which I personally intend to concentrate in the years that, I hope, lie ahead of me as Minister with responsibility for tourism. I intend to implement a campaign to achieve a spotless Britain. As a number of hon. Members mentioned at Question Time yesterday, there is too much litter on our streets and shores. Signposting also requires improvement. The tradition of service does not come easily to this nation and we could do much more to make visitors feel welcome and appreciated. Unquestionably, too, we can do much more to train people coming into the industry and to improve the quality of our tourist attractions. Finally, I wish to encourage the employment of more disabled people to pursue careers in the industry. From the point of view of the visitor and consumer, I wish to ensure too, that more hotels, conference centres and tourist attractions have acceptable and satisfactory means of access for those who, sadly, suffer from disabilities.

I hope that in this short speech I have been able to cover a wide range of aspects of tourism, from the traditional to more recent developments and some of the themes that I personally intend to pursue. I conclude by congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East once again on raising this subject. As one who was born in Manchester and represents a north-western constituency in north-east Lancashire, I am totally committed to the role of tourism. I have seen for myself what tourism can do in part to regenerate our regions and industrial cities and I am committed to ensuring that in those areas, in Yorkshire and in my hon. Friend's constituency of Leeds, the development of tourism in future comes on apace.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at four minutes to Ten o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 23 July 1987

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

LONDON REGIONAL TRANSPORT BILL *(By Order)*
Order for consideration, as amended, read.
To be considered upon Thursday 22 October.

LONDON DOCKLANDS RAILWAY (BECKTON) BILL *(By Order)*

TEIGNMOUTH QUAY COMPANY BILL *(By Order)*

YORK CITY COUNCIL BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

KEBLE COLLEGE OXFORD BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

SELWYN COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

HAMPSHIRE (LYNDHURST BYPASS) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Orders for Second Reading read.
To be read a Second time upon Thursday 22 October.

Oral Answers to Questions

NORTHERN IRELAND

Harland and Wolff

1. **Mr. Nicholas Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to what extent his Department has subsidised Harland and Wolff Shipbuilders over the last five years; and how much money is committed to further subsidy.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Viggers): The amount of subsidy provided to Harland and Wolff over the last five years was £225·6 million. Provision of £40·5 million has been made in the Main Estimates for 1987-88.

Mr. Brown: Is not the Minister's problem this: Harland and Wolff now require a subsidy of well over 40 per cent. of its turnover, whereas the EEC sixth directive on shipbuilding means that subsidies at other shipyards are restricted to 28 per cent.? What steps will the Government take to bring their subsidy to Harland and Wolff into line with the subsidies that they are prepared to provide for mainland merchant shipbuilding yards, or will they continue to subsidise Harland and Wolff in excess of the levels that they are offering to mainland shipyards?

Mr. Viggers: The hon. Gentleman is wrong to think that Northern Ireland is exempt from the EEC sixth directive on shipbuilding subsidies. If he believes that the subsidy given to Harland and Wolff is large, I remind him of the figure quoted by my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 7 July in the House, when he said that British Shipbuilders — with which Harland and Wolff is not connected — has been subsidised to the tune of £1,750 million since 1979.

Mr. Kilfedder: Will the Minister confirm that the Belfast shipyard is essential to Northern Ireland and that it plays a vital part in the economy by directly employing 3,700 workers and indirectly employing many thousands? Will he also confirm that 740 companies in mainland Britain do business with the shipyard, and that during the last financial year companies in Britain have secured orders worth £50 million from Harland and Wolff for the supply of components and materials? Does that not contrast with the 600 companies in Northern Ireland which secured orders to the value of £7 million in the same period?

Mr. Viggers: The hon. Gentleman makes some important points. We are aware of the importance of Harland and Wolff to industry in Northern Ireland, and we are doing all that we can to assist Harland and Wolff in winning further orders, upon which the future of the yard depends.

Mr. Maginnis: Will the Minister remind the Secretary of State for Defence of the exact terms of his statement in the House on 24 April, when he said that Swan Hunter should be given a preferential opportunity to bid for AOR2? He also stipulated that AOR2 should be of the same design as AOR1 and that the terms, conditions, cost and programme should be no less favourable to the Ministry of Defence than that which could be obtained from Harland and Wolff for a follow-on ship. Will the Minister continue to press that point and remind the Secretary of State of his statement in the House?

Mr. Viggers: The commitments made at the time of placing the AOR1 order were quite clear. It was confirmed that the order was unsubsidised and comprehensively costed. As the hon. Gentleman will be aware, independent assessors are ensuring that there is no overrun on the cost of the construction.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: Is my hon. Friend aware that, having spent my working life in shipbuilding, on a recent visit to Harland and Wolff I was immensely impressed by the efficiency of the yard, the quality of the output and the spirit of the work force? Has he received any approach from the EEC Commission which might put the future of that splendid yard at risk?

Mr. Viggers: My hon. Friend's interest in this area is well-known and I welcome his recent visit to the yard. The Government are determined to do all that they can to assist in the winning of future orders for Harland and Wolff. We welcome the recent flexibility that has been

shown by the work force at Harland and Wolff, which should ensure that the manner in which it tenders for further orders is assisted.

Mr. James Marshall: Does the Minister accept that there is agreement in all parts of the House that Harland and Wolff is vital to the economy of Northern Ireland? In the light of that, will the Minister state how many thousands of jobs have been lost to the yard since the Government came to power in 1979? Will he give projected figures for the number of employees in the yard over the next five years?

Mr. Viggers: I welcome the hon. Gentleman to his Front Bench with his new responsibilities. We very much look forward to his future contributions.

The subsidy that has been given to Harland and Wolff has enabled it to continue with its merchant shipbuilding orders. The future of that yard will, of course, depend upon the winning of further orders and I cannot speculate with the hon. Gentleman how the yard will succeed. However, the flexibility that the work force has recently shown in its approach to management problems should assist in winning further orders.

Security

2. **Mr. Bowis** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about progress on co-operation on cross-border security with the Republic of Ireland.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Tom King): Both Governments are committed to the development of the closest co-operation to defeat terrorism. Last week's meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference heard a detailed report on the programme of work which is being carried out by the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Garda Siochana in the area of security co-operation, and we shall continue to give the highest priority to this.

Mr. Bowis: Does my right hon. Friend agree that there can be no political solutions in the North or South of Ireland until terrorism is defeated? Will he acknowledge the sense of outrage felt in all parts of the United Kingdom at the shooting, from across the border, of a British soldier in Belleek? What representations has my right hon. Friend made to the Irish Government about this incident?

Mr. King: I certainly confirm the feeling of outrage that I know every hon. Member will share about that particular atrocity. My hon. Friend may be aware that, after that attack, I spoke immediately to Mr. Lenihan, the Deputy Prime Minister, and to the Foreign Minister of the Irish Republic, about that incident. He gave me the clearest assurance that every possible effort would be made in respect of their jurisdiction. I confirm that we shall be anxious to co-operate as closely as possible to bring to justice those responsible. It is quite clear that that attack was a deliberate provocation to try to stir up hatred and sectarian feeling.

Mr. Maginnis: Will the Secretary of State be assured by me that the people who live close to the frontier have no confidence whatsoever in what he says? The particular shooting to which the hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) referred happened in my constituency. The site from which it took place is well known to me. There is no point in the right hon. Gentleman suggesting that security is better when that was the one single point overlooking Belleek police station and the main street from which an incident of this sort could have taken place. The terrorist was able to move in, carry out the murder and escape without any adequate steps being taken to apprehend him. There is absolutely no confidence in this so-called co-operation, when we know that members of the the Garda Siochana are not even allowed to work overtime.

Mr. King: Of all the Members in the House, the hon. Gentleman cannot pretend that he does not know something about the security situation. He knows perfectly well the problems of guarding 300 miles of border for 24 hours a day, seven days a week. He knows how difficult it is to prevent an incident where one evil man can on one occasion creep into position and commit an atrocity of that kind. He knows the challenge that that poses. I welcome the hon. Gentleman's contribution, but I put it to the House and to the hon. Gentleman that he make a constructive contribution and should recognise that there is no way in which we are likely to improve cross-border security without the co-operation of the Irish Government.

Mr. Bellingham: Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to the family of this young soldier who, I gather, had been in the Province for only 24 hours. Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is time that we reconsidered the whole concept of hot pursuit so that both sides have an opportunity to go over the border in pursuit of terrorists? Surely it is not asking too much to look at that again.

Mr. King: The problems of this sort of attack are not necessarily ones that are immediately met by a response of hot pursuit. It is important that there should be increasingly close co-operation between the security forces of both sides. I certainly look for clear evidence and the clearest determination in pursuit of the perpetrator of this crime. That also applies to the other crimes that have taken place because, tragically, there have been a number of other murders in recent weeks in Northern Ireland, the investigation of all of which must be prosecuted to a successful conclusion.

3. **Mr. Clifford Forsythe** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security situation in Northern Ireland.

8. **Mr. Molyneaux** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security situation in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Tom King: Since I last answered questions in the House on 14 May, 16 people have been killed in incidents arising from the security situation. They included five soldiers, two members of the RUC and nine civilians, of whom six are believed to have been the victims of sectarian murders. Of the remainder, two were former members of the security forces. The Provisional IRA has claimed responsibility for 12 of these brutal murders and the UFF and the UVF claimed responsibility for one each.

In the face of this high level of terrorist activity, the efforts of the security forces are continuing to yield encouraging results. During 1986 a total of 655 people were charged with serious offences, including 12 with murder. So far this year 238 people have been charged with serious offences, including six with murder, and 158 weapons, 6,000 rounds of ammunition and 6,000 lb of

explosives have been recovered. I also understand that during June the Garda recovered about 460 lb of explosives as well as a number of weapons.

Mr. Forsythe: As the name of the man who carried out the dastardly attack on the wife of Jim Nicholson, a former Member of this House, is well-known to the security forces, will the Secretary of State tell the House just what assistance has been given by the Government of the Republic of Ireland to bring this man to justice, to extradite him and to bring him to trial in Northern Ireland?

Mr. King: Obviously I cannot comment on hearsay reports, but my understanding is that there are a number of people for whom both the Garda Siochana and the RUC are actively searching at the present time.

Mr. Molyneaux: What are the prospects for real co-operation with the forces of the Irish Republic, given, as my hon. Friend the Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone (Mr. Maginnis) said earlier, that the overtime of the Garda Siochana has been almost totally eliminated? Therefore, as the Irish army has to work in conjunction with the Garda there can be no effective co-operation. Is it realistic to expect the IRA to observe office times?

Mr. King: The right hon. Gentleman may care to reflect on that question and its totally negative nature. It contains the suggestion that it is not worth trying. It is no secret that the Irish Government face economic problems. The suggestion that somehow we would do better by having nothing to do with the Irish Government and by standing as far apart from them as we can is unrealistic. Surely the right hon. Gentleman should be encouraging closer co-operation with the Irish Government and co-operation between the security forces in Northern Ireland and the Republic and seeing how we can make this co-operation more effective.

Sir John Biggs-Davison: Has not every Irish Government, since the troubles began, said that they were doing everything they could against terrorism? Does not that honourable undertaking, coupled with the worsening figures of deaths as a result of terrorism, indicate that the Anglo-Irish Agreement is at best irrelevant to the security situation?

Mr. King: I pick up one point straight away about my hon. Friend. When he looks at the statistics, will he be very careful, and when he talks quickly about the worsening figures of deaths, will he remember that within the global statistics are included, for example, those who were killed in the internal feud in INLA and terrorists who met their death at the incident at Loughall, and that it is important to look at what makes up the total statistics. I bow to my hon. Friend in his knowledge of Irish history and in what successive Irish Governments may have said. I can answer only from my own experiences and dealings with present Irish Ministers. I am satisfied that, whatever the history of the past, the whole experience of the previous and the present Government of the Republic of Ireland is an absolute recognition of what a total disaster to the whole of the island of Ireland is the present terrorist campaign, which is the godfather of unemployment in the Republic at present. I do not doubt the sincerity and real determination of the Government of the Republic of Ireland now to see what, together, we can do rout it out once and for all.

Mr. Kilfedder: What has the Anglo-Irish Agreement achieved during the past 18 months in defeating the Provisional IRA south and north of the border? Does the right hon. Gentleman not find it strange that Dublin politicians, who shed tears whenever a British soldier, policeman or civilian is murdered by the IRA, sometimes from across the border, none the less protest vehemently whenever a soldier strays accidentally a few yards across what the right hon. Gentleman said is a complicated border? Will he protest as vehemently to the Eire Foreign Minister whenever one of our soldiers or citizens is murdered from across the border?

Mr. King: There is a question later on the Order Paper on the matter of cross-border incursions. What is certainly true, and I would have thought that the hon. Member would have recognised it when he heard the figures, is that there is now a much better understanding between the Governments about the problems of incursion. The hon. Gentleman may be interested to discover how many of them there have been and how little publicity has been given to them. I hope that he will be encouraged in that respect.

Mr. William Ross: In reply to the second question today the Secretary of State seemed to complain about the activities of one evil man killing a soldier in Belfast while in the next few breaths he talked about 16 people who have died since he last answered questions in the House. When will the Government realise that they, and they alone, were elected by the people of this nation to protect its citizens, and get on with the job and stop depending on other folk? They should do their own job.

Mr. King: The hon. Gentleman knows a bit too much about the circumstances in Northern Ireland to pass the blame in that respect. Everybody has a contribution to make. One of the figures that I mentioned was the level of sectarian murders. Many of these sectarian murders will lie on the consciences of a lot of people who make strong speeches and inflame passions. They may not pull the trigger, but they have a share of responsibility for some of the murders that take place. May I just say that, yes, my goodness, standing here as I do as Secretary of State, I do not duck the clear responsibility that I have to do my best to try to improve security in the Province, but I look to a few other people to play their part as well.

Mr. Hayes: Does my right hon. Friend agree that a helpful step forward might be to require councillors to take an oath of loyalty, coupled with a renunciation of violence?

Mr. King: My hon. Friend is trying to lead me on to country into which I am not quite ready to step. However, I note the point that he made.

Mr. McNamara: I note the Secretary of State's careful reply to his hon. Friend's question. I, too, will not trespass there at present. The Opposition firmly support him and the policies of Her Majesty's Government in pursuing terrorists wherever they come from and from whatever side of the community in Northern Ireland. However, there can be no satisfactory solution to any of the problems of poverty, unemployment or discrimination while the place is plagued in that way. Can the right hon. Gentleman tell the House what progress is being made in seeking out the random killers in the Ardoyne who are only inflaming the situation and making passions high?

Can the Secretary of State confirm that, following the assassination of Lord Justice Gibson, he is satisfied with the state of cross-border co-operation between the RUC and the Garda Siochana at border areas and crossing points? Will he do what he can to ensure that people who are likely to be targets are not careless and are fully aware of the responsibility that they have for their own safety, that of their loved ones and, particularly, that of the security forces?

Mr. King: I welcome the hon. Gentleman to his first Question Time with his new responsibilities, and I look forward to debating matters with and responding to questions put by, him and the hon. Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Marshall).

Without debating the merits of the last point, may I say that all those in Northern Ireland in any position of responsibility know that they have a duty to take sensible precautions to avoid offering easy targets to terrorists. As to the hon. Gentleman's point about the terrorists that he believes exist in certain places, the most determined effort is being made. I was conscious on Monday night, when I was out with the UDR on patrol, of the increased effort being made in a number of areas to try to enhance the protection given. The steps that I announced in May to try to increase the size of the RUC reserve and the call-out on a full-time basis of the part-time UDR, are undoubtedly helping to meet a determined terrorist threat.

Mr. McGrady: Will the Secretary of State reiterate his assurance that he is receiving the full co-operation of the Government of the Republic of Ireland and the Garda Siochana with the RUC to apprehend and pursue terrorists within either jurisdiction? Will he confirm that the per capita expenditure by the Irish Republic on the pursuit and prevention of terrorism exceeds that of the United Kingdom? Most important, will he reaffirm that the basic answer to terrorism is a political solution to the problems of Northern Ireland, in that terrorism is the sympton, not the malady itself, which is political instability?

Mr. King: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, who has shown that I did not fully answer the question put by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara). Talk of co-operation as if people will say, "Yes, we will co-operate where perhaps we were not co-operating before" and suddenly it all clicks into place is simply not the score. It will take much detailed work, some of which has been done, and some of which is in process. It will take training, compatibility of equipment and a whole range of different factors to make security co-operation more effective. It takes trust and confidence, and all those things are developing slowly, but in the right direction. It also takes time to establish them. Yes, we are determined, through that, to deny to the terrorists resources, whether they be weapons, explosives, money through the paramilitary rackets, or recruits, more of whom can be created by disaffection and grievance. We are seeking to pursue a totality of approach.

Schools (Parental Choice)

4. **Mr. Harris** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he intends to give parents greater choice in deciding which school their children should attend.

Dr. Mawhinney: New arrangements for the transfer of pupils from primary to secondary schools were announced on 7 April. Under these new arrangements, from September 1988 parents will be free, within a selective system, to send their children to the secondary school of their choice, subject only to the physical capacity of the school and any special arrangements which may have to be made to protect a limited number of small schools serving relatively isolated communities.

Mr. Harris: I welcome my hon. Friend's reply as a clear sign that the Government are committed to increasing parental choice in all parts of the United Kingdom. Does his answer mean that he will no longer be deciding attendance quotas for indvidual schools?

Dr. Mawhinney: That is exactly what it means — subject to the physical capacity of the school. I saw no justification for my deciding the individual allocation quota for a school when there were parents who wished to send their children to that school but who, because of my edict, were not able to do so.

Rev. Martin Smyth: Does the Minister accept that we are not giving proper choice if we subsidise bus fares for people who travel past good schools to go to other schools, and at the same time close secondary schools in working-class inner Belfast?

Dr. Mawhinney: As the hon. Gentleman knows, there are 20,000 surplus school places in Northern Ireland. The Government have been encouraging the education and library boards to pursue a policy of rationalisation over some years, so that more money will be made available for educating the children. It does not make sense to spend money on half-empty schools when it could be better spent on books and education facilities for the children.

Mr. Alton: Is it the Government's policy to encourage integrated education? Why does it take so long for schools that are based on the integrated principle to achieve grant-aided status, particularly Hazelwood college in north Belfast? Having begun life last September with only 17 pupils, it now has 150 enrolled for the next academic year. Why has the Minister still not given the college grant-aided status?

Dr. Mawhinney: It is the Government's policy to encourage integrated education, if that is what the parents wish, and they have taken several steps to encourage that principle. I do not accept that there is undue delay in the giving of grant-aided status to integrated schools, because I must be satisfied, first, that all those in the area who might be affected by the setting-up of a school have ample opportunity to express their views for my consideration. Secondly, I must be satisfied that when we commit public funds to a school it has a viable future, otherwise I would be subject to the criticism by hon. Members that I was wasting taxpayers' money.

Technical and Vocational Education Initiative

5. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he intends to introduce the equivalent of the technical and vocational education initiative in Northern Ireland.

Dr. Mawhinney: A vocational education programme for secondary schools in Northern Ireland was announced in December 1986 and some £5·6 million has been made available in the 1987-88 financial year. That programme has the same broad objectives as the technical and

vocational education initiative, but has been tailored to meet the particular needs of the education service in Northern Ireland.

Mrs. Bottomley: I warmly welcome that news. Does my hon. Friend agree that the vocational education programme offers a real opportunity to break down barriers between education and training and to establish links between schools and employers? Will my hon. Friend give a little more detail about his plans? Can particular priority be given to introducing the programme in secondary and intermediate schools?

Dr. Mawhinney: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, because I attach considerable importance to the new initiative. The £5·6 million to which I referred is for this financial year. I hope to be able to make broadly similar amounts available in the next two financial years. That money will go towards the provision of additional laboratories and workshops, additional equipment, sports facilities and in-service training for teachers because I am determined, as my hon. Friend says, to try to increase technology, science, information technology and economic awareness among the pupils in Northern Ireland to help them make the transition from school to industry and work.

Electricity Generation

6. **Mr. Michael Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a further statement on his policy towards the future of electricity generation in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Viggers: We aim to reduce the Province's over-dependence on oil-fired generating capacity and to promote efficiency in electricity generation and supply. Northern Ireland will require new generating capacity in the mid-1990s and substantial progress has been made in a complex examination of options which, as my hon. Friend knows, include a proposal presented by the private sector as well as by Northern Ireland Electricity.

Mr. Brown: I am encouraged by that reply, but can my hon. Friend assure the House that the final phrase in his answer to my question shows that the Government are anxious to consider the benefits that will flow to the whole economy—not only the Northern Ireland economy but the British economy — from private generation of electricity in Northern Ireland?

Mr. Viggers: We recognise the benefit that could flow from a substantial investment of that sort in Northern Ireland, but the issues involved, particularly in the private sector option, are complex. We need to ensure that when the decision is made it will be to the long-term benefit of all consumers in Northern Ireland, both industrial and domestic.

Mr. Beggs: Does the Minister accept that completion of phase 2 at Kilroot power station is the most economic option presently available for future generation in Northern Ireland? Does he further accept that if the decision were taken to complete Kilroot phase 2 we would create additional jobs for miners on the mainland, reduce dependence on oil by Northern Ireland Electricity and afford time, which is very necessary, to ensure that the right decision is reached on the future siting of the lignite power station and privatisation?

Mr. Viggers: The hon. Gentleman puts the arguments well on one side. Kilroot 2 provides an attractive option, but we must consider the life of the prospective generating station over, say, 30 years, the price of coal and lignite during that period and the benefits that might flow from a substantial private sector investment in Northern Ireland. We are determined to consider all those factors carefully before reaching our decision.

Mr. James Marshall: Will the Minister give a categorical assurance that Northern Ireland will not be used as a dry test run for the privatisation of the electricity supply industry throughout Great Britain?

Mr. Viggers: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that that thinking does not permeate our minds at all. We are determined to do the best that we can for the consumers in Northern Ireland. There are no current plans to privatise Northern Ireland Electricity, although of course, we watch the progress of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy, who is responsibile for electricity generation in Great Britain, and we shall see whether there are lessons to be learnt for Northern Ireland.

Tourism

7. **Mr. Baldry** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on initiatives being taken to promote tourism in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Viggers: We have encouraged the Northern Ireland Tourist Board in its promotional and marketing activities, and the grant-in-aid to the board has been increased for 1987-88 by 18 per cent. to over £3 million in order to assist it in these tasks. In addition, the Department of Economic Development is encouraging the extension and improvement of tourist accommodation by the private sector and the development of new tourist amenities by the public sector with grant-aid of almost £3 million.

Mr. Baldry: I thank my hon. Friend for that answer. Did he hear the BBC Radio 4 programme "Breakaway" on Saturday, which paid attention to the idyllic attractions of Lough Erne, which seems to be an area of miles of still water and wooded islands where one can sail for days, tying up at different jetties, at each of which there is a different pub? Is it not time that we paid some regard to the beauties and attractions of Northern Ireland and the jobs that tourism can create for the people of Northern Ireland?

Mr. Viggers: I regret that I missed that programme last week, but I have visited Lough Erne. The last occasion on which I did so was for the Sealink fishing festival—the fishing festival with the largest prize money in Europe—where I met a number of the 300 competitors from continental Europe and enjoyed with them the delightful tranquility of Lough Erne, which I encourage all hon. Members to see for themselves.

Mr. Wilkinson: Does my hon. Friend agree that the most useful thing that the Government could do to promote tourism in Northern Ireland would be to win the war against terrorism and violence in the Province? In that regard, will he make representations to the Government of the Republic to the effect that our support for the Anglo-Irish Agreement is not unconditional and that we expect the apprehension and extradition to Northern Ireland of wanted terrorist suspects?

Mr. Viggers: My hon. Friend is leading me along paths which are not my direct responsibility as Minister with responsibility for tourism. Those who come to Northern Ireland can enjoy golf, angling and the scenery, without really knowing that it has a problem of sectarian violence and I encourage people to take advantage of the tourist attractions immediately.

Mr. Kilfedder: The Dublin Government use their embassies throughout the world to promote tourism in the Irish Republic. Will the Government urge their embassies to do a similar job to show the attractions of Northern Ireland to people in different parts of the world and to tell them the truth about Northern Ireland?

Mr. Viggers: Our embassies overseas work hard to promote tourism in Northern Ireland, and I shall be delighted to give the hon. Gentleman more information about the efforts that have been made in that respect.

Plastic Bullets

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if there are any plans to end the use of plastic bullets in the Province.

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. John Stanley): No, Sir.

Mr. Parry: As 383 people have been injured, some seriously, by the use of plastic bullets, and that 15 people, mainly innocent civilians, have been killed, will the Minister reconsider his decision? Will he state the position for compensation for victims who have been killed or maimed?

Mr. Stanley: The hon. Gentleman will also be aware that over the years Northern Ireland has seen serious street disturbances. It is necessary to have an adequate deterrent to meet such disturbances. As to the figures that he gave on injuries, he should also bear in mind that in the two years ending in November last year about 1,000 RUC officers had been injured in street disturbances. It is important that we take that into account. Compensation is a matter for the normal processes of civil litigation. I do not believe that there is any extension of the statutory schemes.

Mr. Adley: Everybody obviously regrets any injury or fatality, but does my right hon. Friend agree that if he was a Minister standing at the Dispatch Box being asked to answer such questions in almost any other country he would probably have said, "Yes, Sir. They will be replaced by live rounds."? Is it not a compliment to the security services and to the tolerance that we show in this country towards such murderous activity that we still use plastic rounds?

Mr. Stanley: I take my hon. Friend's point. He is entirely right. We have always followed a policy of absolute minimum effective deterrence in trying to deal with the serious problem of street disturbances. The series of marches in the Province during the past few days have been conducted in a much more peaceful and relaxed atmosphere. That is a significant development that reflects extremely well on the Royal Ulster Constabulary and on both communities in the Province.

Mr. McGrady: Does the Minister agree that in many circumstances the use of plastic bullets is, in fact, the use of live ammunition, and that the circumstances surrounding their use often lead to confusion and to fatalities? Does he not also agree that, politically speaking, the use of plastic bullets is probably one of the most emotive and defeatist things that could be done when quelling a random disturbance in Northern Ireland?

Mr. Stanley: The hon. Gentleman must bear in mind the nature of the problems that the RUC has had to face in the past in Northern Ireland. I certainly cannot agree with him when he says that plastic bullets are the equivalent to using live rounds. I draw his attention to the fact that although, regrettably, 15 people have been killed by the use of plastic bullets since 1970, about 100,000 plastic bullets have been fired during that period.

Ms. Short: Does the Minister not understand that families in Northern Ireland are still grieving because innocent children have been killed by plastic bullets? People have been maimed. Indeed, a woman that I have met was standing in her kitchen doing the washing up when she was blinded by a plastic bullet. When the Minister stands at the Dispatch Box to defend the use of plastic bullets, does he not think that he should at least express some regret for those totally innocent people who have been hurt, maimed and killed by the use of plastic bullets?

Mr. Stanley: I am very ready to express regret for the small minority of cases in which innocent bystanders have become casualties as a result of the firing of plastic bullets. I hope that, for her part, the hon. Lady will be ready to condemn those who have indulged in the throwing of petrol bombs and in all sorts of other extreme forms of violence in street disturbances in the Province.

School Leavers

10. **Mr. Forth** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many school leavers in Northern Ireland obtain one or more A-levels.

Dr. Mawhinney: In 1983-84, the latest year for which figures are currently available, the number was 6,217 — about 22·5 per cent. of all school leavers.

Mr. Forth: Will my hon. Friend accept the congratulations of the House on those excellent results? Will he explain to the House why those results are so excellent? Will he have a word with our right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science to give him some guidance as to how we might achieve the same level of excellence on the mainland as we have managed in Northern Ireland?

Dr. Mawhinney: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his comments. There are several excellent schools in Northern Ireland and parents are committed to ensuring that their children are educated as well as possible. I am sure that both those factors, together with the fact that in several schools the teaching is directed closely towards examinations, help to give the good A-level results that are achieved.

Scheduled Offences

11. **Rev. Martin Smyth** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to his answer of 2 July, *Official Report*, column *141*, what is his estimate of the cost of listing the different representations received from

bodies and individuals, including the Government of the Republic of Ireland, concerning current arrangements for trying scheduled offences in the courts in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Tom King: Assuming that only representations made since 1979 were covered, the estimated cost of identifying and listing them all is estimated to be in excess of £300.

Rev. Martin Smyth: Does the Secretary of State recognise that that is a small sum to pay to allow the House to know what input has been made into a reform of the justice system of our nation? Or, are we being led astray by the statements of his previous co-chairman of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, who said that with the removal of Lord Hailsham we are getting ready to introduce three-judge courts in Northern Ireland?

Mr. King: If the hon. Gentleman had tabled a direct question I would have been happy to answer it, but on this matter, as I have made clear before, we have listened to the arguments and at present are not persuaded of the merits of the case. That is the position and nobody should read more into it than what I have said. We are not persuaded of the arguments and our position remains as it was when I made my statement on the matter.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Gregory** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 July.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. Gregory: Will the Prime Minister encourage local authorities this summer to put their services out to competitive tender, thereby securing savings of up to 30 per cent. in place of municipal Socialism?

The Prime Minister: Yes. As my hon. Friend knows, we are introducing legislaton on this matter. It is a matter of regret that more local authorities have not taken this course of action, because had they done so they would have had substantial savings and a much more efficient service. We shall always encourage local authorities to produce services most efficiently. The local authority Audit Commission has made many proposals and has shown the scope for saving money.

Mr. Hattersley: Can the Prime Minister assure us that this morning's Cabinet meeting took an unequivocal decision not to reduce public expenditure in real terms next year?

The Prime Minister: We had an excellent Cabinet meeting this morning. We issued a statement as follows:

"The Cabinet had its usual July discussion of public expenditure today. It reaffirmed the policy"—

[HON. MEMBERS: "Reading."] Indeed, for the sake of greater accuracy. I assume that the right hon. Gentleman would want that.

"It reaffirmed the policy that public expenditure should continue to take a declining share of national income, as set out in the last Public Expenditure White Paper,"

et cetera, et cetera.

Mr. Hattersley: Does the Prime Minister not know that exactly two hours ago journalists were briefed that this morning the Cabinet decided to maintain the public expenditure planning totals, which amounts to a cut next year in real terms? Why does she not have the guts to tell that to the House of Commons?

The Prime Minister: I am telling the right hon. Gentleman precisely what happened. Why does he not have the guts to accept it?

Mr. Michael Marshall: Is my right hon. Friend aware of the growing anxiety about reports that Her Majesty's Government have failed to reach agreement on an interdepartmental basis on the budget for space expenditure and that the proposal of the British National Space Centre for increased space activities will therefore be rejected? Does that not call into question our future commitment to the European Space Agency and to the BNSC?

The Prime Minister: I do not believe that it does. It is quite correct that we have not been able to find the considerable amount of extra expenditure that was requested. As my hon. Friend is aware, we spend through the taxpayer some £4·5 billion on research and development. We are not able to find any more resources. Therefore, it would mean a switch of resources from one research or technology development to another. My colleagues felt that they could not make that switch and therefore we shall continue our subscription to the European Space Agency, but at present we are not able to find more money. I hope that the private sector, if it is interested in the results from such research, will come forward with considerable resources.

Q2. **Mr. Meale** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 July.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Meale: Will the Prime Minister [HON. MEMBERS: "Reading."]

Mr. Foulkes: For greater accuracy.

Mr. Speaker: Try to paraphrase, please.

Mr. Meale: Will the Prime Minister extend her pledge and give a categorical guarantee that she will veto any attempt to introduce VAT on bus and rail fares or on newspapers?

The Prime Minister: I answered that question in detail last week. I am not quite sure to which of the three aspects the hon. Gentleman is referring. He is probably referring to the proposal before the Commission that there should be some approximation of value added tax. That proposal could be passed only by the unanimous vote of all countries. — *[Interruption.]* It is not a question of vetoing—we should vote against it. *[Interruption.]* That is not a veto; it is a vote against. A veto is the phrase used for the Luxembourg compromise — *[Interruption.]* Mr. Speaker, the Opposition seem to know the answer.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: Will my right hon. Friend assure the House that any agreement on intermediate nuclear weapons must not only be properly verifiable, but must ensure that NATO can deter aggression at whatever level it may occur?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I agree wholeheartedly with what my hon. Friend has said. Any agreement on intermediate nuclear weapons must be thoroughly verifiable, so that we can see that people are carrying out what they say they will do. Of course, it would have to be phased, and that, too, would have to be verifiable. We must also examine it in relation to the state of other defences, particularly chemical and conventional weapons.

Mr. Steel: During her summer holidays, will the Prime Minister try to work out how she will explain to people serving in Her Majesty's forces that if, in the next few years, they are stationed in England they will pay no poll tax, but if they are transferred to Scotland they will pay such a tax without any corresponding increase in income? During the summer, will she try to find anyone outside the ranks of the Government who supports this ludicrous measure and report such a discovery to the House?

The Prime Minister: I take it that the right hon. Gentleman is very much in favour of the community charge in Scotland. He knows full well why the Bill was brought forward in Scotland. Scotland has already suffered from the effect of a rating revalation, with disastrous consequences, such that we had to bring forward that legislation first. Legislation for England and Wales will follow.

Mr. Churchill: Is my right hon. Friend aware that Mr. Gorbachev's acceptance of the double zero option with regard to intermediate and shorter-range nuclear missiles is most welcome? Will she accept that it is almost entirely due to her determination and steadfastness, and to that of our ally, President Reagan, that this satisfactory state of affairs is being brought about and that it owes nothing to the activities of the Opposition, let alone the so-called peace movement?

The Prime Minister: It is reported that the Soviet Union is about to accept the global zero option for intermediate nuclear weapons. Its proposals will be tabled, it is expected, in Geneva this afternoon. Until they are tabled, we do not know whether the option has been accepted with any conditions attached. If it is without conditions, we warmly welcome it.

As my hon. Friend is aware, I referred to this matter in the House on 30 April, when I said:

"We would prefer the Soviet Union to agree to a global zero-zero on intermediate nuclear weapons. So far it has been unwilling to do that, but that is what we shall continue to ask for."—[*Official Report*, 30 April 1987; Vol. 115, c. 410.]

We shall indeed welcome it if the Soviet Union accepts it without conditions.

Q3. **Mr. Bidwell** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 July.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Bidwell: Would the Prime Minister like to congratulate the hon. Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) on his honesty, and good fortune, in disclosing to the *Daily Telegraph* that he stands to have the rates on his ancestral pile reduced from £2,000 to £300 under her new poll tax?

The Prime Minister: People who are paying heavy rates, unless they are within a very heavy spending local authority, will indeed gain. The people who will suffer from a community charge will be those who are under very high-spending authorities. That is one of the purposes, but only one, of having a community charge, so that local authorities will be accountable to all their constituents and so that their constituents can judge whether the services are delivered efficiently.

Q4. **Mr. Favell** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 July.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Favell: Is my right hon. Friend aware that today in the north people are looking to her for a poll tax to promote initiative and enterprise? For years, Left-wing councils have been promising that their high-spending, high-rating policies will protect jobs and services. Is not the reverse patently the case?

The Prime Minister: Yes. I believe that a number of small firms are precluded from starting up in some of the areas where they are most needed because of the high rating policies of those local authorities. One of the purposes of introducing a community charge is to get a unified business rate, which will be a great advantage to those areas that need more private sector business. It is interesting that there have been record numbers of inquiries to our small firms centres about starting up small businesses. It may be that the expectation of a unified business charge is helping people to come forward.

Miss Mowlam: Will the Prime Minister please consider whether any of the proposed cuts in the 20 million tonnes of steel from the European Steel Community production should take place in the British Steel Corporation, in view of the fact that we have had higher percentage deductions in staffing and production than any other European steel producer?

The Prime Minister: That depends on the year from which one starts, as it always does. Under this Government, the British Steel Corporation has gone from a deficit of about £600 million a year to a considerable profit, and it is now working well. We shall have to work with the European Community on steel quotas and we shall, of course, do battle for our steel workers.

EC (Budgetary Control)

Q5. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Prime Minister if she will invite the European Council to secure a report from the Commission on the operation and effectiveness of the strict budgetary controls agreed by the Council on 4 December 1984 before the Council gives further consideration to the Commission's proposals for extra funding linked to strict budgetary controls: and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The Commission reported on budget discipline in its two February papers on future financing of the Community. In the light of discussion at the June European Council it has undertaken to bring forward further proposals shortly. I made it clear that before the question of increasing Community resources can be addressed we must agree on effective and binding controls over Community spending, particularly agricultural spending.

Mr. Taylor: As the last round of "effective, binding controls" produced, instead of restraint, a series of

accounting devices, of which even Liverpool councillors would be ashamed, and an escalation in the cost of food dumping and food destruction to £240 million a week, with the Soviet Union and the Mafia being major beneficiaries, will my right in saying hon. Friend agree to stand firm in December and, instead of giving more money to the uncontrollable CAP, propose that we should return agricultural responsibility to member states?

The Prime Minister: I confess that I have some degree of sympathy with some of my hon. Friend's points—as one usually has. He is quite right in saying that we did not get a binding arrangement for financial discipline on the last occasion, and we must have it on this occasion. I do not think that we can abolish the common agricultural policy. There may have to be a degree of national financing, but it would have to be within a Community framework. My hon. Friend will know—he knows the common agricultural policy very well—that if one looks back to the treaty there is absolutely nothing wrong with the common agricultural policy. It is the way in which it has been operated in practice that we wish to cure.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: I warn the House that this is not an open question.

Mr. Cryer: Is not the common agricultural policy a disaster? The Prime Minister makes a great pretence of being concerned about the complete lack of budgetary control, but will not the farm agreement cost this country £600 million this year and many more millions of pounds next year? As we have such a huge balance of trade deficit in manufactured goods, will the Prime Minister explain to the House clearly and succinctly what benefits we get from the Common Market, because it costs about £500 million to £1 billion to be a member of this absurd organisation?

The Prime Minister: No. I think that the original reason why we went in, and it was agreed by most hon. Members on both sides of the House that it was wise to go in, was a political one—that we should be part of the European Community. The Community's original purpose was to ensure not only that there was an Economic Community but that nations which had hitherto fought one another should in future work together in peace and for greater prosperity for them all.

Business of the House

3.31 pm

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): May I ask the Leader of the House to state the business for the week after the recess?

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): The business for the first week after the summer Adjournment will be as follows:

WEDNESDAY 21 OCTOBER — Second Reading of the Public Utility Transfers and Water Charges Bill

Followed by Second Reading of the Scottish Development Agency Bill.

THURSDAY 22 OCTOBER—Second Reading of the Arms Control and Disarmament (Privileges and Immunities) Bill.

FRIDAY 23 OCTOBER—Debate on the promotion of good health on a motion for the Adjournment of the House.

Mr. Hattersley: I have two specific questions to ask the Leader of the House. He will know very well that the consultation period for comments on the Government's proposals for the reorganisation of education ends on 16 September. That is an absurdly short period and it ends at a time calculated to stifle debate. Will the Leader of the House tell his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science that Opposition Members regard that timetable as an intolerable burden and expect it to be extended?

Secondly, the Leader of the House knows equally well that the Council of Finance Ministers of the European Community meets in September to consider proposals to impose VAT on items which at present do not bear the tax — food, children's clothing, footwear, fuel and books. Will the right hon. Gentleman categorically assure us that the Government will not give even tacit agreement to the extension of VAT to any of these items until the House has been consulted?

Mr. Wakeham: First, on the consultation period on the education statement, I do not accept what the right hon. Gentleman says, but I shall certainly refer the matter to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science. Secondly, on the European Finance Ministers meeting in September and the question of VAT, I cannot add anything to the clear statement that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has just made.

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): Will my right hon. Friend find time for a debate on the registration and inspection of residential homes for old people? This is a matter of particular concern because yesterday an emergency procedure was invoked to deregister a residential home under the Registered Homes Act 1984. This involved the closure of The Haven old people's home at Gravesend in my constituency. We have also seen the publication of a report on the Nye Bevan lodge old people's home in Peckham. This is a matter of great urgency for many people.

Mr. Wakeham: These are very important matters. I will get in touch with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State concerning the first case. On the second case — Nye Bevan lodge — this is first a matter for the local authority and for the Director of Public Prosecutions. But my right hon. Friend is, of course, concerned with the wider implications of the report for the care of old people.

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): Will the Leader of the House confirm that there is a delay in introducing the poll tax legislation because the Government are giving further consideration to exemptions for certain organisations, and especially those that are connected with churches, so that they can continue to pursue the welfare of the infirm, the dying, the homeless and others for which they care? Has the right hon. Gentleman had a chance to consider further the representations that I made to him about the establishment of a Northern Ireland Committee?

Mr. Wakeham: There has been no delay in the introduction of the community charge Bill. The Bill is being drafted and I expect it to be introduced on time. I am having further discussions with other hon. Members on how we deal with Northern Ireland business and seeking to find the best way forward.

Mr. Terence Higgins (Worthing): Will my right hon. Friend do all that he can to ensure that departmentally related Select Committees are set up as soon as possible after the House resumes following the summer recess? Does he appreciate that it is especially important that a Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee is established to scrutinise the autumn statement of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer? Can my right hon. Friend say when that statement is likely to be made?

Mr. Wakeham: I am not in a position to say when the autumn statement will be made. We have made some progress in setting up a number of Select Committees, and I hope that it will be possible to make further progress on the establishment of departmental Select Committees fairly soon after the House returns. I know that my right hon. Friend has helped very much in enabling us to make the progress that we have been able to achieve. I am only sorry that we have not made more.

Mr. Paul Boateng (Brent, South): Will the Leader of the House ask his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment to explain to the House why he is not giving private tenants and leaseholders the opportunity to compel their landlords to transfer their premises to the council, especially in the light of the appalling state of affairs of premises in my constituency that are known as Clive court, where a 78-year-old lady, amongst others, is living in the most terrible conditions of disrepair and neglect? So bad has the situation become that the council is being asked to take over the freehold.

Mr. Wakeham: It will be seen when my right hon. Friend introduces his housing Bill that it will make more progress towards improving the housing conditions of many in the community than the hon. Gentleman's suggestions.

Mr. Roger Sims (Chislehurst): My right hon. Friend will be aware of the considerable interest in the House and outside about the establishment of family courts, about which the Government issued a consultation paper. He will be aware also that a debate took place yesterday in another place on this subject. However, the issue has yet to be discussed in this place. Will he give the House an opportunity to discuss family courts before the Government come to conclusions and issue their proposals later in the year?

Mr. Wakeham: I take careful note of what my hon. Friend says, and it seems that he has made a sensible

suggestion. I do not think that I can add anything of substance to what my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor said yesterday.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Does the Leader of the House share the concern about the injunction issued by the Family Division of the High Court against a west Yorkshire mother who is concerned in child abuse proceedings that prevents her or her representatives from talking to anyone about the proceedings? Surely it cannot be right that such a person, who is obviously in distressing circumstances, is prevented from talking to a doctor, a solicitor, a priest, or even a Member of Parliament. Will the right hon. Gentleman initiate discussions with the President of the Family Division to ensure that clear advice is given to plaintiffs so that it is understood that consulting doctors, solicitors, priests and Members is not against the terms of such injunctions?

Mr. Wakeham: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his courtesy in giving me notice that he intended to raise this matter. I appreciate that it is an issue of some concern. I do not think that I can helpfully comment on the substance of it, but I have been in touch with my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor, and I know that he will be happy to hear from the hon. Gentleman.

Sir Philip Goodhart (Beckenham): I am sure that my right hon. Friend will have read the recommendations of the previous Parliament's Select Committee that investigated sound broadcasting. One of the recommendations was that the public should have the opportunity of dialling in to listen to our debates through the telephone system. When we return after the summer recess, will the House have an early opportunity of giving its approval to this imaginative proposal?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not know whether my hon. Friend has had the chance to read the letter that I sent him earlier today on this subject. I hope that we can have a discussion early in the autumn to see what progress can be made.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): Did the Leader of the House see the remarkable and horrifying film on Scottish television yesterday evening about war criminals, which included precise evidence and witness accounts of the activities of one Antonas Gecas, who is now living in Edinburgh? Is there to be a debate, or will the Home Secretary make a statement? May we at least have an assurance that these allegations of the gravest kind about the foulest behaviour will be fully investigated by the Government without further delay?

Mr. Wakeham: I am afraid that I did not manage to watch the programme on Scottish television, but I recognise the hon. and learned Gentleman's concern, as do many other people, about the matter. I shall refer it to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): Will my right hon. Friend, if not in the first week after the summer recess, shortly thereafter, arrange a debate on care in the community? That subject is of deep concern to hon. Members on both sides of the House. My right hon. Friend will be aware that his predecessor looked sympathetically upon requests from both sides of the House for a debate on the subject before irrevocable decisions relating to the closure of psychiatric hospitals are taken and their future is sold.

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise the importance of the subject and my hon. Friend's concern in the matter over the many years during which he has served on the Select Committee on Social Services. I recognise that we will have to examine the matter soon, and I shall do what I can.

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): Will the Leader of the House tell us how widespread are the discussions to which he referred in his answer to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill, (Mr. Alton) and which were referred to yesterday by the Secretary of State for Scotland in his reply about devolution? Will he find time in October for the House to discuss the concept of federation or devolution of the kingdom?

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot guarantee a debate in October, but my discussions are as wide as any hon. Member wishes to make them. My door is open. If the hon. Gentleman wishes to join in, I shall be happy to hear his views.

Sir Ian Lloyd (Havant): My right hon. Friend will be aware that, for at least a year, many hon. Members endeavoured to persuade his predecessor to find time for a debate on science policy. Now that the Government have produced a most important, interesting, challenging and controversial White Paper on science policy and have made a number of extremely important suggestions on how such matters should be conducted, may I have his assurance that we will be able to discuss the matter in full soon after we return?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise the importance of the subject and, indeed, my hon. Friend's considerable knowledge and interest in it over the years. The subject is suitable for debate, and I shall arrange one as soon as I can.

Dr. John Reid (Motherwell, North): Will the right hon. Gentleman try to make time available immediately after the recess for a debate on the closure of the Caterpillar tractor factory in Uddingston? Despite the efforts of many hon. Members on both sides of the House, and those of one of two of my hon. Friends on the Opposition Front Bench, that closure is scheduled to take place on 15 August. The closure is particularly important because of current rumours that the Caterpillar corporation intends to cream off between £15 million and £50 million of its pension fund. I hope that Government Members will agree that the company has not only stopped the Government, looted taxpayers and abandoned its workers, but now intends to pilfer its pension fund. Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that we should have a debate to ensure that any moneys that have accumulated in the fund should go where they deserve to go, and that is to the workers whose labour created them in the first place?

Mr. Wakeham: I certainly cannot accept the hon. Gentleman's allegations, but I recognise his and other hon. Members' concern about their constituents' jobs. I shall refer the matter to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): Every week I hear of more and more cases of people in the north who find work in the south but are simply not able to find accommodation to enable them to take up such jobs. When will my right hon. Friend's welcome proposals to reform the legislation on rented accommodation be brought before the House?

Mr. Wakeham: The housing Bill will be introduced fairly soon after we come back in October, and, as far as I am concerned, as quickly as possible.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): I am grateful for the fact that the Leader of the House recognises the urgency of a debate on residential care for the elderly and that he is aware of the anxiety in Kent and in Southwark. When we have that debate, will he ask the Secretary of State for Social Services to concentrate specifically on the fact that when an inquiry was asked for and eventually undertaken by the DHSS inspectors they explicitly refused to look into the home—Nye Bevan—where the abuses took place? May we have an early explanation of why, when the Government were asked to intervene, they did not, with the tragic consequences that have unfolded for all to see?

Mr. Wakeham: I shall certainly refer the matter to my right hon. Friend, but I cannot give the hon. Gentleman an immediate answer.

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): If during the summer recess there should be an escalation in the Gulf crisis and the involvement of British warships in hostilities, will my right hon. Friend assure the House that he will be willing to consider the recall of Parliament for an emergency debate?

Mr. Wakeham: I assure my hon. Friend that, if the circumstances warranted it, I would set in train the necessary arrangements for the recall of the House; but that is not to say that I have any plans to do so now.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): Will the right hon. Gentleman provide an early opportunity after the recess for the House to consider the uprating of the old-age pension to ensure that pensioners will no longer suffer from the cruel cut caused by the Government's breaking the link between pensions and earnings?

Mr. Wakeham: The Government gave a clear pledge to maintain the old-age pension in excess of the increase in prices. They have done so, and I do not expect a debate in the week we come back.

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): Will my right hon. Friend assure the House that, whatever the outcome of the proposed merger between British Caledonian and British Airways, he will instigate a debate as soon as we return on the Government's competition policy in the light of that decision?

Mr. Wakeham: Competition policy generally is an important subject, and I hope that we shall debate it before too long, but I cannot give an undertaking that we will do so immediately we return.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): In the light of the allegations by Britain's aircraft controllers that the British aircraft control system is now out of control, and the personal despair expressed by many aircraft controllers and their predictions of an inevitable major air disaster, may we have an emergency statement tomorrow morning so that we can question Ministers about what is happening at West Drayton and seek some assurances that those matters will be resolved?

Mr. Wakeham: Safety is the paramount concern of the Civil Aviation Authority and the National Air Traffic Control Service. Despite the considerable increase in traffic, statistics show that the trend of risk-bearing near-misses is declining. The CAA has spent £125 million on improvements to the air traffic control system in the past five years and plans to increase investment in the future. But I will refer the hon. Gentleman's point to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): Why was not time found to make a statement, which we could question, on the Government's policy on space? Why was the information that we so much feared elicited in the Prime Minister's answer to the supplementary question by my hon. Friend the Member for Arundel (Mr. Marshall)? As these are important matters for Britain's long-term industrial, scientific and technical future, may we have a debate on space policy at the earliest possible moment after we return?

Mr. Wakeham: There are calls for debates on many subjects immediately we return. I agree that this is an important subject, but I can add nothing to the substance of the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

Mr. Eric Martlew (Carlisle): Has the Leader of the House read the article in *The Guardian* today alleging secret negotiations between the Government and a private consortium on the privatisation of the Carlisle to Settle line? Will he ask the Secretary of State for Transport to make a statement on that to the House tomorrow morning? Does he agree that it would be improper for a Minister to be involved in such negotiations at the same time as he was deliberating on British Rail's application to close the Carlisle to Settle line? Will he also ask the Secretary of State to make a statement on the role of the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) in those negotiations?

Mr. Wakeham: Stories in *The Guardian* are not normally the best basis for deciding what are important matters to discuss in the House. Nevertheless, I shall refer the matter to my right hon. Friend to see whether there is any statement that he needs to make.

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): Does my right hon. Friend expect to see a copy of the report on the Zeebrugge disaster? If so, will he ensure that a statement is made to the House at the earliest possible opportunity?

Mr. Wakeham: Yes. If the result of the inquiry is announced tomorrow, I think that it would be for the convenience of the House that there should be a Government statement on that important issue.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): If, in answer to the question put by my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), the Leader of the House believes that safety is of the utmost importance, will he arrange later today or tomorrow for the Secretary of State for Transport to make a statement on the ultimatum issued by Texaco Overseas Tankships Ltd. that British seafarers, due to return to the Gulf—a war zone—should sail or be sacked? Will he also arrange for that Department to investigate the report today in one national newspaper that tankers are being chartered to be sailed into the Gulf deliberately to be sunk for insurance purposes? Do the Government support profiteering at the expense of British seafarers' lives?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not accept very much, if anything, of what the hon. Gentleman says, but I will refer it to my right hon. Friend.

Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): After our intermission during the summer, will my right hon. Friend arrange for us to debate the north-south divide so that this House can, once and for all, discover what it is supposed to be, where it is supposed to be and why the Liberal and Labour parties do not appreciate that north of it there is a place called Scotland which has infinite benefits that the English do not enjoy?

Mr. Wakeham: If I thought that a debate in this House would settle the matter, I would certainly arrange one. However, I am afraid that that debate will go on for much longer than that.

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): Will the Leader of the House find time for a debate on the demand made yesterday by the European Commission for a cut of 20 million tonnes a year in steel production and whether the British Steel Corporation is to be exempted from that demand? In the light of the statement made to the House by the former Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry on 23 March, following the last Council of Industry Ministers meeting of the European Community, which said that the British Steel Corporation would be exempt, and in the light of yesterday's statement by Commissioner Narjes, Commissioner for Industry, that the corporaton would not be exempt, does that not suggest that there was a strategum involving the corporation, the Government and the EC to mislead the House and the country before the election as to whether the British Steel Corporation would or would not be exempt from the latest round of steel production capacity cuts?

Mr. Wakeham: The Government accept that there remains about 20 million tonnes excess capacity in the European steel industry. As Ministers have made clear at Industry Council meetings, the main responsibility for correcting that situation lies with the loss-making producers on the continent. Yesterday's announcement concerned proposals by the Commission to deal with that situation. There was no United Kingdom input into those proposals. It is for the Council of Ministers, not the Commission to take the decision on the way forward. However, I hope to arrange a debate on European matters very soon after we return.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. As the House knows, I am always very reluctant to deny hon. Members an opportunity to question the Leader of the House, but there are three statements to follow. I ask for brief questions. I shall endeavour to call those Members who have been standing, but we must try to get on.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): Has my right hon. Friend noted early-day motion 2?

[That this House notes with deep regret the omission from Her Majesty's most Gracious Speech of any reference to the introduction of promised legislation to allow the House to reach a conclusion on the need for statutory protection for the human embryo against experimentation.]

It exemplifies the deep and widespread concern in all parts of the House about experiments on human embryos. Many hon. Members are concerned that the Government will issue the White Paper before we have a chance to express an opinion. Will my right hon. Friend assure the House that the White Paper will be issued after we have had a chance to debate the matter?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise the importance of this subject and the concern expressed by many hon. Members. I shall certainly consider sympathetically the request for a debate and shall certainly have discussions about when is the most suitable time for it.

Mr. Sydney Bidwell (Ealing, Southall): If the disastrous trade figures continue and the Chancellor of the Exchequer has to take some measures to mitigate them, would the Leader of the House support the recall of Parliament?

Mr. Wakeham: There is a certain amount of hypothetical material in that question. I cannot say any more than I said earlier, that if circumstances arose—although I do not think that they will arise on the subject that the hon. Gentleman raises—I would certainly put steps in hand.

Mr. Tim Yeo (Suffolk, South): Will my right hon. Friend find time during the autumn to have a debate on the report of the Select Committee on Social Services, which was published just before Parliament was dissolved, on problems associated with AIDS? Such a debate at an appropriate time would provide an opportunity to explore the Government's success in raising public awareness about the dangers of this disease and how it can be contracted.

Mr. Wakeham: It is not for me to say what will be in order, but it seems possible that with a little ingenuity my hon. Friend may well be able to make the points that he wants to make in the debate on Friday 23 October.

Mr. Robert Parry (Liverpool, Riverside): The Leader of the House will have seen early-day motion 112 concerning the imprisonment against strong medical advice of a young pregnant women for a first-time minor offence. The baby is due to be born next week.

[That this House deplores the decision of Judge John Edward Jones in rejecting an appeal against the three month prison sentence imposed on Paula Otemah, a 20-year-old pregnant woman; notes that Ms Otemah is 35 weeks pregnant and that according to the Senior Registrar in obstetrics and gynaecology at Liverpool Maternity Hospital is in danger of having an induced birth due to intrauterine growth retardation of the foetus; condemns the possibility of an innocent baby being born in prison; and calls upon the Home Secretary to order the release of this young woman, a first offender, on compassionate and humanitarian grounds and for the Lord Chancellor to put Judge John Edward Jones on the retired list forthwith.]

Will the Leader of the House and his right hon. Friend the Home Secretary order the release of this young lady on compassionate grounds? Will he also ask the Lord Chancellor permanently to retire geriatric judges who are in their middle 70s?

Mr. Wakeham: I shall certainly refer the matter to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary.

Mr. Tom Sackville (Bolton, West): Will my right hon. Friend try to find time to discuss the disgraceful behaviour of some nationalised industries on planning matters in view of the fact that during a public inquiry into the Lomax site in Bolton, which would be the second largest

[Mr. Tom Sackville]

open-cast mine in Europe, British Coal was this morning forced to admit that it had misled the inquiry and was compelled to produce documents whose existence it had previously repeatedly denied to the inquiry?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise my hon. Friend's concern in this matter and I shall refer it initially to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Will the Leader of the House have a look at the newspapers, including the Tory newspapers, of last week to see what a furore the new disciplinary code of conduct has caused in the coalfields about miners being disciplined for out-of-hours activities? Will he call upon the Secretary of State for Energy to issue a directive to British Coal to get rid of the code?

Mr. Wakeham: No. These are matters for the management, unions and work force of British Coal to work out for themselves. It is not for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy to get involved in the first instance.

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham): On this day, when Mr. Gorbachev has made his positive response on the zero-zero option and on which some of us have had an opportunity to discuss with a high-level Soviet delegation matters concerning peace, will my right hon. Friend reassure the House that he will call the annual debate on the defence White Paper very soon after the House returns? It is already well overdue.

Mr. Wakeham: We will have that debate fairly soon after we return. Perhaps I could draw my hon. Friend's attention to the debate on Thursday 22 October. Some very important points about disarmament might well feature in that debate.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): When the House returns, will the Attorney-General make a full statement on the Wright case, including a statement on the amount of money that has so far been spent? I understand that the figure is well over £300,000. If I may make a point about an earlier theme, is it not absolutely essential for the Home Secretary to make a statement about the person held responsible for the most monstrous Nazi war crimes and who is living in Edinburgh? Why on earth should this country of all countries, which for the first two years of the war virtually stood alone with our Commonwealth partners against the onslaught of the Nazi empire, give haven and refuge to a person accused of the most monstrous crimes against humanity? Will he really live the rest of his life in Britain?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not think that I can add anything to what I said to the hon. Gentleman last week about the Wright case, that I would refer the point to the Attorney-General. I have already promised to refer the second matter to the Home Secretary.

Mr. Nicholas Baker (Dorset, North): Is my right hon. Friend aware of the widespread support for the Government's initiative on inner cities? Is he also aware of the concern that at the same time we should protect our countryside? Is he further aware of the concern that our present planning system is incapable of doing both jobs? Will he arrange an early debate on the need for the reform of our planning system?

Mr. Wakeham: I realise that those are important matters and are of continuing concern to many hon. Members. I will see what can be done, but I cannot promise a debate in the early future.

Mr. Bill Michie (Sheffield, Heeley): Does the Leader of the House accept that there is to be an important statement after this debate and that, whatever the contents of the statement, there will be little or no opportunity to discuss it? We are going into a summer recess, during which time problems may arise in local government over which we can have little influence. Therefore, will he arrange a debate immediately that the House resumes so that we are not faced with a fait accompli?

Mr. Wakeham: I hope I can say with some humility that whilst I was Chief Whip we seemed to have more debates on those matters than I could have chosen. I have a feeling that after the statements by my right hon. Friends this afternoon there will be many other opportunities to come back to those matters.

Mr. Michael Marshall (Arundel): Further to earlier questions from my hon. Friends about the significance of the talks that have just been concluded with Russian parliamentarians under the aegis of the Inter-parliamentary Union, following as they do the visit of Mr. Gorbachev and his parliamentary delegation and a return visit led by my noble Friend Lord Whitelaw and the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey), can my right hon. Friend say what he may be able to do to help the House debate the wider questions of British-Soviet relations in the near future?

Mr. Wakeham: I know that those are matters of concern to my hon. Friend and to hon. Members in many parts of the House. In the course of the summer there will be contacts at the highest level. I hope that they will continue to be fruitful.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): I emphasise the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) about the crisis facing the air traffic control system. Has the Leader of the House had a chance to read the article in *The Independent* today in which air traffic controllers made it clear that they believe that a major air disaster is inevitable given the lack of investment and the poor technology in the air traffic control system at present? As the holiday season is upon us and members of Parliament will no doubt be also taking to the airways soon — after all, by-elections are very expensive to the public purse—and in view of the great public concern and the widespread alarm that will no doubt arise from that article, will he arrange for the Secretary of State for Transport to make an urgent statement tomorrow so that he can discuss those concerns?

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot add anything to the statement that I have already made.

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): In view of the sincere and heartfelt pleas from hon. Members for debates on important issues, will the Leader of the House consider shortening the length of the summer recess?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not think that is entirely a matter for me. The House has debated the question of the summer recess. I did not notice which way the hon. Gentleman voted.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Is the Leader of the House aware that British Rail has denied that the Settle-Carlisle line—80 miles of spectacular scenery—will be flogged off to a private consortium? If any announcement is made during the recess, it will be exposed as a shabby conspiracy of deception. To avoid that, will he ensure that there is a statement tomorrow by the Secretary of State for Transport about the retention of the line to clarify the position, or that there is an answer to my question that is down for answer tomorrow? If that is not possible, will he assure the House that there will not be a statement when the House is not sitting and that the Minister will wait until we return before making any statement so that he is accountable to the House?

Mr. Wakeham: I am glad to have the hon. Gentleman's agreement that everything that one reads in *The Guardian* is not necessarily true. I do not think I can add anything other than to say that I will refer the matter to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport.

Mr. Michael Shersby (Uxbridge): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the London air traffic control centre at West Drayton operates at a very high standard? Will he consider the possibility of a debate at an early date to reassure the public that nothing serious is amiss with our air safety measures?

Mr. Wakeham: I am glad to hear my hon. Friend's remarks about West Drayton. I will certainly see what I can do about a debate.

Rate Support Grant (England)

4.4 pm

The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Nicholas Ridley): With permission, I should like to make a statement about local government finance for 1988-89.

With the passage of the Government's forthcoming legislation, this will be the penultimate rate support grant settlement. By 1990 the new system, which will be both fairer and easier to understand, will take its place. The level of an authority's spending will be clearly and directly reflected in the level of its community charge.

We must, however, bear with the present arrangements for two more years and my proposals for 1988-89 are as follows.

I propose to set current expenditure provision at £27·538 billion. This is a cash increase of £838 million on the provision for 1988-89 published in the 1987 public expenditure White Paper, and represents a 7 per cent. increase on the gross amount provided for the current year. It will allow non-rate-capped authorities to hold their spending broadly level in real terms. Rate and precept-limited authorities will be set expenditure levels which imply real reductions in spending in most cases.

Authorities continue to spend more than I believe they need to. I therefore propose to maintain a margin between the total of grant-related expenditure and expenditure provision. Authorities owe it to their ratepayers—and prospective community charge payers—to do all they can to keep spending down. The measures now before the House in the Local Government Bill will make a big contribution. Authorities need not wait for enactment to start implementing more cost-efficient practices and contracting out more services. Authorities should concentrate on reducing their payroll bills—both by negotiating settlements which reflect the continuing low rate of inflation, and also by reversing the recent steady upward drift in manpower, which has risen by about 0·75 per cent. over the last year.

I propose to provide authorities with £13·775 billion in aggregate Exchequer grant. This is a cash increase over 1987-88 of £750 million or 5·75 per cent. It will maintain the grant percentage at the same level as this year after taking account of the additional grant we made available for teachers' pay — 46·2 per cent. of relevant expenditure. I do not propose any major changes in the mechanisms for grant distribution and, as this year, authorities spending up will lose grant.

I believe that those proposals provide a fair framework in which authorities can operate next year. It will mean that if they do not spend more than the realistic provision that I have announced that we propose, the average increase in rate bills for non-rate-capped authorities should be around the rate of inflation, though as always there will inevitably be considerable variations around that average. Ratepayers in rate-capped authorities can expect lower increases, or, indeed, reductions. For the position of individual authorities, hon. Members will need to wait until the announcement of my detailed proposals in the autumn, but I emphasise that actual rate bills will depend on the spending decisions of each individual authority.

I am today laying before the House a report setting out how authorities will be selected for rate limitation next year. I am selecting authorities not selected in 1987-88

[Mr. Nicholas Ridley]

whose budgets are at least 12·5 per cent. above GRE and show growth of at least 6 per cent. since 1986-87. I am reselecting those authorities that were selected in the current year whose budgets are at least 12·5 per cent. above GRE. On those criteria, five authorities not selected in 1987-88 — Ealing, Kingston upon Hull, Liverpool, Manchester and Waltham Forest — are selected. Twelve authorities are reselected — Basildon, Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Haringey, Lambeth, Lewisham, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Southwark, Thamesdown and Tower Hamlets. Together with the authorities subject to automatic precept control under the Local Government Act 1985, this will mean that, in all, the Government will next year be limiting the rates or precepts of 37 authorities with expenditure totalling over £4 billion.

I am today also setting the expenditure levels for the 17 rate-capped authorities. For reselected authorities, there will be a cash standstill on implied expenditure levels for 1987-88 with an allowance for the full-year costs of the 1987 school teachers pay settlement. All the five newly selected authorities have budgeted in 1987-88 for a significant increase in spending. Therefore, I am setting their expenditure levels at a 6 per cent. increase over their 1986-87 budget with again an allowance for teachers' pay.

I am, of course, open to representations for redetermination of expenditure levels. Last year, I said that, where an application for redetermination of an expenditure level was made on certain limited grounds, I did not intend to use my powers under the Rates Act either to reduce the expenditure level or to impose conditions following an increase. The Rates Act procedures are now well established, and I should make it clear from the start of this year's round that I will not be giving any such undertaking.

My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for the Home Department, for Education and Science, and for Transport will be making separate announcements about expenditure levels for the Inner London education authority and the joint authorities which are subject to precept limitation under the Local Government Act 1985.

Dr. John Cunningham (Copeland): What a contrast this statement is from that of last year, when the Secretary of State said that he wanted to be realistic and even generous with the rate support grant settlement. We are continually told by Ministers that the economy is stronger than ever — indeed, they claim that Britain is booming — but this settlement falls £1·2 billion short of the unanimous view of all local government associations, with support by Tory as well as Labour Members for that figure.

Why is this shortfall necessary? What a contrast it is with last year, before an election. This year, after it, the Government revert to their long-standing policy of increasing the burdens on ratepayers and failing to match the cash needs to maintain essential services, leaving councils with the option of either increasing the rates or cutting the quality, flexibility and sensitivity of the services that so many people desperately need and rely on.

How can the Secretary of State pretend that local authorities can maintain expenditure in real terms when there is a major shortfall in the cash that he is making available in the settlement? Have not, just this week, Her Majesty's inspectors of education made it clear in their report that one in five of all classes in our schools are working in such awful conditions that it is

"having an adverse effect on the quality of work"

that children and teachers are able to produce?

Does not this settlement imply further cuts in education budgets at a time when most people recognise that we should be increasing expenditure? How does the Secretary of State square that and his penalties on authorities which he claims overspend with the Secretary of State for Education's boast about increased expenditure in education in some authorities? Who has got it right? Whom are we to believe?

Does not the statement also make nonsense of the Government's claim to be making the inner cities a priority for support, when this shortfall and the controls on rates will make it even more difficult for exactly those authorities to make a more effective contribution to solving the problems that millions of their people face? Will not this settlement mean that all authorities, including many Tory-controlled councils, seeking simply to maintain their existing levels of expenditure and services, will be penalised and forfeit grant to the Treasury? What has the Secretary of State to say to those Tory councils, and to his hon. Friends who represent them and those communities?

Have not some police authorities and chief constables, like James Anderton most recently, already made it clear that they cannot meet the requirements of proper policing? How will they be able to do that and find the money for the latest police pay award with this settlement?

Although we do not accept the principle, we recognise the Government's determination to press ahead with rate limitation, but why has the Secretary of State decided this year not to have any discussion on the basis of partial redetermination? He did that last year. He made it clear in his statement that he would do so. Will he reconsider this? We are not aware of any particular problems caused by partial redetermination. On the contrary, it seems to have worked reasonably well for both sides. I ask the Secretary of State to reconsider that matter because it would be to his advantage, as well as helpful to some local authorities that are affected.

Does not this inadequate settlement mean that the very poorest people in Britain who, from April next year, for the first time under the new social security regulations will have to pay 20 per cent. of their rates bill, will now face even bigger charges? Is this not typical of the unfairness of the Government's approach to the sharing of burdens in our society? As the Secretary of State in his statement said that this already unfair system will be replaced with a flat-rate poll tax, how does he square his claims of fairness in a poll tax with the Prime Minister's statement some time ago that any system that replaces rates should be based on the ability of people to pay?

Mr. Ridley: I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman understood my statement. I would be happy to repeat it, but I think that that would be tedious for my hon. Friends, who clearly did understand it. This is not a reduction in grant. The hon. Gentleman might be interested to know that the Government have made provision that is 7 per cent. greater than the provision for this year, and grant that is 5·75 per cent. greater than the grant for this year.

when inflation between the two years is expected to be 4 per cent. That is both provision and grant greater than the rate of inflation.

The Association of Metropolitan Authorities went on record last week as saying in a newspaper:

"This year, anything less than £1bn would be quite tough. Anything less than £500m would be very difficult."

We have got it exactly between the two at £750 million, so I imagine that the AMA finds it quite tough but not very difficult. I am grateful for its support, expressed in advance of the Government's settlement.

The hon. Gentleman asked about grant forfeit. I remember well last year how the hon. Gentleman predicted that local authorities would forfeit about £500 million of grant due to the abolition of recycling. He will be interested to know that the figure that I have is about £270 million, which shows the extent to which the abolition of grant recycling has persuaded authorities to moderate their spending.

I repeat to the hon. Gentleman that if local authorities next year hold their spending level in real terms, then they need have on average no greater rate bill increases than the rate of inflation. Surely it is not too much to ask of the authorities that they should make those economies that are available to them and keep their spending within the rate of inflation, in which case, nobody who pays rates will have to pay more rates, on average, but what they actually pay will depend entirely on how much their local authority spends

The hon. Gentleman asked about the undertaking in relation to the redetermination of rate limits. Undertakings were given in the past two years that if authorities applied for redetermination on grounds as to how to accommodate mainly their creative accounting, we would not contemplate either conditions or reductions in rate limits as a result of that further negotiation. I merely withdraw that undertaking for the year in advance because it is no longer necessary. We are withdrawing not redertermination but conditions.

Mr. David Howell (Guildford): Does my right hon. Friend accept that much the best thing that he can do with the rate support grant is to do away with it altogether, and that his plans to do just that are therefore welcome? Will my right hon. Friend also undertake, in his future plans for reform, to aim to see that local authority services and functions are tailored and limited as far as possible to what can be raised in local taxation, so that the mechanism and arrangements for subvention from the central taxpayer to the local authorities are limited to what is genuinely needed, and no more.

Mr. Ridley: I could not agree more strongly with my right hon. Friend that the way to deal with the complicated and unfair system of rate support grant, as it has become over the years, is to abolish it and start again. I assure my right hon. Friend that the new system of needs grant, standard grant and the national non-domestic rate will be much easier to understand. Its incidence will be much fairer on authorities. The burden that local authorities should be asked to cover financially can be adjusted up or down by reducing or increasing the amount of Government grant commensurate with the functions that local authorities have to fulfil. It would not be right for me to go into that wider and philosophical question, on a technical statement on the rate support grant.

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): What assessment has the right hon. Gentleman made of the job losses that will arise from what will widely be seen as a vindictive decision to rate-cap Manchester? Is he aware that job losses in the public sector, in a city where unemployment is already unacceptably high, will immediately lead to further job losses in the private sector? How can the right hon. Gentleman possibly defend a decision that makes a complete nonsense of all the Government's sloganising about regenerating our inner cities?

Mr. Ridley: In answer to the right hon. Gentleman, I should like to tell him that Manchester city council's spending has increased by 38 per cent. and that the rates have gone up by 26 per cent. since last year. The result of that is to threaten massive job losses. It is the most cruel and cynical way to create unemployment in that city. The right hon. Gentleman should be ashamed to say what he has done this afternoon. The way that we can help him, against his own city council, to create more jobs in Manchester is to limit rates so that businesses can survive and continue to employ his constituents.

Sir George Young (Ealing, Acton): Is my right hon. Friend aware that his decision to rate-cap the London borough of Ealing will be warmly welcomed by domestic and industrial ratepayers in the borough, who are appalled at the extravagance and irrelevance of much local government expenditure and made their views known at the general election? Will my right hon. Friend deal robustly with any application for redetermination from Ealing, as all ratepayers know that huge potential savings can be made without any reduction in services? Can my right hon. Friend tell us by how much the rates would go down if he stuck to his announced expenditure target?

Mr. Ridley: The local rate in Ealing this year went up by 72 per cent. I agree with my hon. Friend that there could even be a connection between that and the majorities of my hon. Friends who represent that borough. I do not think that it is a direct ratio, but there might be an even greater relationship between the majorities and the community charge if that were in place. I cannot forecast the rate for Ealing at the moment. The effects of the settlement on individual authorities cannot be predicted until later in the autumn. However, I shall be happy to see any authority that applies for redetermination. Of course, I cannot say in advance what the result might be.

Mr. David Blunkett (Sheffield, Brightside): Will the Secretary of State confirm that, every time the local electorate in a borough, city or county votes Labour instead of Conservative, the people may expect the following year to be rate-capped until the Government introduce the poll tax, which will be based purely on the ability to pay and not on citizenship, which has been accepted as democracy over the past 100 years? Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that the system of rate-capping authorities, which completely dislocates the financial planning process, is anathema to the financial experts and treasurers in local authorities throughout the country because his decision mean a reduction one year and the lifting of rate capping from some authorities the next, which makes planning almost impossible?

Will the right hon. Gentleman confirm that the ability of local authorities to meet the needs of their areas,

[Mr. David Blunkett]

particularly in inner cities, about which the Prime Minister, he and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry have pledged their concern, is made impossible by not allowing local authorities to determine for themselves what to do? Finally, will the right hon. Gentleman confirm that the figures that he mentioned in relation to the Association of Metropolitan Authorities anticipated the consolidation of the teachers' pay and the subsequent grant increase, not its withdrawal, so the figures that he suggests will initiate a substantial rate increase in many authorities, which he will then hold up as a reason for introducting the poll tax next spring?

Mr. Ridley: The effect of the teachers' pay settlement restructuring has been included in the figures that I gave, as I imagine the figures that I quoted from the AMA have been, too. The hon. Gentleman started philosophising at the beginning of his supplementary question about the relationship between rate capping and high spending, and electing various parties, but I should have thought that, from the London experience, he might see it this way. Once a Labour council is elected, the next stage is extremely high rate increases, the next stage is rate capping and the next stage is the election of a Tory Government or of a Tory council in its place.

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the best part of his statement was the information that all the nonsense of the rate support grant and the absurd rating system has only two more wretched years to go? I appreciate that this is a local statement, but does my right hon. Friend recall that a promise was made some years ago that in the rate support grant there would be much greater fairness to the shire counties? Can he therefore give an assurance that when the details are worked out, they will not be expected to subsidise incompetent local authorities? In particular, can my right hon. Friend assure me that no excuse will be provided for incompetent and inefficient county councils, such as the Lib-Lab Cambridgeshire county council, to use the settlement as an excuse for further inefficiency?

Mr. Ridley: I can only share with my hon. Friend the joy at the thought that this is the penultimate rate support grant settlement. I might be even more enthusiastic about that prospect than him and my other hon. Friends because I have to do it. I cannot predict the effects of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 working through as a result of the general statement that I have made. A formula in that Act operates on the needs formula as well as on the rateable value of each authority. That combination has taken grant from the shire counties on the whole and moved it to other authorities. That cannot be arrested until our mutual dream of the abolition of the system is achieved.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): Will the Secretary of State correct one misapprehension, that when and if the community charge is introduced, there will still be Government support for local government? The right hon. Gentleman is not saying, is he, that in two years' time all taxpayers' contributions to any local government services will end under the community charge, because that is far worse than anybody anticipated. Will the right hon. Gentleman confirm what the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) said, that his officials and local authority officers agreed that the amount needed for services to be sustained at their present level was £29 billion, £1·5 billion more than the right hon. Gentleman has accepted, so there is a necessary underfunding?

Lastly, if the Government are committed to the inner city, why have eight inner-London boroughs been rate-capped, along with Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle, reducing their funds in coming years, when they are just the places where homelessness and unemployment are greatest and where regeneration depends on money coming from the Government and those who can afford to pay?

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman kindly asked me to remove his misapprehensions, and I am happy to remove all three of them. First, if he had read the Green Paper, the Conservative party's manifesto and other documents, he would have known that Government support will continue, but instead of being in the form of a rate support grant it will be in the form of a needs grant together with a standard grant—not the same thing, and based on a different principle.

Secondly, if the hon. Gentleman has any misapprehensions about the expenditure groups to which he referred, I can tell him that those are merely the bids of local authorities for extra spending and are in no sense agreed by Government.

Thirdly, I invite the hon. Gentleman to consider whether the rates in his and similar boroughs are inimical to the regeneration of the inner city rather than a help, in the sense that they drive away employers and businesses, causing the loss of jobs and income, and the very problems for which we are trying to find solutions.

Several Hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind the House that we have two further statements before an important series of Northern Ireland debates. I shall endeavour to call every hon. Member if questions are brief, but it may be difficult.

Mr. Charles Morrison (Devizes): Can my right hon. Friend give me an assurance that within the allocation of the rate support grant there will not be a switch to metropolitan districts at the expense of shire counties, which traditionally have run much better managed budgets?

Mr. Ridley: I cannot give my hon. Friend that assurance because the rate support grant formula is enshrined in statute and works according to the rateable values and needs figures for each authority. He will have to await the results in the autumn to see such effects.

Mr. Robert Parry (Liverpool, Riverside): How will Liverpool city council be affected? Are the Government seeking confrontation with the newly elected Labour council? Is that why the Prime Minister has changed her mind about visiting Liverpool during the summer recess? Does she not have the guts to meet the people of Liverpool? If the Prime Minister will not visit Liverpool, will the right hon. Gentleman at least pay a visit to see things at first hand?

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman has his answer in the fact that Liverpool has the third highest domestic rate in the United Kingdom at 304p. That is damaging to those who would set up in business there and provide jobs. I know that the hon. Gentleman does not care, but we do.

and that is why it is convenient and helpful that Liverpool falls within the criteria. I hope that that will encourage businesses to return to that city.

Mr. John Heddle (Mid-Staffordshire): Does my right hon. Friend accept that the majority of ratepayers in local authorities which play the game will see today's announcement as a sensible settlement? Does he agree that it is the duty of local councils to manage their affairs as efficiently as possible? If so, what does he propose to do to bring to their senses those local authorities that are allowing rent arrears to rip to over £200 million in the past 12 months? Furthermore, will he ensure that local authorities such as Manchester city council and others do not revert to bogus leaseback schemes and other forms of deferred purchase to get round his guidelines?

Mr. Ridley: I thank my hon. Friend. The settlement is fair, but it is fairly tough in the sense that it does not simply acknowledge local authority spending sprees. Only prudent authorities which contain their spending will find it easy to live with. However, as my hon. Friend says, help is at hand through the Local Government Bill and the many possible savings of up to £2 billion which the Audit Commission's report has identified. I cannot say anything at this stage about creative accounting, but I have noticed some signs that the lenders are finding lending less attractive than they used to, and they are wise to do so.

Mr. William O'Brien (Normanton): Does the Secretary of State accept that his statement today will be seen as real poppycock by those who serve in and work for local government? Is he aware that, when he talks about holding expenditure in real terms, he must realise that he is starting from a low base? Is he also aware of the damage to roads and so on, and of the problem of community care? Will he have a word with the Secretary of State for Social Services, who is sending people, such as the disabled, the mentally ill and the elderly, from hospital into he community? Will he ensure that there is no shortfall in the provision for community care which is being taken over by local government?

Mr. Ridley: I have no idea what the hon. Gentleman is talking about when he speaks of a low base. This year, as far as we know, local authorities are spending 3 per cent. more than the rate of inflation compared with last year. If one goes back further, since 1981-82, real local authority spending has increased by 14 per cent. whereas in the same period real Government spending has increased by only 6 per cent. We are not seeing a settlement from a low base. The Government are waiting to see whether local authorities can take the necessary measures to cut out waste and extravagance and bring their budgets under control. If they can, they can easily live with the settlement.

Mr. Jerry Hayes (Harlow): I give my right hon. Friend's statement a guarded welcome, but when he abolishes this travesty of a system which is unfair to counties such as Essex, will he reward those counties which are prudent and efficient and penalise those which are not?

Mr. Ridley: Did my hon. Friend give a *Guardian* welcome, or did I mishear him? [HON. MEMBERS: "Guarded."] My hon. Friend is right about the unfairness of the system on counties such as Essex, but Essex could do more to contain its spending. It will be able to keep a low rate increase if it can keep a low spending increase.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Will the Minister take his nose out of the works of Adam Smith for a moment and look a little wider? Let me put to him an argument that he might understand—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Will the hon. Gentleman ask his question, please?

Mr. Corbyn: Will the Minister consider that the laws of supply and demand—which he may well understand because he knows a lot about that—cannot be met under his proposals because the necessary social services for elderly people cannot be met by rate-capped local authorities any more than the housing needs of the homeless can be met without a massive increase in capital building? Instead of trying to control local government expenditure by Government diktat, will the right hon. Gentleman examine the needs of inner-city areas and be prepared to pay the money necessary to take out of the lives of millions of people the misery caused by the Government.

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman would be welcome at a teach-in on the laws of supply and demand. He will know that supply and demand are equal when the price is such that the market clears. In the case of local authority spending, there is no such price and many of the services about which he is talking are not paid for, so there is no conceivable possibility of the market clearing. Therefore, there must be a limitation on the total expenditure. On this occasion I have produced a limitation that is well in excess of inflation. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would welcome that rather than make such grudging comments.

Mr. Irvine Patnick (Sheffield, Hallam): Will my right hon. Friend explain the total amount of overspend for local authorities and the effect that that is having on other authorities? What news can he give me for the residents of Sheffield, Hallam? Although I realise that the city is not rate-capped, the last time that rate capping occurred, the hike in rates was penal and extra rates were levied by my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) who, I believe resigns his leadership of Sheffield city council at midnight tonight?

Mr. Ridley: I am sorry to hear that the hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) has become my hon. Friend's hon. Friend. The hon. Member for Brightside should remain an hon. Member because of the different views that he nd my hon. Friend hold about what is good for business in that city. I hope that the possibility of rate limitation might have a slight deterrent effect, and that those who cannot be limited might fear such limitation and have in mind the possibility that keeping their rates low may help business and jobs in the city.

Mr. James Lamond (Oldham, Central and Royton): Is the Secretary of State aware that in a constituency such as mine, which is an older metropolitan borough, surgeries are crowded, not by irate ratepayers telling me that they pay too much in rates, but by people who demand improved services, more home helps, better roads and pavements, and more nursery school places? Why does the right hon. Gentleman see his duties as Secretary of State for local government in such a one-sided fashion that he is concerned only about trying to keep down, as far as he can, the expenditure of councils such as Oldham, which has never overspent? Why does he not concern himself

[Mr. James Lamond]

instead with the real duty of local government, which is to meet the demands of the people who have elected the council, and who are prepared to pay the rates to sustain those services?

Mr. Ridley: I quite accept from the hon. Gentleman that his surgeries are not crowded with irate ratepayers. However, I advise him that mine are, because about £1 billion of rate support grant has been taken from the south of England and given to the north. The people who must pay that £1 billion are represented by many of my hon. Friends, and they go to their surgeries asking whether it is fair. The least that the hon. Gentleman can do as a result of that massive switch of resources from south to north is to avoid supplementary questions as griping and ungrateful as the one that he has just put.

Mr. Patrick McLoughlin (West Derbyshire): Does my right hon. Friend realise that the biggest source of complaints that I receive in my surgery is high rates? What satisfaction have my constituents in Derbyshire received when our county has not been rate-capped? Does my right hon. Friend accept that we are the highest-rated county in the country and that my constituents will be extremely disappointed by his statement today that we have not been rate-capped?

Mr. Ridley: The only consolation to the citizens of Derbyshire is that my hon. Friend was elected, and that the chairman of the county council was not. I congratulate my hon. Friend, but advise him that authorities can be rate-capped only if they fall within the criteria that I have set forth. It is not selection. Rate capping applies only to those authorities that fall within the criteria, and Derbyshire does not.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): What help will the statement bring to the city of Bradford, which has had its rate support grant cut by the Government by more than £70 million since 1979? If the Prime Minister has chickened out of a visit to Liverpool, will the Secretary of State suggest that he and she visit the city of Bradford, and when they arrive, will they announce a substantial increase in rate support grant for the city so that more of my constituents can live in decent homes, have their children attend schools that are not falling down, and live in an environment that is not decaying before their eyes?

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman cited three examples: schools, the environment and housing which, of course, are not covered by the rate support grant. They are capital items in the local authority's budget and in no sense does the statement that I have made today refer to them. However, I have some good news for the hon. Gentleman. On average, rate support grant has increased by 5·75 per cent., which will benefit his constituents and those of all other hon. Members.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): Will my right hon. Friend accept the thanks of the people of Ealing for his decision to rate-cap them? I advise him briefly that pensioners are going without food to find the 65 per cent. rates increase. Many jobs are being lost in industry and the purchasing power which is taken out of the economy means that there is less money available for shopkeepers to sell their goods, and that they themselves have higher rates to pay. Haircuts to pensioners are up by 60p. Will my right hon. Friend tell the House what the rate in Ealing would be if the formula that he has mentioned were applied?

Mr. Ridley: I have received congratulations about this from practically every resident in Ealing, with the exception of the Leader of the Opposition. Perhaps that has been delayed in the post and will be with me soon. I cannot give my hon. Friend the figure for which he asked without some notice, but I shall give him as much information as I can immediately. I agree that high rates cause poverty and deprivation among the poor and drive away jobs. The loss of jobs drives away income, and that limits the ability of an area to generate wealth for itself.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: I repeat that I am anxious to call all hon. Members, but I must ask for brief questions, or that will not happen.

Mr. David Clelland (Tyne Bridge): Is the Secretary of State aware that, although the decision to release the metropolitan borough of Gateshead from rate capping will be welcomed, given the financial regime that the Government have imposed on local government, that council can protect its services and jobs only at a cost to the ratepayer? Is he also aware that the continued rate capping of Newcastle, which shares inner-area partnership status with the metropolitan borough of Gateshead, gives the lie to the Government's crocodile tears for inner-city problems?

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman must understand the point. He seemed to miss it again. He said that Gateshead could protect jobs and services only at the expense of the ratepayers. That is to put jobs at a low priority because jobs are provided by people who pay rates. Until he and his hon. Friends understand that high rates cause unemployment — *[Interruption.]* When the hon. Gentleman has taken that point on board we shall be making a little progress.

Mr. David Madel (Bedfordshire, South-West): Does my right hon. Friend recall that, as a result of representations that some of us made to his ministerial colleagues last autumn, he changed the way in which the safety nets operated and that that was of some help to counties such as Bedfordshire? Is similar help over safety nets built into the proposals that he has announced this afternoon?

Mr. Ridley: We have not yet done further detailed work on the unallocated margin, the safety net, the cap on gains, or on the service distributions. Until that further work is done, it is impossible to analyse the possible results on each authority. That announcement is usually made in the early autumn.

Mr. Robin Corbett (Birmingham, Erdington): So that I may, with greater accuracy, take this so-called good news immediately to the city of Birmingham, will the Secretary of State say exactly how much new and extra money the city will receive from this settlement to maintain and develop needed services and to give greater attention to the increasing demands of inner-city decay?

Mr. Ridley: I cannot predict the result for individual authorities. However, the total extra Government grant is £750 million gross to the whole country.

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim (Amber Valley): Is my right hon. Friend aware that Derbyshire used to be one of the

lowest-rated counties in England and Wales, but is now one of the highest-rated counties? Is he further aware that that is solely due to the profligacy of Derbyshire county council? Is it not time to put an end to the long suffering of the ratepayers in Derbyshire, to draw the teeth of the little Lenins at Matlock, and to rate-cap Derbyshire immediately?

Mr. Ridley: I would not like to interfere in the adjectives that my hon. Friend uses. I can only say that this year Derbyshire does not fall within the criteria of rate capping. Equally, it would be helpful if at the next elections the county council was called to account for the rates that it has imposed.

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): If the Government have any conception of the problems of the inner cities and genuinely intend to resolve them, which jobs and services does the right hon. Gentleman want Manchester council to cut?

Mr. Ridley: Obviously, I shall not discuss the detailed possibilities of any given authority. I can only tell the hon. Gentleman that authorities which keep a low rate and run efficient services are doing very much better at attracting jobs and solving problems than those which believe that the future lies only in taking on surplus council staff as a sort of bogus way of creating jobs in the inner city.

Mr. Graham Riddick (Colne Valley): Can my right hon. Friend give the House any indication about the effects of his announcement today on northern metropolitan district councils? Can he confirm that if councils such as my local authority of Kirklees were quickly to contract out local services and to improve efficiency, they could probably reduce the rates?

Mr. Ridley: My hon. Friend is entirely right. The opportunities for savings exist through providing council services more cheaply after putting them out to competitive tender—whether contracted out or not: that is not the point — even in advance of the Local Government Bill. Once it is on the statute book, they will have to do that. It is intolerable for councils to complain that they have insufficient money when it is well known that more than £2,000 million could be saved by councils increasing their efficiency. They must attend to that first.

Mr. Keith Bradley (Manchester, Withington): Does the Secretary of State realise that the people of Manchester have completely rejected the Government's policies on rate support grant by kicking out the last Tory from Manchester council? Does he realise that our spending is based on the needs of the people, of whom over 50 per cent. live in poverty? Will he explain why he will attend the Cabinet Committee meetings on inner cities although he does not understand the link between local government finance and the need to regenerate inner cities? Finally, will he withdraw the despicable answer that he gave my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris)? Does he not understand that thousands of jobs have been lost in the public and private sectors because of rate-capping Manchester?

Mr. Ridley: I hope that the hon. Gentleman, together with some of his hon. Friends, will get the point that Manchester, with a rate of 336p in the pound, has the highest rate in the country. Any business which is thinking of choosing a location and providing jobs is unlikely to pick the council with the highest rate in the land: it is the last place they will go. The difficulties created by the hon. Gentleman and the city council are among the main causes of inner-city problems.

Mr. Robert Key (Salisbury): I know that my right hon. Friend is sensitive to the fact that in areas where the economy is expanding, such as in Wiltshire, a great deal of development, much of which is opposed by the local authority, leads to compulsory infrastructure expenditure. Does he agree that the time has come for the developer to pay for that infrastructure, thereby releasing the burden of expenditure from the local authority?

Mr. Ridley: I have heard of arrangements between developers and local authorities where something of that sort takes place, but I do not think that we should get into the position where there seems to be a payment for planning permission of that sort. Local authorities receive grants and capital allocations tailored to their needs to provide for the infrastructure. The trouble is that the total of those needs throughout the whole country is inevitably greater than the money that can be afforded.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): When will the Secretary of State get it into his head that it is not high rates that cause unemployment but high interest rates, low investment and over-valuation of the pound? Those are the major causes of unemployment in the inner cities and elsewhere. Will he begin to understand that no local authority likes to increase the rates? Local authorities increase rates to meet the needs of the community — needs which have been exacerbated by the Government's policy. Before the right hon. Gentleman, with his hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) and others starts criticising, will he realise that the substantial rate increases in those boroughs were caused by years of dereliction when the Conservatives controlled those councils? When will he start defending the system of local democracy and local government accountability instead of coming here and acting like some Stalinist bootboy on the orders of—*[Interruption.]*—No. 10?

Mr. Ridley: I understand that I have to congratulate the hon. Gentleman on being made a Whip. Having listened to him on many occasions, I hope that Opposition Whips are not like Government Whips in the sense that they cannot talk, because every time he opens his mouth he helps us greatly. Naturally, interest rates are extremely important. If the Government were to increase the grant, as the Opposition seem to want, or local authorities were to increase spending, as they are talking of, there would be massive increases in interest rates which would indeed be damaging to jobs in all hon. Members' constituencies, not just the hon. Gentleman's.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): I represent a constituency on the edge of Liverpool and I am a Mancunian born and bred. Does my right hon. Friend recognise that the one thing both those communities need is jobs and that the one thing likely to create them is the rate capping of those two profligate authorities, which he has just done? In the light of the Audit Commission's recommendations that £1·5 billion-worth of savings can be made by local authorities, what action will he take to encourage them to make those savings?

Mr. Ridley: During my hon. Friend's question I thought that I almost heard the ghost of Mr. Robert Kilroy-Silk, but my hon. Friend is much more eloquent.

[Mr. Ridley]

His figure of £1·5 billion of savings being possible for local authorities is an underestimate. The Audit Commission has estimated that perhaps £2 billion could be saved. Certainly, there is considerable confidence that the Local Government Bill alone could result in savings of up to £500 million.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Why do the Government not treat other public institutions in the same way as they treat local authorities which are rate-capped, such as Manchester and Liverpool? Why, for example, should the Prime Minister's costs at No. 10 Downing street have increased 100 per cent. beyond the rate of inflation since Jim Callaghan left, as we have been informed in answers this week? Why has she not been rate-capped? May we have a guarantee that the right hon. Gentleman's statement today will stand up in a court of law? [HON. MEMBERS: "Come on."]

Mr. Alistair Burt (Bury, North): Is my right hon. Friend aware of the considerable damage done to the reputation of the north-west and its vital capacity to attract outside investment by the activities of such councils — once great city councils — as Liverpool and Manchester? Is he aware that his decision today to rate-cap Manchester will be seen as a welcome warning of good sense and will be welcomed by many outside the city who love it and have mourned its decline in recent years?

Mr. Ridley: I agree with my hon. Friend. The more I hear from Opposition Members about the problems of Manchester and Liverpool, the more I am beginning to think that they are the problem.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): In the light of the calls he made in his statement for local authorities to address the 0·75 per cent. drift in manpower which he identified last year, is the Secretary of State saying that local authorities such as Cumbria should not appoint social workers to pursue people who abuse children, should not appoint lollypop ladies, teachers for nursery schools, and the people who play a vital part in underpinning every community? Why should they not have the right to appoint those people when they know that the general public want those appointments made?

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman will agree that there is a distinction between the needs of people to be in grace and to perform desirable functions and the need to have the right number of those people and not an excessive number. During the past eight years the Government have reduced the Civil Service by about 135,000 people, while at the same time they have provided much better quality government. That is an example which local authorities should follow.

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham): Is my right hon. Friend aware that his answers to my hon. Friends the Members for Devizes (Mr. Morrison), for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel) and for Cambridgeshire, South-West (Sir A. Grant) will not reassure either the leaders or residents of careful counties such as Kent, and the residents in my district authority, which is the most careful district authority in the country, that there will be no artificial shift of money from the shire counties to the cities. Will he reassure them that, when he says there will be no major changes in the mechanism for distribution, he means that there will be no artificial shift of resources from the shires to the cities?

Mr. Ridley: When I was talking about there being no major changes in the mechanisms, I was referring to the slopes, the forfeit of the grant and matters of that sort. A further set of mechanisms is the unallocated margin, the service distribution and the multipliers. When they are determined, we will be able to give hon. Members a more accurate forecast of the grant entitlement of each authority. I cannot do that now. I have to be frank with the House and say that, as in all previous years under this system, the increase in rateable value in certain areas results in the loss of grant to areas with high need, and there is nothing that the mechanism can do to arrest that. That is a problem with the system, and it is why the system has to be scrapped. We must wait to see the exemplifications before giving my hon. Friend a better answer.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): That sneering and cynical statement will be met with apprehension in cities such as Bradford which are struggling to maintain services and to repair schools, many of which were built in Victorian times. The Tory Government are fond of Victorian values. Does the Secretary of State not understand that councils are trying to maintain services against a background of massive rate support grant cuts? He could do the nation a service by restoring some of those cuts and ensuring that councils can maintain the services which, by and large, help the poorest people in our community. If he wants the money, he can persuade the Cabinet to cancel the £10 million Trident programme.

Mr. Ridley: The return of the hon. Gentleman to this House was the true cause of apprehension in Bradford.

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that, while we have the present formula for allocating grant, it is inevitable that high rateable value councils such as Oxfordshire will have grant taken away, which is why such counties will warmly welcome our proposals for reforming the rating system? Until that happy day, if counties such as Oxfordshire spend disproportionately above GRE, they will inevitably see rates go through the roof to the detriment of pensioners, jobs and others in the county.

Mr. Ridley: My hon. Friend assessed the situation entirely correctly. There is no way that the switch of grant from high rateable value areas to high need areas can be arrested by any of the mechanisms, although it can be moderated. We will have to see what we can do about that later. Such situations are grossly exacerbated by high spending.

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): At some time, probably during the recess, will the Secretary of State place in the Library his analysis of the connection between jobs and rates so that we can have this debate on the basis of common knowledge? Contrary to the very first question he was asked by the right hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Howell), the penny-pinching that has taken place in towns such as Guildford has led to the town being strewn with litter all weekend. People wonder why, get annoyed and complain. There is a connection between false penny-pinching by local authorities and services.

Given that the word "people" does not appear in the Secretary of State's statement, I wish to ask him a question about the rising elderly population in the country. Are the local authorities that he claims are spending too much the same local authorities that are not training care assistants for old people's homes, or that are not able to inspect private sector old people's homes, with the tragic consequences that have ensued recently? Whatever the jargon involved in this kind of statement, it is about people. I ask the Secretary of State to address himself to these points, which have been raised by some of his hon. Friends and all of mine.

Mr. Ridley: Starting with Guildford—I notice that my hon. Friend the Member for Guildford (Mr. Howell) is no longer with us— one of the difficulties for councils in areas such as Guildford is that such a tremendous cut is made in the grant that they have very high rates for a very low spending performance, because so much money is transferring to constituencies in the Manchester and north-west area. So, for the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) to come and criticise what is happening in Guildford on top of that is a little disparaging, when he remembers the subsidy that is going to areas further north. Of course, that is the point: rates and jobs are intimately connected. That is why areas such as Guildford have tried so hard to keep their rates as low as they can, because they fully understand the relation between high rates and jobs — even if the hon. Gentleman does not.

Yes, the statement is about people, but the people are separated from the statement by their local authorities. I hope that the local authorities will remember that this statement is about people, and the people who pay the rates as well.

Rate Support Grant (Wales)

5.7 pm

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Peter Walker): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement about my proposals for the 1988-89 rate support grant settlement for Wales.

Local authorities in Wales are beginning to plan their budgets for next year. In order to assist that process, I am today announcing the key elements of my proposals for the RSG settlement. I shall shortly be circulating, as is customary, more detailed information to Welsh councils, and I shall place copies of that material in the Library and in the Vote Office.

In framing my proposals for 1988-89, I have taken account of the demands on Welsh local authorities. Again, this year, Welsh councils have a settlement which provides a realistic base, enabling them to maintain and develop services while keeping spending within the Government's plans. While there is competition between services for resources, there is also tremendous scope for maximising the effective delivery of those services, through improved efficiency and greater awareness of the potential to achieve cost savings by adopting the best practices currently developed. Not enough is done to ensure the rapid and effective dissemination of improvements in efficiency, and I want to work in close co-operation with local government to increase the pace of progress in that area and to realise the savings that are waiting to be made.

I turn now to my proposals for the 1988-89 settlement. Provision for local authorities' relevant current expenditure in 1988-89 in the public expenditure White Paper published in January 1987 was £1,589 million. I now propose to set current expenditure provision at £1,640 million—£51 million, or 3·2 per cent., more than the White Paper figure, £82 million, or 5·3 per cent., more than authorities have budgeted to spend this year, and £113 million, or 7·4 per cent., more than provision in the 1987-88 settlement. This allows all authorities to hold their spending broadly level in real terms, and in addition provides an allowance for key county services. In the autumn I shall give details of the distribution of this sum between services.

Total relevant expenditure for RSG purposes is estimated to be £1,886 million, which is £105 million, or 5·9 per cent., more than authorities have budgeted to spend this year, and £122 million, or 6·9 per cent., above the assumption for total relevant expenditure in the 1987-88 settlement.

As for aggregate Exchequer grant in support of relevant expenditure, I propose that it should be £1,256 million, an increase of £82 million, or 7 per cent., on the level in the main report for 1987-88. The grant percentage will be maintained at 66·6 per cent., the same level as in the main report last year after allowing for grant provision for the teachers' pay increase. This generous increase in grant should lead to very low average rate rises next year.

The local authority associations have made it clear to me that they favour stability and certainty in grant entitlements. I therefore propose to leave the basic grant distribution mechanisms unaltered, although I shall review this proposal during the course of further consultations with them in the autumn. The slope of the grant-related poundage schedule and the 10 per cent. threshold will remain unchanged, and I propose to leave in place the

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mechanisms used in the current year to limit grant gains and losses. This will enhance stability while exerting the necessary downward pressure on spending. For most councils, increases in spending will result in a loss of grant and this will not be recycled. Equally, reductions in expenditure will attract extra grant. Councils thus have an opportunity to plan ahead with certainty in the knowledge that their grant entitlement will be a direct result of their own spending decisions. I remind councils that there is also extra grant available in 1987-88 if they bring their spending closer to plans.

I have no doubt that my proposals for 1988-89 offer local authorities in the Principality a realistic base. They will be able to develop services whilst improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the services under their control. They know that if they work within the Government's expenditure plans their taxpayers will benefit from the extra resources that I have provided. I look forward to further discussions with the Welsh Consultative Council for Local Government Finance, not only about my proposals for the 1988-89 settlement, but about how best to further our joint objective of achieving the best possible services for Wales.

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): Stripped of its verbiage, we have just heard from the Secretary of State an admission of his failure. The only welcome we can give is for the fact that there has been no change in the mechanisms and for the fact that he has dropped the detailed schedule that caused so much confusion last year. Behind the symbols and the hieroglyphics of the rate support grant lie for Wales the sad realities of crucial, but crumbling, services, and essential, but inadequate, resources. The statement is really about houses and house repairs, or the need for them; about social services, home helps and services for the elderly, or the lack of them; and about books for schoolchildren and repairs for schools, or the absence of them. Does the right hon. Gentleman realise that, in the past eight years, in all those aspects Wales has fallen behind social need at a time when that need has been increasing, because of the extra 75,000 unemployed and the aging population?

The cost increase assumption in the statement is critical because, self-evidently, if the costs are not covered by the increases, cuts must be made or rates must be increased. Will the right hon. Gentleman confirm, therefore, that in his statement he assumes cost increases and a GDP deflator of 4 per cent.? Does he recognise that this is not only completely inadequate but completely unrealistic? Surely he is not unaware that costs for councils, because they are labour-intensive, rise far more rapidly than the cost of living index? They are essentially geared to the changes in salaries and wages.

The police have just had a 7·75 per cent. increase—an increase awarded by the Government — which councils will have to pay. Teachers have just had an increase—again an increase awarded by the Government — which councils will have to pay. The firemen have just had an increase. Those increases alone will need an extra £86 million of expenditure, and there are still the manual, administrative and clerical workers to come. None of those is likely to settle at the 4 per cent. implicit in the right hon. Gentleman's assumptions.

Is the Secretary of State aware that the district councils estimate that they need to increase expenditure by 7 per cent. just to stand still, just to maintain the existing levels of provision and commitment? The county councils estimate that they need 10 per cent. just to stand still. Is the Secretary of State the only one in Wales who does not know what all Welsh people know, which is that merely sustaining the existing levels of service in Wales is not enough? In fact, this statement leaves a gap of 3 to 4 per cent., a £16 million under-provision of the levels needed just to sustain inadequate services at their present level.

Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that, although at first sight this settlement appears to be better than the English settlement—5·3 per cent. compared with 4 per cent.—that comparison is deceptive, because 37 of the English authorities, which account for about one third of the total spend in England, are rate-capped or otherwise subject to spending limitations? If we take the English shires, such as the area represented by the Secretary of State, we find that the settlements are virtually the same in England and in Wales.

Has the Secretary of State looked at what has happened to local government finance in Wales since the Conservative party came to office? Is he aware that this Government have robbed Wales of £672 million of rate support grant—the extra amount that would have been received over the life of this Government if only the rate support grant had been kept at the 1979 level? Does the right hon. Gentleman realise that that represents a loss of £650 for every Welsh household, or a loss of £268 for every Welsh man, woman and child? A figure of £672 million is difficult to visualise, but, put in capital terms, it would provide 20,000 houses or 280 new schools.

Does the Secretary of State accept that, because rate support grant has fallen since 1979 under this Government from 75 to 67 per cent. of total spending, the Welsh councils have had to find from rates 33 per cent., instead of 25 per cent., of expenditure? Is it not hypocritical of the Government to throw up their hands in false surprise when councils inevitably have been forced to increase their rates? Does the right hon. Gentleman realise and accept that this poor settlement means more rate increases for Wales in the coming year, or is that perhaps what the Goverment want? Is this to soften up the public in preparation for the introduction of the poll tax?

The Secretary of State says that he has maintained the percentage of grant. *[Interruption.]* His statement leaves more questions to be answered than it answered. Does the right hon. Gentleman not understand that to say that he has maintained the percentage of grant is meaningless, because the percentage on its own is meaningless? What really matters is what it is a percentage of. The same per cent. of too little still remains too little, and this grant is £60 million below what is needed just to stand still.

The Secretary of State talks of greater efficiency. Is he aware that the chairman of the Audit Commission cut by 75 per cent. his predecessor's estimate of the scope for efficiency savings in local government? Is he aware that Wales has suffered eight years of neglect and disinterest and that this statement does nothing to reverse that deprivation and nothing to restore the £672 million stolen from the people of Wales? It will be a cause of alarm and despondency in Wales. It will mean rate increases far beyond anything that the Secretary of State is projecting. This is the right hon. Gentleman's first real decision for Wales. What Wales needed was a champion, a fighter, in

the Cabinet. Instead, we have a Secretary of State who is strong on charm but utterly, disastrously and pathetically weak on performance. Today he has failed the people of Wales, but it is the people of Wales who will pay for that failure.

Mr. Walker: That was a third-rate statement by the third choice shadow Secretary of State. No wonder it was greeted throughout in such dismal silence by the Opposition. To string along previous cuts in local government expenditure is wrong. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would like me to go over the period when the Labour party was in power and to refer to his total silence as the Labour Government slashed education and health services and plunged into debt to the International Monetary Fund. Perhaps the Labour party recognises that the shadow spokesman was a silent spokesman on these topics when the Labour Government were cutting services such as those that he now mentions as being so passionately dear to his heart.

The statement says that next year the Government grant will increase ahead of the estimated rate of inflation. The expenditure accepted for grant is equal to £1,800 per household in Wales, of which £1,200 will come from Government grant—an increase of 5·3 per cent. on the amount that local authorities have budgeted for this year. I should have thought that most people taking a sensible and objective approach would recognise that this is a sound and sensible settlement. The Opposition are not interested in improved efficiency in local government.

As for the suggestion that the Audit Commission considered that only a proportion of my predecessor's forecast savings could be achieved, the fact is that the Audit Commission and LAMSAC, the local authorities' own management advisory service, have come forward with dozens of proposals to improve efficiency in local government in Wales and, indeed, throughout the United Kingdom. Some local authorities in Wales have done some of these things — some have done much more than others—but the potential for improvement in efficiency is very considerable.

It would be irresponsible to say that one will increase grants without expecting improved efficiency. Therefore, I strongly defend a settlement in which we get a 66 per cent. grant compared with 46 per cent. in England, and a 5·3 per cent. increase on this year's budget, which is 1·5 per cent. more that has been obtained for England. It is a just, sensible and good settlement.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I again appeal for brief questions.

Sir Anthony Meyer (Clwyd, North-West): Is my right hon. Friend aware that he has secured an excellent settlement, which will be warmly welcomed by local authorities of all political colours, in contrast to the prolonged and unworthy whingeing that we have heard from the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams)? Is he further aware that local authorities in Wales are keenly looking forward to working closely with him on the basis of the approach that he has demonstrated in this statement and previously?

Mr. Walker: It is a sensible settlement, and I am grateful for my hon. Friend's remarks about it. The settlement will be welcomed in the Principality. I very much look forward to working closely with local authorities throughout the Principality.

Mr. Richard Livsey (Brecon and Radnor): What allowance is made in the rate support grant for inflation? There seems to be some controversy about this. The right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) said that there was a GDP deflator of 4 per cent. If that is accurate, the rate support grant for Wales is underfunded. Indeed, Powys county council estimates that a 6 per cent. increase is required simply to stand still. Will the right hon. Gentleman put us right on that? Does he believe that the rate support grant settlement is adequate for education, social services and housing, all of which are in a state of crisis in Wales?

Mr. Walker: There will always be scope for increased expenditure in all those spheres, but in Wales we must also consider the importance of attracting jobs and businesses, and the level of rates. If they soar, as they have in parts of England, they will have a detrimental effect on the expansion of the economy.

When the Liberals were in partnership with the Labour Government, they, too, found that there were practical problems associated with enormous increases in expenditure, for which they usually ask. When they supported the Labour Government, they had to support cuts in most of these sectors. The hon. Gentleman said that local authorities calculate that it will cost an extra 6 per cent. to stand still, but they have agreed wage increases substantially above the rate of inflation. Whether that is done in the private or the public sector, one has to improve productivity and efficiency to help meet part of the extra wage cost. That applies as much to local government as to anyone else.

Mr. Keith Raffan (Delyn): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on his statement. I am sure that the people of Wales will attach far greater credibility to the statement of a Secretary of State within the Cabinet than to a third choice outside the shadow Cabinet. At least we, unlike the Labour party, have a fighter where the power lies.

Does my right hon. Friend agree that the result of this generous settlement and the drive for efficiency that he has called for will be not only low rate increases but a real improvement in local services, provided that local authorities concentrate on their statutory obligations? Will my right hon. Friend exert his influence on Clwyd county council to get it to divert resources from non-statutory spending to skill building and the maintenance of the school libraries' stock, in view of growing concern over the scandalous neglect of both?

Mr. Walker: I note what my hon. Friend said about his county council. He is right in saying that improving efficiency is an important factor. It is of benefit because it means that the amount of money available is used more sensibly and to greater purpose, and it stops unnecessary increases in the rates. I wish to discuss with the local authorities in Wales how we can introduce machinery whereby if one local authority finds a managerial process or makes a technological breakthrough which is important in improving efficiency it can quickly be transmitted to all the others and applied.

Mr. D. E. Thomas (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy): Does the Secretary of State accept that his response to my hon. Friend the Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) was hardly relevant to his tenure of the Welsh Office? The right hon. Gentleman attacked the high-spending

[Mr. D. E. Thomas]

authorities but, whether we like it or not, in terms relevant to England, there are no high-spending authorities in Wales. He must accept that. Our problem in Wales concerns the effective delivery of services to meet needs. Will the right hon. Gentleman accept that, whatever the Government transfer of funds to local authorities, he requires a mechanism that establishes needs? The rate support grant mechanism does not do that. We have a graduated expenditure calculation, but that does not necessarily reflect the reality of the social and economic needs of the areas or the services.

In his statement the right hon. Gentleman stressed the need for additional allowance for key county council services. Will he identify to the House and to Wales what he regards as the key local authority services in Wales? Do they include social service provision, through the personal social services, for the elderly, the provision of education services for the under-fives, or the provision of housing services by local authorities, which are substantially underfunded?

Mr. Walker: The most important service in the distribution, and the one involving the greatest expenditure is, of course, education. The increased costs will be involved in the recent settlements in education.

On the question of needs and services, of course all concerned with the distribution of money throughout the local government system will be anxious to identify quickly and sensibly the difference in needs and requirements. Politicians of different political parties and, indeed, within the same party, will always have different priorities in defining the needs that are the most urgent. The very fact that the Government are to provide 66 per cent. of total local government expenditure in the Principality, compared with 46 per cent. in England, illustrates that we have identified the differences in both the rateable value base and the needs in Wales, and therefore that we need the reallocation. I am anxious to discuss with the local authorities any improvements that we can make in identifying the needs.

Mr. Gwilym Jones (Cardiff, North): I applaud my right hon. Friend for coming forward with a very generous settlement—7·4 per cent. more than last year. The ball is now in the local councils' court, and my constituents in Cardiff are very concerned about the rates that they have to pay, after last year's excessive rate increase of 24 per cent. Given that next year is again not a local council election year, we dread another savage rate increase. Will my right hon. Friend use all his efforts to ensure that local councils minimise the burden to the ratepayer, perhaps by publishing the savings that might be made by each council in Wales if they contracted out local services?

Mr. Walker: The new Local Government Bill, which is going through the House at the moment, contains important provisions on that issue. There is no doubt that in a whole range of activities—and this certainly applied to energy efficiency when I was in my previous post as Secretary of State for Energy — the difference in performance between one local authority and another is dramatic. Millions of pounds are wasted through the inefficiency of some local authorities. As my hon. Friend pointed out, people in Cardiff and elsewhere in Wales are interested in keeping rates at a low and sensible level and that applies particularly to the business community, especially new businesses and enterprises.

Mr. Alun Michael (Cardiff, South and Penarth): Will the Secretary of State accept that local authorities in Wales —particularly Cardiff, to which he has just referred— have had great success in attracting jobs and improving efficiency? Will he give us answers to some specific questions? In his statement he said that he would state in the autumn how moneys would be distributed among services. Does he not recognise that local authorities need to know that distribution now, so that they can work on their rating strategy? Does he not recognise, too, that the requirements are well in excess of the figures that he gave?

Let me offer the right hon. Gentleman some figures for Cardiff. In order to stand still, Cardiff requires 13 per cent., 8 per cent. of which is to allow for wage increases, on which the local authority has no choice because the settled increase for administrative staff is 6·75 per cent. and the settlement for manual workers is likely to be about 10 per cent. Will he accept that that is well in excess of the increase that he has offered the Welsh authorities, which is less than 6 per cent.?

Does the right hon. Gentleman recognise that there are other costs that fall on local authorities and that he has made no allowance for the expenditure that will be necessary to prepare for the poll tax if he and his colleagues insist on proceeding with that foolish and expensive tax? Does he realise that no sum is provided to prepare for the change in housing benefit and that there are other expenditures, to which I shall refer on another occasion, for which he has failed to allow in opting for a settlement that is slightly in excess of general price inflation and bears no relationship to the needs of local authorities?

Mr. Walker: The settlement is 5·3 per cent. above the local authorities' budgets for last year. When local authorities mention the sums that they will need to spend if they are to stand still, as it were, they tend not to include a large element to reflect improved efficiency.

The hon. Gentleman rightly says that manual and administrative workers have received pay increases that have been way above the rate of inflation. If local authority associations negotiate with manual workers and give them an increase that is double the rate of inflation, I hope that their intention is to absorb a substantial part by means of improved efficiency. Local authorities cannot continue saying "We shall agree to a pay increase that is double the rate of inflation," without looking for improved efficiency and performance. That is important.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): Is my right hon. Friend aware that this extraordinarily generous settlement for Wales will be greeted with acclamation and that the points made by the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) in his well-prepared carp, which he obviously had ready before hearing the details of the settlement, will not be accepted? When we press for greater efficiency, can we ensure that local authorities in Wales do everything that they can to put services out to tender and to privatise wherever possible? That will mean that there will be scope for rate reductions this year.

Mr. Walker: My long experience enables me to assure my hon. Friend that no Government and no Minister will

ever receive acclamation for a rate support grant. It will always be suggested that the settlement is wrong, that it should be more generous and that certain parts of it are ill-founded. However, I believe that this is a fair and reasonable settlement. It is important for local authorities throughout the Principality to look to the authorities that have succeeded in improving their efficiency and to consider why they have been able to do so, and where possible copy their example.

Mrs. Ann Clwyd (Cynon Valley): I am glad that the Secretary of State mentioned his previous office, which was that of Secretary of State for Energy. Why should we be expected to swallow his strictures when he talks about cost-efficiency and controlling prices, when he has recently been rapped over the knuckles for spending £23 million of taxpayers' money unnecessarily on persuading people to tell Sid, during his tenure as Secretary of State for Energy?

It is difficult for Welsh local authorities to take the right hon. Gentleman seriously in the light of his record. How can we be expected to take seriously his statements in the Welsh Grand Committee when he says that the sorts of problems that face the inner cities are those faced by the Welsh valleys and that the ways of dealing with inner-city problems should be applied also to the Welsh valleys? At the same time he is expecting local authorities in the valleys, which face high unemployment, bad housing and pressures on social services and the Health Service, to accept the rate support grant that he has announced. Does the right hon. Gentleman really expect us to take him seriously?

Mr. Walker: I was not the subject of any great strictures about telling Sid. I suggest that the hon. Lady reads fully the relevant report, in which it suggested that there is the possibility of a division of view. I am delighted to say that throughout the country 5 million people took advantage of being able to become participants in an important industry. I have no regret whatsoever about the manner in which that was done.

There are problems in the valleys and resources are needed if they are to be tackled. The resources that will be made available in allocations and increases in expenditure and on the budgets of last year are above the rate of inflation. We shall do better than England, because there are parts of the Principality with problems that are worse than those to be found in England.

Mr. Paul Flynn (Newport, West): We have heard a statement that will be received with great resentment by Welsh local authorities. The Secretary of State has already confessed his lack of interest in and understanding of RSG, and nothing illustrated that more than his delivery of the statement and his answer to questions. Practically no illustrations have been drawn from Welsh local authorities and it seems that the right hon. Gentleman is suffering from the caricature of local authorities that has been presented by the Government. The right hon. Gentleman shows no understanding of the splendid work of many local authorities, including Newport borough council, which for many years has provided key services of great value. Will you look to your own Department, which was condemned only last week by the Public Accounts Committee for showing no serious concern for mismanagement, collapse of control and the financial anarchy of a body over which you have sponsorship and control?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Newport, West (Mr. Flynn) had better learn that I am "you".

Mr. Flynn: I ask the Secretary of State to consider the position of local authorities in Wales and to understand that the missing word in his statement is "cuts". The grant percentage is 66·6 per cent. Does he agree that the percentage for every previous year has been above that? It was 66·7 per cent., and in 1980-81 it was 73·4 per cent.

Mr. Walker: The hon. Gentleman has put on display his ignorance of the rate support grant mechanism. If he reads my statement carefully he will find that the percentage grant is identical to that which applied last year. The reason for that is the change that has taken place in the provision for teachers' salaries. The reality is that the settlement is sensible and generous. I have met local authority representatives today to discuss these matters with them, and I am glad to say that their approach is far more constructive, objective and sensible than that displayed by the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Roy Hughes (Newport, East): We are told that our local authorities are beginning to plan their budgets for next year, and I note that the Secretary of State wishes to assist in the process. Will the right hon. Gentleman appreciate that his offer can be interpreted as a threat, bearing in mind that the Government have taken £672 million from our local authorities in Wales since 1979? When will the Government provide the revenue that local authorities in Wales need so that they can provide the level of social services that are needed by the people? There is an aging population, and there was a transfer recently of certain responsibilities from the Department of Health and Social Security to local government.

Does the Secretary of State recognise that Wales has a greater proportion of older houses than any other area of the United Kingdom? When will the Government unleash the purse strings, bearing in mind especially the receipts from the sale of council houses, and enable local authorities to tackle this important social issue? Is there any need for me to remind the right hon. Gentleman of the mass unemployment with which Wales is afflicted, which is not disguised by restart programmes or by fiddling with the figures? According to the Government's recent submission to the EEC, the activity rate of Wales is lower than that of any other part of the United Kingdom. Does the right hon. Gentleman recognise that our local authorities could play a major part in rectifying that problem?

In reality, our local authorities need a 10 per cent. increase on the previous settlement if they are merely to continue with their existing policies. The bulk of such an increase would be taken up by the justifiable teachers' settlement, and, as my right hon. Friend the member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) said, there are other major settlements in the pipeline, including those of the police, the firemen and local authority manual grades.

Finally, will the right hon. Gentleman recognise that he has a major task to justify his appointment and to provide our local authorities with the wherewithal that they need? Instead, it seems that they can look forward only to a poll tax and the decimation of education and other vital services.

Mr. Walker: In the coming year, local authorities can look forward to an allocation of £105 million more than

[Mr. Walker]

they budgeted to spend this year. A great tale of woe and misery comes from the Opposition. Such a constant, mournful tone does a lot of damage to the atmosphere of the Principality. It is time that the Opposition cheered up. I agree that housing is a serious problem. That is why I am pleased that my predecessor managed to do much more about home improvement than the previous Labour Government did.

Rate Support Grant (Scotland)

5.40 pm

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make an announcement about local authority expenditure and rate support grant in Scotland for 1988-89.

I propose to set the level of provision for local authority relevant current expenditure in Scotland at £3,640 million. This figure allows authorities to maintain their spending broadly level in real terms, and it includes provision for costs that local authorities will incur in preparing for the introduction of the community charge. The figure represents an increase of 9 per cent. over provision in the current year, and £170 million over the provision for 1988-89 in the public expenditure White Paper.

Aggregate Exchequer grant will be £2,372 million. This will maintain, at present estimates of loan charges and other financing items, the grant percentage which is being paid this year — 55·5 per cent. — and will provide an additional £180 million over the current year's figure.

This is a realistic and a fair settlement. In reaching it I have taken careful account of the views that the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities expressed to my hon. Friend when they met him on 3 July. For the second year running, the settlement is based on local authorities' own budgets and the grant percentage is being maintained. If authorities adjust their spending to guideline this year and budget at guideline next year, average rate increases will not exceed the rate of inflation. I hope that local authorities will respond positively to this settlement.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): There is some limited evidence in the statement that the right hon. and learned Gentleman is learning some hard lessons at this time, and that is perhaps something of a tribute to the electorate of Scotland. Is it not extraordinary that, only a week ago, Ministers were forcing through a measure to cut £202 million from local authority budgets in the general clawback, and that that figure is now incorporated in the calculations for 1988-89? It is an "Alice in Wonderland" situation and reflect no credit on the Scottish Office's consistency of approach. Will the Secretary of State accept that the logic is that the penalty for this year should now be cancelled?

The relevant expenditure to which he referred includes provision for additional responsibilities of one sort or another, which I understand are being shouldered by local government for the first time. Will he confirm that it includes, for example, £34 million that will totally take care of the final instalment of the teachers' pay settlement? Does the figure that he announced allow for a full settlement of the firemen's and police pay claim, or at least a calculation of it? How much has been put in for that? Has he added a figure for the considerable cost of implementing the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986, which was skilfully piloted to the statute book last year by my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke)? Will that sum have to be found at the expense of established expenditure if local authorities are to do what they should and what they want to do to help the disabled?

The right hon. and learned Gentleman referred to the cost of preparing for the introduction of the poll tax. He said that it was specifically taken into account in the

relevant expenditure figure. He will recall, of course, that the memorandum to the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987 mentions a figure of £9 million for compiling the register. That has been seen as clearly inadequate and condemned by everyone—not only by councillors but by impartial officials—as simply not measuring up to the cost of the chaos and complications that the introduction of the poll tax will involve. As he has said that a specific figure has been included, will the Secretary of State say what it is and just how much he therefore thinks the completion of the register will cost in 1988-89?

Will he accept that the distribution of the grant, the relevant expenditure and aggregate grant amount are vital? As he knows, this year, authorities such as Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling, Strathclyde and Lothian were given guidelines that meant expenditure at or below the previous year's budgets in real terms. I should like an assurance that, in 1988-89, there will be sufficient room for the figure that he announced and that it is his intention that no authority will get a guideline that, in real terms, is below this year's budget.

Will the Minister accept that there is little cause for satisfaction in the announcement? Discounting the special factors, as I understand it, the calculation for inflation is 4 per cent. Does he accept that that will be inadequate when measured against what will almost certainly happen in the 1988-89 pay round and the general rise in local government costs? Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman accept that, if the grant percentage had been held at 68·5, as it was in 1980-81, and applied to the relevant expenditure figure that he announced for 1988-89, it would have yielded another £550 million? Is it not a simple fact that the Government have a very long way to go if they are to undo the terrible damage that they have done to jobs, services and the fabric of local democracy in Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: It is probably fair to say that the hon. Gentleman's comments represented a welcome for my statement. I appreciate that he had somewhat to qualify them for the purposes of the occasion, but nevertheless that is the reality behind his contribution. I noted that, last year, when I announced a generous settlement for local authorities, the hon. Gentleman informed me that it was because of the imminence of an election. Today, when I announced a generous settlement for local authorities, he informed me that it was the result of an election. *[Interruption.]* Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will conclude, whether circumstances are of one kind or the other, that the Government have been extremely fair to local authorities. I hope that local authorities will respond in a similar way.

The hon. Gentleman asked whether the penalty that was announced some time ago will be cancelled. No, it will not be cancelled. The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that, if local authorities reduce their expenditure, that sum will be returned to them for the benefit of themselves and their ratepayers.

The hon. Gentleman asked whether the £34 million represented the full requirement for the teachers' pay settlement. I confirm that it does. I am also happy to confirm that pay increases for police and firemen have been allowed for in the figures.

The hon. Gentleman asked me about the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986. That is a matter for local authorities to decide on the basis of what they perceive to be their priorities within what we all agree is a generous provision. The hon. Gentleman asked me about the community charge provision. In the provision figures, we have assumed costs of £12 million. That figure comprises £9 million for the preparation costs of the community charge register and £3 million to cover the additional work load in housing benefit administration.

The hon. Gentleman asked me about guidelines. They will be considered over the next few weeks. I anticipate that local authorities will be informed of the level of individual guidelines in late September or early October.

The hon. Gentleman concluded his questions with the ritual denunciation that is required on such occasions. On this occasion, he does not feel strongly about the matter. The provision that I announced for local authorities is £3,640 million. The hon. Gentleman might like to know that the Council of Scottish Local Authorities budget projection for the year in question is only £3,679 million, and that is a difference of £39 million. On that basis, when we take into account the fact that its estimates for inflation are substantially greater than the actual expected rate of inflation, at the very least one will be entitled to assume that, if local authorities spend even on the basis that they are projecting, overspend next year should be infinitely smaller than that with which we are faced this year. Indeed, the figures that local authorities are announcing will be held against local authorities if in the event, despite such a generous settlement, we find degrees of overspending of the kind that we have seen in recent years.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I again appeal for brevity. Will hon. Members ask questions instead of making debating points? There are five Northern Ireland orders after this statement and time is getting on.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on the settlement. Perhaps even COSLA will begin to realise that the Government's economic policies are working to the benefit of local government. May I press him further on the guidelines? Will he do all that he can to bring local authorities whose guidelines are below assessed needs up to that level, and when he is working on the formula, will he keep in mind the importance of rural areas?

Mr. Rifkind: I give my hon. Friend that assurance. It is our aim to bring all authorities' guidelines up to assessed need, and I hope to make significantly more progress on that in the forthcoming year. My hon. Friend will appreciate that, this year, 11 more authorities had their guidelines brought up to assessed needs and all authorities with guidelines below assessed needs were still able to increase their spending in real terms. I take my hon. Friend's suggestion very much to heart.

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): The Secretary of State said that he had taken careful account of the views of COSLA in reaching his decision on a settlement. In what respect did those views adjust his position? He said that the statement was based on local authorities' own budgets. Is it not true that they were based on his imposed guidelines? Is he really trying to tell us that the settlement offers any opportunity for an improvement in local government services?

Mr. Rifkind: I hate to disappoint the hon. Gentleman, but it is based on local authorities' own budgets. I said explicitly, and I am happy to repeat — the hon. Gentleman clearly missed that part of my statement — that the figure for grant is based on local authorities' budgets, after the selective action in respect of the two authorities which the House considered on Monday night, plus 4 per cent. to take account of inflation, plus the other components to which I referred. I am happy to reassure the hon. Gentleman on that point.

Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): I congratulate and thank my right hon. and learned Friend for his statement and the provision that he has made. After what we went through on Monday evening, I hope that he will be anxious not only to punish the wicked but to reward the good — among them Perth and Kinross district council, which is prudent — when he pronounces his sentence. Is it not an amazing phenomenon, which it must be difficult for the Opposition to swallow, that even the extravagance of Socialist COSLA cannot be beaten by the success of Tory economics?

Mr. Rifkind: I am unable to improve on my hon. and learned Friend's remarks. In determining such matters, we try to give positive and genuine support to prudent local authorities.

Mr Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Will the Secretary of State give us some insight into the influence which the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), had on the settlement? Did his persuasive skills manage to salve his conscience in relation to his strictures about the profligacy of local authorities?

More seriously, will the Secretary of State give me some advice on how I can go to places such as Valley Field and Oakley in my constituency, which have suffered from mine closures, and tell the people there that the Scottish Office feels justified in allocating £12 million for the poll tax but in excluding that area from urban aid? They have been hit severely by mine closures. Although we recognised the need to revive city centres, those areas in west Fife must also be revived, and we have had discussions with the Scottish Development Agency to that effect. How can I persuade the local authorities in those areas to pay attention to central Government when that Government are spending £12 million unnecessarily?

Mr. Rifkind: I am not familiar with the details of the hon. Gentleman's point about urban aid. The Government have made an extremely generous provision of urban aid, although we are not always able to meet every request that is made. But I hope that every request, especially those from areas of high unemployment, is considered sympathetically, within our overall capability. The hon. Gentleman will appreciate that the local communities which he represents will benefit from such a realistic and fair rate support grant settlement.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): I thank my right hon. and learned Friend for this very generous settlement. Does it take into account the specific needs of areas such as Perth and Kinross, where Breadalbane is listed as an environmentally sensitive area? Will he confirm that no allowance is made for the dumping of nuclear waste on Schiehallion, which was one of the fairy tales put out by the Scottish National party during the election? Has he noticed the absence of the Scottish National party member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh)—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I asked for questions, not debating points.

Mr. Walker: It is a very important question, because the hon. Gentleman was making some comments about a road in my constituency—

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is about the rate support grant.

Mr. Rifkind: The needs of my hon. Friend's constituency will be considered in the context of the guidelines when they are announced. Financial support is given to environmentally sensitive areas, such as Breadalbane, but not through the rate support grant.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): In the light of his announcement on Tuesday about the Inverclyde initiative, will the Secretary of State show much more sympathy to Inverclyde district council in its hour of desperate need? I remind him that unemployment on the lower Clyde is still scandalously high and that 1,200 employees at Scott Lithgow are still being forced to suffer because of the Government's bad faith in relation to the three Ministry of Defence orders which were promised 17 months ago. That promise has still not been honoured by the Government, who are quite without principle or humility.

Mr. Rifkind: If the hon. Gentleman was as fair and objective as he usually is, he would at least have prefaced his remarks by welcoming the substantial support for Inverclyde which I announced earlier this week and in respect of the land that is being released by Scott Lithgow to ensure industrial development and improvement of the infrastructure in that area. I am well aware of the needs of Inverclyde. The hon. Gentleman might ensure a sympathetic response if, when constructive contributions are made to his constituency, he at least had the fairness to acknowledge it.

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that, in view of the overriding need to maintain rigorous control of public expenditure in Scotland, this is by any standards a very generous settlement? Will he confirm that what he said about prudent authorities will apply to authorities in urban as well as rural areas? Does he agree that, after this generous settlement, it is high time that the Labour group on Strathclyde regional council announced an end to its policy of keeping police numbers below authorised establishment?

Mr. Rifkind: I agree with everything my hon. Friend has said. If there is concern—as there understandably is — to ensure the maximum effort to deal with the problems of crime and dishonesty in Strathclyde, it is a matter of great regret that the region remains one of the few authorities, if not the only authority, in Scotland that is not making provision to enable the full utilisation of the resources available for its police service.

Mr. Jimmy Wray (Glasgow, Provan): Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that local authorities can be prosecuted for failing to provide services for the disabled? Is he aware of the cost of implementing in Scotland the provisions of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1987?

Mr. Rifkind: I take the hon. Gentleman's point, but I am sure that local authorities will be able to carry out their

statutory responsilities under that Act when they remember that the provision announced today is £3.640 million. It should not be difficult for local authorities to carry out their minimum statutory requirements with such a provision.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): May I focus the Secretary of State's attention on need and on the agreed requirement for local authority services? Will he assure the House that the proposed settlement for next year will avoid the present ludicrous and disgraceful position where five local authorities are being penalised by grant penalty despite the fact that their budgeted expenditure is less than the agreed need assessment formula of his Department?

Mr Rifkind: I cannot give the hon. Member that assurance because he knows perfectly well that, not only do we have the objective of ensuring that those authorities with guidelines below assessed need have their guidelines increased, but that, even in the current year and the previous year, those authorities were allowed guidelines that enabled substantial increases in expenditure in real terms before any penalty was approved. I believe that that is the basis upon which these matters should be considered.

Mr. Tony Worthington (Clydebank and Milngavie): The Secretary of State will be aware that the announced settlement is a global sum and whether it is a fair settlement will depend very much upon the distribution of that settlement. Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that, in terms of material received from his Department, Strathclyde was ranked first in terms of areas of deprivation and Borders was ranked ninth — the last in the list? Therefore, how does the right hon. and learned Gentleman explain the fact that, in 1987, the assessed expenditure need of Borders was £582 per head and for Strathclyde £556 per head? That represents a difference of £26 per head, or about £51 million, which is the amount by which Strathclyde will be over guideline. Will the Secretary of State rectify that unjustifiable imbalance?

Mr. Rifkind: Whether this is or is not a fair settlement does not depend on distribution. It is a fair settlement because of the sums involved and the local authorities' own predictions of what their requirements will be. Distribution is a separate matter and, as the hon. Gentleman knows—

Mr. Worthington *rose*—

Mr. Rifkind: If the hon. Gentleman will allow me a moment. The hon. Gentleman has had long, detailed experience within COSLA and he knows perfectly well that the distribution formula is not only discussed with the convention, but that the present distribution formula is one agreed by the convention. While the hon. Gentleman may represent an individual authority that has a difference of view on this matter, he knows perfectly well that the convention as a whole discussed those matters and there are no outstanding, significant differences between the Scottish Office and the convention with regard to the formula used for distribution. Therefore, if Strathclyde region has a difference of view on this matter, it is up to that region to persuade its colleagues on the convention who can then make representations to the Scottish Office.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): Will the Secretary of State explain why he will not restore the rate support grant settlement to the level of 1978-80 or 1981-82 in proportion to the amount levied on local rates? That would allow local councils to reduce rates this year by up to 15p in the pound.

Mr. Rifkind: I must inform the hon. Gentleman that, in the four years when the grant percentage was, for example, 68·5 per cent., the rates imposed on ratepayers in Scotland went up by 60 per cent. Therefore, the suggestion that ratepayers benefit from a high grant percentage would be true only if some local authorities did not abuse the situation to increase their expenditure and still impose heavy rates increases on the local people.

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): In the light of what the Secretary of State has just said about the convention being consulted and discussions taking place, does he not agree that he is being a bit disingenuous? The reality of those discussions is that COSLA representatives get told what the formula will be and they do not engage in a process of negotiation. Does the Secretary of State's statement mean that there will be real negotiations with the Scottish local authorities?

Mr. Rifkind: The settlement that I have announced today has already been referred to by a number of the hon. Member's hon. Friends as an extremely reasonable and fair settlement. [HON. MEMBERS: "Who?"] That is the only inference that I can draw. Indeed, the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) asked me whether my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) would be pleased with such a generous settlement. How are we to interpret that question except on the basis that I have suggested?

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): Will the Secretary of State consider making an earlier announcement as to the guideline for each region or district? Does he not accept that the important thing for each local authority is to know exactly what its guideline will be? Will he not allow time so that the authorities can make representations to him? Will he also consider publishing a definition, in clear and unambiguous terms, of what he considers to be excessive and unreasonable as regards local authority expenditure, given the fact that the Minister said in the early hours of Tuesday morning:

"there is no precise basis on which excessive and unreasonable expenditure is automatically triggered." [*Official Report*, 20 July 1987; Vol. 120 c. 159.]

Mr. Rifkind: On the hon. Gentleman's latter point, we have had discussions on that matter and evidence was given to the Select Committee some time ago as to the basis on which those matters were approached.

I agree that the guidelines should be given as early as possible in the financial year. I have said that we would hope to be able to give them in late September. However, I hope that the hon. Gentleman will appreciate that we cannot consider individual guidelines until we know overall provision because, clearly, the two are directly and inevitably related. The provision is now known and we can now start working on the details of individual guidelines.

Mr. Martin O'Neill (Clackmannan): With regard to distribution, will the Secretary of State take account of the money that Central region spent on providing assistance to the National Coal Board for the development of Polmaise colliery? The Government's energy policy resulted in the closure of that colliery last week. Will the Secretary of State ensure that Central region will not be

[Mr. Martin O'Neill]

out of pocket as a result of the money that it spent to encourage the NCB with that project, which has now sadly ended?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that individual local authorities take responsibility for any specific use of their resources on matters that they believe to be important to their local communities. Our control is exercised with regard to the totality of that expenditure, not with regard to individual projects.

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunningham, North): Does the Secretary of State agree that, in areas such as Cunningham with a 30 per cent. male unemployment rate, many people will be astonished by the selective profligacy of the Government because they are prepared to spend £12 million on the preparation of a poll tax register? Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman give an assurance that the idiotic enterprise in which he is engaged will be accounted for separately? If the cost of preparing that register turns out, as many suspect, to be more than £12 million, will local authorities be appropriately reimbursed?

Mr. Rifkind: The Department has made the best estimate of what the cost will be and we have suggested provision of the kind that I have mentioned today. In the context of the overall provision that I have announced today, I do not believe that anyone could seriously suggest that the sums involved are other than extremely modest and relevant to what is required in that respect.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): Does the Secretary of State agree on the importance of rural schools not just for primary education, but as a community resource in constituencies such as mine, North Tayside, Dumfries and others? Will this settlement enable Strathclyde regional council to keep open all the existing rural primary schools?

Mr. Rifkind: It is a matter for Strathclyde region to determine whether it wishes to do that. If it does and if that is the priority of the authority, there should be no difficulty given the vast sums allocated to Strathclyde region.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): Will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that the percentage grant for Scotland is 55·5 per cent. compared with the grant of 46·2 per cent. for England and Wales? Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the increase in rate support grant for Scotland is 9 per cent. whereas in England it is only 7 per cent. and that that increase will involve an added £36 being spent on every person in Scotland by the Treasury? If that is correct, will my right hon. and learned Friend agree that Scotland is in an extremely privileged position in relation to the rate support grant and that that grant involves a massive transfer of resources from England and Wales to Scotland to improve employment in that region?

Mr. Rifkind: I do not entirely agree with my hon. Friend. The grant percentage in Wales is 66 per cent., certainly higher than in Scotland, but in a sense that does not tell us very much. The grant percentage for any territory — Scotland, England or Wales — is only an average figure. Within Scotland, Wales and England there are extremely wide ranges of grant percentage. In some parts of England the grant percentage is lower than in Scotland and in some parts of Scotland it is lower than in England. Throughout the United Kingdom the grant percentage of any individual local authority depends upon the resources it can raise through the rate poundage applied in that part of the country. If certain parts of Scotland, England and Wales are less able to raise high resources from within the local community, inevitably that increase will be averaged in that locality. That is the position, and it should be borne in mind.

Mr. Speaker: Application under Standing Order No. 20.

Mr. John McFall (Dumbarton) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman has not been rising. *[Interruption.]* I did not see the hon. Gentleman rising. If he has been rising regularly, that is my mistake, and I shall call him.

Health Care (Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale)

6.10 pm

Mr. Peter Pike (Burnley): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter, namely,

"the decisions taken by Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale health authority last night resulting in hospital closures and reduced patient care."

It is important because it affects the Health Service provision for a population of 250,000. It is urgent because this is the last opportunity for three months to debate last night's decisions, after which time it will be too late to influence those decisions.

These decisions have become increasingly inevitable and I have taken every opportunity to raise these serious matters prior to decisions being taken. A delegation from the health authority recently met the regional health authority and returned empty handed with a clear instruction to implement a budget reducing expenditure this financial year by £1·3 million. Ministers and officials have dodged the revenue budget problem by constantly referring to the capital budget and to developments that have taken place.

Last night's decisions are unacceptable. They are based on assumptions that will not be fulfilled, and we shall still be faced with major problems unless the Government make more resources available. Consultation has not taken place about closing Victoria hospital. That hospital celebrated its centenary in 1986 and a new wing was opened providing new facilities at a cost of over £90,000, the money being raised by public subscription. Those facilities have not all been completed, and those that are complete have hardly been used because, suddenly, possible closure was suggested.

Last night's meeting agreed temporary closure of Victoria hospital and rationalisation of Rossendale surgical services in order to save £120,000. However, we know that temporary closure is effectively permanent closure and that the hospital will not be re-opened. The statutory consultation now to be held will be a token and a farce. In those wards already closed, equipment has been labelled for removal for some time. When it goes, and it will go, the cost of re-equipping those wards on top of the present financial crisis will make re-opening impossible.

When the hospital closes, some aspects of patient care cannot be provided at the other local hospitals remaining open. The general hospital cannot accept the transfer of all the X-ray facilities. It already has major problems and the ultrasound equipment is virtually in a corridor in the X-ray department. Much money was recently spent at Victoria hospital on updating the heating system and providing a central cook-freeze kitchen that supplies other hospitals in the group.

Hartley hospital is to close completely and the land is to be disposed of for a theoretical income of £150,000. The package goes on and on. It worsens Health Service provision and patient care in the area, and the health authority knows it. The last annual report of the district medical officer showed major health problems in the area and proved the need for more resources not fewer. The proposals are drastic and unacceptable. They will fail in their objectives and more cuts will follow. The matter is serious and urgent and must be debated in the House today.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he thinks should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the decisons taken by Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale health authority last night resulting in hospital closures and reduced patient care."

I fully understand the concern with which the hon. Gentleman has moved his application. He knows that the only decision that I have to take is whether to give this matter precedence over the business set down for today. I regret that I do not consider that it is appropriate under Standing Order No. 20 and I cannot therefore submit his application to the House.

BILL PRESENTED

MULTILATERAL INVESTMENT GUARANTEE AGENCY

Mr. Secretary Howe, supported by Mr. Chris Patten and Mr. Peter Lilley, presented (Under Standing Order No. 48 (Procedure upon Bills whose main object is to create a charge upon the public revenue)) a Bill to enable the United Kingdom to give effect to the Convention establishing the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 15.]

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Ordered,

That the Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) Order 1987 (S.I., 1987, No. 1165) be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c. — *[Mr. Alan Howarth.]*

Northern Ireland (Fluoridation)

6.16 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Richard Needham): I beg to move,

That the draft Water (Fluoridation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 27th April, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

The purpose of this order is to bring Northern Ireland into line with the provisions of the Water Fluoridation Act 1985. In Northern Ireland the Department of the Environment is the sole water authority, but this order, like the Great Britain Act, leaves the question of fluoridation as a local issue to be decided at local level, in our case through health and social services boards.

Dental decay in Northern Ireland remains, even after a welcome reduction, a significant and costly form of disease. The child dental health survey, carried out in 1983, showed that among 13-year-olds 64 per cent. of children in the Province had active decay in permanent teeth. This compares with 31 per cent. in England, 40 per cent. in Wales and 51 per cent. in Scotland. These are dreadful statistics.

Some people in Northern Ireland have taken a far-sighted and determined stand on fluoridation. There are two fluoridation schemes currently in operation, one at Tandragee and the other at Holywood. These schemes were introduced by their respective district councils prior to local government reorganisation in 1973. I pay tribute to their farsightedness. The House will want to know that the two areas which have the lowest incidence of tooth decay are, indeed, North Down and Tandragee.

There is overwhelming evidence that the presence of floride in drinking water avoids a great mass of dental caries in young persons. It is also overwhelmingly and crushingly demonstrated that the presence of fluoride in water has no morbid consequences whatsoever. I can find no moral or libertarian reason why the advantages to be obtained from a water supply with one part per million element of fluoride should not be made available to the people of this counry at the discretion of the local health authorities.

I am sorry that the former right hon. Member for South Down is not here today to hear the succinctness of his views quoted back at him. I hope that his successor will agree with Mr. Powell's views, as I hope will his other Ulster colleagues. It would be the Department of Health and Social Services in Northern Ireland that would be required to fund any scheme that came into operation following the recommendation of a health board. The board would have to have consulted the DHSS on the cost-effectiveness of its proposal and the availability of funding before formally submitting proposals to the Department of the Environment.

The board will also have to publish details of its proposals at least three months before implementation, and it will have to give notice to and consult any district council affected, and will have to take into account any representations from the public.

The arguments for and against fluoridation have been advanced at some length on the Floor of the House and the House would not thank me if I were to rehearse them again. In Northern Ireland there are some forms of decay which are extremely difficult to handle, but tooth decay is one that we can and must do something about.

Mr. James Molyneaux (Lagan Valley): The Minister ought not to be sensitive about repeating the arguments. The problem for us all is that even if he were successful in convincing the House or if any of us were successful in convincing the House that there was some serious error in the order, there is nothing on God's earth that the Minister, the Government or anyone else could do about it. That is why it is a charade.

Mr. Needham: I appreciate the right hon. Gentleman's views on that matter. We have such discussions in the House and in Committee upstairs. As I said last week, I hope that the talks currently taking place can lead, via the usual channels, to some way of redressing that problem to the satisfaction of all concerned.

We are making strides towards reducing dental decay, but we are not doing it fast enough or broadly enough. I am convinced that fluoridation of public water supplies at the level proposed in the order would significantly reduce the unacceptably high incidence of tooth decay in the Province.

Royal Assent

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have to notify the House, in accordance with the Royal Assent Act 1967, that the Queen has signified Her Royal Assent to the following Acts:

1. Appropriation (No. 2) Act 1987.
2. Finance (No. 2) Act 1987.
3. British Shipbuilders (Borrowing Powers) Act 1987.
4. Channel Tunnel Act 1987.
5. Western Isles Islands Council (Vatersay Causeway) Order Confirmation Act 1987.
6. Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys Act 1987.
7. Essex Act 1987.

Northern Ireland (Fluoridation)

Question again proposed.

6.20 pm

Mr. James Marshall (Leicester, South): The Opposition welcome the draft order. We accept the Minister's arguments that the order brings the law in Northern Ireland into line with the law in Great Britain and removes any legal doubt about adding fluoride to water supplies in the Province. Having said that, we have great sympathy with the point put forward by the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) that there is no right of amendment to the draft order available to hon. Members. However, we arrive at a different conclusion from the right hon. Gentleman. It is our view that the right forum for those kinds of decisions, debates and amendments should be in a devolved Assembly in the Province. If the Government, supported by the right hon. Gentleman, are prepared to work towards those ends, they would be warmly acclaimed and supported by my right hon. and hon. Friends.

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): Before we arrive at the objective that the hon. Gentleman and I both share of a devolved Assembly in Northern Ireland, does not the hon. Gentleman think that it would be better for orders of this kind to be considered in the Northern Ireland Committee that is provided for under Standing Order No. 99 of our Standing Orders rather than being debated here on the Floor of the House?

Mr. Marshall: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman recognises that when that Standing Committee was operating I was not a Member of the House. My hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) reminds me that one of the reasons that the Standing Committee failed to work successfully was the absence from the House of certain hon. and right hon. Gentleman. If the Government are prepared to revive the Standing Committee and those hon. and right hon. Gentlemen are prepared to attend, and attend regularly, some advance could be made along the lines that were used before. Our ideal solution would be a devolved Assembly in the Province to deal with legislation of this kind.

To come to the point of the order, fluoridation is a recognised method of public health care for preventing tooth decay. In some quarters it is still recognised as controversial, but all the medical evidence available seems to show that it does not have any deleterious effect upon people's health and, as a method of preventing tooth decay, should be accepted and welcomed.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Northern Ireland Office compared the incidence of tooth decay in the Province and other parts of the United Kingdom. I am sure that there is no need for me to remind him that he does not have to make just that comparison. If he compared the cities of Belfast and Dublin in the island of Ireland he would find that the level of tooth decay in Dublin is far lower than it is in Belfast. The Minister, and I am sure hon. Members, will know that, whereas there is no fluoridation in the water supply in Belfast, there has been in Dublin for a number of years, and that has led to a significant reduction in tooth decay, particularly among children.

In the Minister's press release of 1 December 1986 he said that there is more tooth decay among children in the Province than in any other part of the United Kingdom. That is correct. Fluoridation would help to redress that balance. Fluoridation may begin to redress that imbalance, but it should not hide from the Minister, the Government or the House the fact that much of that tooth decay is a reflection of the high levels of unemployment and the consequential poverty in Northern Ireland. Fluoridation of water supplies should not take the limelight from the need to continue to bring economic benefits and other social benefits to the Province.

The Opposition accept the order and, if it is implemented after the full and proper consultation processes that are laid down in the draft order are met, it will have our full support.

6.25 pm

Mr. James Kilfedder (North Down): The word "charade" has already been used in the debate by my right hon. Friend the Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux). I support the accusation that he made. Once again there is clear evidence of scandalous discrimination against Ulster and the Ulster people, because today the Government have put forward a number of Orders in Council that are not capable of amendment. This procedure offends the basic rights of people in Northern Ireland. The only choice given to Ulster Members is to vote either for or against the order.

I shall exercise my parliamentary right of voting against the order as the only means of protesting against an unacceptable and undemocratic system. My Unionist colleagues will join me in the No Lobby for the Division, but despite our opposition the Government will have a comfortable majority and will push the order through the House. No doubt some hon. Members are waiting with palpitations for a Division at 7 o'clock.

Many of those hon. Members who will support the Government have probably not been to Northern Ireland. I am sure that, if they were treated as second-class citizens in the way that Ulster Members of Parliament are treated and were not able to move amendments to various orders, they would be as angry as I am at the denial of fundamental rights to the people of Northern Ireland and their elected representatives.

Mr. Roy Beggs (Antrim, East): Will the hon. Member also place on record his concern over the fact that many of those hon. Members who will vote in favour of the order are not even present and will not hear the debate?

Mr. Kilfedder: That is correct. No doubt they will converge on the House. If they are not now on their knees praying for a 7 o'clock Division, they are elsewhere, hoping to get in the right spirit.

During business questions this afternoon the Leader of the House told hon. and right hon. Members that talks were taking place with interested parties to discuss the intolerable way in which Orders in Council are put before the House. When reference was made to "interested parties", to quote his words, one would assume that he would include Unionist Members of Parliament, but I was not invited to discuss the matter raised by the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton). I am shocked to learn from my right hon. Friend the Member for Lagan Valley that even he was excluded from such talks, and also that he received a letter advising him that he would not be invited to any such talks.

[Mr. Kilfedder]

That is further corroboration of the undemocratic and contemptuous way in which the Government are treating the elected representatives of the people of Northern Ireland. I find that repugnant. It reveals an arrogance that is certainly unacceptable to my hon. and right hon. Friends, to the Ulster people and to me. This order is not a surprising manifestation of the Government's attitude. Only last week the Minister reprimanded me in a television interview for my impertinence in criticising him and his Department for the proposals that would further undermine hospital services in the North Down area. I fear that the Northern Ireland officers and Ministers are so isolated in their cantonment from the Ulster people that they have come to believe that they are the modern version of colonial rulers and they live in a different world. They are not part of Northern Ireland. They do not experience what Ulster people experience. I have to warn them that they are in for a pretty hard time of it.

I shall not go into the merits of the order. These matters have been discussed at length elsewhere. I do not intend to add to this charade by taking part in the debate on fluoridation. However, I shall vote against the order and I intend to vote against every order presented to the House this evening.

6.30 pm

Mr. James Molyneaux (Lagan Valley): I welcome the hon. Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Marshall) back to the House and to his new post as Opposition spokesman. I take the liberty of reminding him that, even if we had a devolved Government and Assembly at Stormont, that body would not be given all of what used to be called transferred matters. The Anglo-Irish Agreement uses the term that it "might" have devolved to it certain matters, which is a different affair. In any event, even if the transferred matters were restored to a revamped Stormont, a vast amount of legislation affecting Northern Ireland would still be dealt with here. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman, being as fair and generous as he always has been, would not suggest that we should perpetuate the situation whereby Northern Ireland would continue for all time to be legislated for by Orders in Council — a procedure which would not be acceptable to, or even be contemplated for, any other part of the United Kingdom.

My contribution will be brief because I have outgrown any liking that I ever had for charades, and, as my hon. Friend the Member for North Down (Mr. Kilfedder) said, this is a charade. Here we have no fewer than five Orders in Council crammed into the penultimate day before the recess. This is an insulting timetable, but it is only partly the fault of the business managers. To a far greater extent it reflects the incompetence of the Northern Ireland Office, which had these draft orders on the stocks, in the pipeline or on the shelf for some considerable time. It knew that approval was required for these orders before the recess. However, here they are, waiting to be brought in on the penultimate day.

In theory, we could devote seven and a half hours, not to considering, but merely to talking about, five unamendable Orders in Council. It is the intention of Ministers to give the impression, as we wade through these five orders, that we are debating and improving legislation for Northern Ireland. We are not debating in the meaning of the term as it is understood by the House. We are not improving, because improvement is utterly impossible, and the Minister was truthful and honest enough to admit that in an earlier exchange.

No influence can be brought to bear on the legislation or, more important, on those who will implement the legislation. When these five orders were set down for today, the theory being whispered around corridors was, "Bad luck. It will be on the penultimate day before the recess, but it will be in prime time." Here we are, at half past six, starting on the marathon of the five orders.

I have never believed that it was the Government's intention to allow us prime time. I have been round this course far too many times. It was obvious to me a week ago that three or four statements would be made before our debates. Some of my rather more trusting hon. Friends queried my judgment, but I warned them that the Government would find ways and means to sabotage this so-called allocation of time. I said that three or four statements would be squeezed in unannounced, and we were landed with statements taking over two hours of our time.

All has not been lost, because, quite unintentionally, that injection of the three statements has illustrated a point. During the questions, some of them very lengthy, following the statements, and the answers, some of them also very lengthy, we heard assurances from the Dispatch Box by Ministers that account would be taken of the many valid points made in those exchanges. The Northern Ireland Minister—I say with sympathy the unfortunate Northern Ireland Minister—does not have the freedom to give the assurance that account will be taken of anything said in this debate or the four other debates, because there is nothing that he can do. He dare not give that assurance, because the die is cast, and there is nothing that the Government can say in response to any points raised in the debate.

Even if all hon. Members present desired a change in the legislation, and even if the Front Bench agreed that a change were desirable, there is nothing that the Government could do about it. This is all a charade and a deception. Earlier today the Leader of the House assured us, as he did on business questions last week, that he is engaged in consultations with a view to finding a remedy to this situation. My hon. Friend the Member for North Down has shown that some hon. Members are being consulted more than others. Rather than perpetuate this pantomime, it would be far better, and far more honest of the Government if, at the state opening of each Parliament, they introduced a Sessional motion giving advance approval to every and any order that the Northern Ireland Office might think fit to invent during the Session.

6.37 pm

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): This order, being unamendable and restricted — despite its moral, constitutional and medical importance — to a short debate, is the Government's misguided attempt to force mass medication with a very dangerous substance upon a largely unsuspecting and trusting public in Northern Ireland.

The Government are doing this, not because they are a malign or ill-meaning Government—just the opposite — but because their advisers will not take the time

objectively to assess the evidence of positive harm that fluoride does to our bodily functions, just as they refused to assess the evidence about thalidomide.

This Government, of all Governments, are brushing aside the invasion of individual liberty that mass medication involves, in favour of a medical lobby that does not care a fig about freedom of the individual or even medical ethics. If people believe that this rat poison will do their children good, they are free to put it in their water. But if the people do not so believe, or cannot possibly benefit because they are past benefiting or have no teeth —a sizeable proportion of the British population are in that state — why, oh why, should they be forced by Government diktat to take it?

I do not understand why the Government go on allowing themselves to be conned by a small faction of the medical profession obsessed with the so-called benefits of fluoridation, when those claims are, on an almost monthly basis, being disproved. I do not know why the Government go on accepting as scientific "fact" that fluoridation does no harm, when so little work has been done on its long-term effects, when the dose cannot be regulated because people drink different amounts of water or tea, or eat different amounts of substances cooked in fluoride, or breathe fluoridated air, or brush their teeth with fluoridated toothpaste when no one seems to give a damn about the effects on people who are allergic to it, or who, like kidney dialysis patients, are positively known to be harmed by fluoride, and when so much of the rest of the civilised world refuses to have any truck with the substance. I simply do not understand why a Conservative Government, believing as they do in the freedom of the individual, have allowed themselves to go into the totalitarian business of mass-medicating the public water supply when not one single life will be saved by such measures. We are now inflicting this dangerous nonsense, not on our worst enemies, but on our friends in Northern Ireland.

Not only were the Government conned into passing the Water (Fluoridation) Act 1985, but the conning goes on and on and the medical cranks get bolder. Let me give some examples. First, every Government publication by the Fluoridation Society repeats the lie that there is no evidence that fluoride causes any harm. How can the Government be party to that lie? Countless reports from reputable university researchers in the United States, Japan and Sweden and all the major countries of the Western world report physical harm. A few are listed in my short speech in the debate on the Bill in 1985. Colleagues will be relieved to know that I have no intention of repeating them now.

Since then, the evidence has continued to emerge. For brevity's sake I shall cite only one example. Scientists from the Medical Research Council's neuro-endocrinology unit in Newcastle upon Tyne now say that aluminium contamination of food and water is a possible cause of Alzheimer's disease — senile dementia — which affects three quarters of a million people in Britain. Two Sri Lankan scientific researchers reported to the reputable science journal, *Nature*, that fluoride added to water at one part per million brings a thousandfold increase in the aluminium content of water that is boiled to cook cabbages, tomatoes and other acidic foods.

I can understand the pro-fluoridation supporters saying that there is evidence on both sides and that they prefer the evidence that fluoride is utterly safe. But one has to be a fanatic to say that there is no evidence at all of any harm. Of course, if the fluoro-fanatics were to admit that there was some evidence of harm, that would be the end of fluoridation, because the public would not accept it for one moment. Therefore, the fanatics continue the fraudulent pretence and the Government go along with it. It does not seem to matter how many reputable scientists, from however many reputable universities, or however many Nobel prize winners, say that it causes harm, they keep repeating that there is no evidence.

Mr. Jimmy Hood (Clydesdale): Is the hon. and learned Gentleman aware that stomach cancers as a result of fluoridation have been reported in America? Does his speech cover that aspect?

Mr. Lawrence: No, because my speech is meant to be short. I am grateful for the hon. Gentleman's intervention.

Secondly, every Government-supported publication on the subject repeats the assertion that as certain towns and cities have seen a reduction of dental caries in children's teeth after fluoridation, that is because of fluoridation, although the evidence is growing all the time that the same decrease in dental caries takes place where no fluoride is added to the water at all. I should like to read an extract from the reputable journal *Nature*, of 10 July 1986. A research scientist from the Australian National University in Canberra says:

"In fluoridated areas, there are now many . . . studies which record large reductions in the incidence of caries. The results of these and of fixed time surveys have led to the 'fluoridation hypothesis', namely, that the principal cause of these reductions is fluoridation.

Until the early 1980s, there had been comparatively few longitudinal studies of caries in unfluoridated communities . . . But during the period 1979-1981, especially in western Europe where there is little fluoridation, a number of dental examinations were made and compared with surveys carried out a decade or so before. It soon became clear that large reductions in caries had been occurring in unfluoridated areas . . . The magnitudes of these reductions are generally comparable with those observed in fluoridated areas over similar periods of time."

The scientist cites the following places in Britain: Bristol, Devon, Gloucestershire, the Isle of Wight, north-west England, Scotland, Shropshire and Somerset.

The reason for the improvement is that we eat better food and a better diet, less sugar, more whole-germ cereals and more brushing of the teeth, but the reason is not fluoride. He concludes by saying:

"Perhaps the real mystery of declining tooth decay is why so much effort has gone into poor quality research on fluoridation, instead of on the more fundamental questions of diet and immunity."

The Government are allowing themselves to be conned.

Thirdly, every fluoro-fanatical publication declares that all that is happening is a minimal topping up of the natural fluoride in the water, when that topping up is frequently a hundredfold increase, and when there is an important difference between naturally fluoridated water that has a high calcium and manganese content, which both reduce the harmful effects of fluoride and strengthen the teeth, and artificial fluoride, which contains much less calcium and manganese, and which is the effluent of heavy industrial processes.

Fourthly, emboldened by their unlikely support from an otherwise sensible Government, the fluoro-fanatics are now going on to even more incredible feats. They have persuaded Gallup, an otherwise highly reputable pollster, to ask a thoroughly absurd and unethical question: "Do

[Mr. Lawrence]

you think fluoride should be added to the water if it can reduce tooth decay?" That question biases the answer. Of course everyone would vote for that, just as people would vote for the devil himself if they thought that it would would do any good. The fluoro-fanatics claim 71 per cent. in favour of fluoride in 1985 and 76 per cent. in 1987. That is nonsense. If the question was asked: "Do you think that fluoride should be added to the water supply?", that answer would not be received, and the fanatics know it. In practically every local poll taken in areas all over Britain the public are massively opposed to adding that substance to their water, and so are the elected district councils, county councils and parish councils.

Fifthly, so cocky have the fluoro-fanatics become that they have even investigated my district. They proudly put in their magazine:

"5 year olds
Fluoridated Uttoxeter
An average of less than one tooth affected per child
Non-fluoridated Burton
An average of over two teeth affected per child."

I am afraid that that is not very persuasive. To begin with, it is untrue that Uttoxeter is, or ever has been, fluoridated. It has natural fluoride, at a level of 0·9 per cent. That statement in the magazine is misleading. It is likely that children in rural areas will tend to eat more healthy food than the Asian immigrant community from which a substantial part of the sample was taken in the inner Burton area. We all know how much they delight in sweet food and that as yet they are not as conscientious about teaching their children to brush their teeth and have a proper diet as others are. To make the comparison between only 321 children in Uttoxeter and 186 in Burton and then to plaster all over the page in a magazine the statement that children in Uttoxeter have half the number of dental caries cases of children in Burton is misleading.

Evidence is now beginning to emerge in the fluoridated parts of my area of discoloration of children's teeth. One should tell the public that by the time they have breathed fluoride through the air, brushed their teeth with fluoridated toothpaste and consumed fluoride at one party per million whenever they drink water, tea or beer, or eat food that has been boiled in fluoridated water, their children will grow up to have brown, mottled and discoloured teeth. If one told the public that, would 75 per cent. be in favour of fluoridation? The information is nonsense and misleading, and the Government are going along with it.

I am sorry to see that the Government have taken no notice of the flaw that has developed in the British legislation, because they repeat it exactly in the Northern Ireland order. The Government were making a great concession to us. They would not allow the decision to be made by elected local authorities, but notice would be served upon them, and they had to be consulted. The idea was to keep the decision to fluoridate local even though there would not be democratic decisions, but that is not happening.

Let me give an example from the Burton area. Under the section that talks of the continuity of existing fluoridation schemes, notice need not be given if a scheme was in operation when the Act became effective. The same thing is being repeated in the order. To us that meant that if work was being undertaken, and hundreds of thousands of pounds spent, the local authority need not be consulted. But that is not how it is being interpreted. If there are any plans on paper, that is to be a "scheme", and that will stop people from being notified and consulted.

Therefore, these fluoridation procedures can be steamrollered through without consulting the people whom we in the House decided to consult. That could be corrected if we could amend the order, which we cannot, and that is deplorable too. The Government should not go along with that, because they know that that is what is happening and I am sad to see it put in this legislation as though nothing wrong was happening.

Artifical fluoridation of the water supply has been carried on under consecutive Governments. I always said that it was unlawful, and I was right. The court in Scotland said that it was unlawful, and now we have changed the law to make it lawful, and it is being extended to Northern Ireland. It is also undemocratic and will go on being so unless the Government stop giving money to nonsense public opinion polls and stop turning a blind eye to breaches of Parliament's clear intention to give notification and consultation rights to local authorities.

Artificial flouridation is unbeneficial because the evidence of benefit is now being confounded, as it was as long ago as 1969 by the Government's own survey. It is unsafe, as a massive amount of evidence now shows. It is unethical for doctors to advocate mass medication where the patient, the dose and the state of the patient's health are unknown. It is also a shocking deprivation of individual liberty.

The order, like its parent legislation, is an utter disgrace, and I shall have no part in it.

6.52 pm

Mr. Eddie McGrady (South Down): Today's debate seems to be on the merits and demerits of fluoridation, yet the order is permissive rather than mandatory. I have great confidence that the people of Northern Ireland will vehemently express their view, district by district, on whether they want to be fluoridated. I have no doubt that all the district councils, area boards and many other organisations will make their views well known.

I am concerned not with the arguments for or against fluoridation but with the legislation before us and I want to ask the Minister about some what are to me, but obviously not to him, obscure points. In doing so, I draw the attention of the House to the unique fact that the Minister responsible is acting not only as the Secretary of State for the Environment but as the Secretary of State for Social Services. Therefore, in a sense, the Minister can either cure or bury us.

It appears from paragraph 3 that the Department of the Environment may, without further application, increase the dosage of fluoridation which is referred to in paragraph 3(4) without any further reference to any other body or authority.

Paragraph 3(6) says:

"Water to which fluoride has been added by the Department in exercise of the power conferred by this Article . . . may be supplied by the Department to consumers in any other area"—

I emphasise the words "any other area".—

"in connection with the carrying out of any works . . . by the Department."

Why does that power appear to give the Department the ability to fluoridate areas which have not requested it,

acquiesced in it or agreed to it? That is also extended to the operation of existing fluoridation schemes under paragraph 5(3)*(b)*.

Because time is pressing I want to deal with only two further points concerning publicity and consultation. I am aware, like many previous speakers, of the considerable intentions to consult organisations, health boards and district councils and I hope that they will be carried out. But the order gives the DHSS power to direct that the article giving the protection of public consultation shall not apply in relation to any proposal of the board to withdraw an application or to terminate a preserved scheme. Those dichotomies of the order require clarification, if possible this afternoon.

I am fairly familiar with Northern Ireland, as one may assume. We have five health and social service boards and 26 district councils serving a population of only 1·25 million. Will water fluoridation be carried out by district health board, by district council area, or in areas dealing with water conservation or water distribution? Unless we have a network of stopcocks, how can fluoridated water be prevented from flowing from an area which desires it to one which does not?

6.56 pm

Mr. Needham: First, I congratulate the hon. Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Marshall) and welcome him to his position. I hope that we shall have more time in future to discuss these matters.

I am sorry if the hon. Member for North Down (Mr. Kilfedder) feels that I took him to task. I assure him that it was only because he accused me of not being at my post in the Province as often as I should be, which is not fair or true.

I understand the feelings of the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux), as he is well aware, but there was a consultation period on these orders. It would have been helpful to have had his and his colleagues' views. I understand why we did not, but nevertheless that facility was there.

I have read with great care everything that my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) had said in previous debates. I have been through all the points that he has made over a lengthy period, but I cannot agree with many of them with regard to Northern Ireland and the treating of children there, which the order is designed to assist.

I assure the hon. Member for South Down (Mr. McGrady) that there is no question of areas being fluoridated against their will or against the procedure laid down in the Order. Where water is no longer available because of a breakdown or maintenance, water boards will be able to take it from a fluoridated to a non-fluoridated area. Once the work is completed, that will cease. I appreciate that I may not have dealt fully with all the hon. Gentleman's points, but I assure him that I shall write to him.

This measure will be of immense benefit to most children in Northern Ireland and I am sure that it will be welcomed by them and their parents.

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 148, Noes 40.

Division No. 28] **[6.58 pm**

AYES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Baldry, Tony
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Hayes, Jerry
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McGrady, E. K.
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Martlew, Eric
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Raffan, Keith
Redwood, John
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wheeler, John
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Richard Ryder.

NOES

Alton, David
Ashby, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Beggs, Roy
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bidwell, Sydney
Butler, Chris

Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cryer, Bob
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forth, Eric
Ground, Patrick
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Haynes, Frank
Hinchliffe, David
Hood, James
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Janman, Timothy
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Livsey, Richard
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
Maginnis, Ken
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meale, Alan
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Parry, Robert
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Skinner, Dennis
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Steel, Rt Hon David
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wray, James

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. William Ross and
Mr. Neil Hamilton.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Water (Fluoridation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 27th April, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

Felixstowe Dock and Railway Bill

Order for consideration, as amended, read.

7.10 pm

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wish to raise two points, the first of which is on the procedure on the Bill.

I am sure that you will agree, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it is an extremely unusual procedure for a Bill to start in the House in 1984 and for us to continue to consider it now. You will further agree that for some of that time delay occurred as a result of Labour Members objecting to the principle. But for more than 12 months the Bill made no progress as a result of a decision by the promoters not to press for time for the Bill to continue. The result is that the Bill was introduced in 1984, had its Second Reading in 1985, and was considered in Committee in 1986.

The information put to that Committee is obviously out of date. In particular, the company that originally started to promote the Bill has been taken over and many of the officials who gave evidence to the Committee are no longer able to represent the company, so there must be considerable doubt about some of their evidence. We are now supposed to consider the Bill on the basis of the evidence from the report of that Committee, when clearly circumstances have changed.

At the end of Committee proceedings nothing was done except to table two carry-over motions, so now the Bill is returned to us. We are halfway through consideration and there are considerable difficulties in recapping the evidence given to the Committee because of the change of ownership of the company and changing circumstances, such as the progress made on the Channel Tunnel Bill.

Will you also consider, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we now have a different elected body. Many hon. Members of the present House could not consider the earlier proceedings. It is possible for them to check on the debates in this Chamber, but as I understand it a transcript of the evidence given in Committee is not easily available. Therefore, it is extremely difficult for new hon. Members to get the historic information.

This is an unsatisfactory procedure. I understand that the House has set up a Committee to consider private business. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you may feel that, rather than give a ruling now, it would be better to refer the procedure of this Bill to that Committee for it to consider whether this is the way in which legislation on private business should be considered.

My second point is that when our proceedings were suspended——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I had better deal with one point at a time. I remind the hon. Gentleman that the motion that enables us to consider the Bill was approved by the House. Therefore, our proceedings today are completely in order.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am a fairly new Member and I seek your guidance because I was not in the House from 1983 to 1987.

As I understand it, on page 273, *Erskine May* gives us guidance that at the end of a Parliament everything before the House is quashed. I know that there has been a new Standing Order which allows business to be carried from

one Session to the next, but the guidance in *Erskine May* is to ensure that limitations are placed on Parliaments to stop one Parliament from binding all future Parliaments. Indeed, that is an important principle of our British constitution.

I seek an assurance that new hon. Members, like me, will have the opportunity to consider the Bill in a reasonable period because there are rumours that attempts will be made to force closure motions without adequate debate. I know that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would not be keen on that and I appeal to you and your sense of fair play to ensure that we have a proper opportunity for consideration of the Bill. It is this Parliament, not any past Parliament, which makes the decision and we should like a proper opportunity to reflect and to make the correct decision.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: These matters will be for the occupant of the Chair at the relevant time. What the hon. Gentleman has said will, as always, be taken into account by the Chair.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I seek your guidance.

When our proceedings were suspended on 15 July 1986 we had debated a group of amendments which were designed to ensure that any application to proceed would have to be put to the Secretary of State. Following a closure motion, we voted on the first group of amendments, which was headed by a new clause. We were pleased that the new clause should be added to the Bill. However, when we started that debate on the first group of amendments the occupant of the Chair said:

"With this new clause it will be convenient to discuss the following amendments: No. 6 . . . No. 8 . . . No. 9 . . . No. 10 . . . and . . . No. 11."—[Official Report, 15 July 1986; vol. 101, c. 917.]

We could not vote on those amendments because of lack of time. From looking at the selection of amendments before us now, I see that amendment No. 6—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I understand that the amendments to which the hon. Gentleman refers are included in the amendments before the House this evening and have been selected by Mr. Speaker for debate.

Mr. Bennett: I cannot see amendments Nos. 6, 10 and 11, but I can see amendments Nos. 8 and 9. If they have been renumbered, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I should be grateful if you could tell me the changed numbers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I understand that the amendments to which the hon. Gentleman refers are included in the second group selected.

7·18 pm

Mrs. Ann Clwyd (Cynon Valley): I beg to move amendment No. 1, in the preamble, in page 2, leave out lines 15 to 18.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 3, in clause 3, in page 4, line 37, at end insert

'and provided that the framework of the Dock Workers Employment Scheme is in no way impaired consequent on the removal of any area from the jurisdiction of the Ipswich Port Authority.'.

No. 4, in page 4, line 40, leave out clause 4.

No. 41, in title, line 3, leave out from 'dock' to 'to' in line 5.

Mrs. Clwyd: As you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a long association with this Bill going back over several months. I have heard many arguments about the Bill and have taken a keen interest in those of the promoters, particularly as they were major contributors to the Conservative party. I am afraid that they appear since to have ceased their contributions, but, over a long period of time, we heard some of the arguments of the promoters of the Bill and of those who objected to its passage.

The Bill has some critical repercussions that affect trade unions and employment in registered ports, even though its provisions relate particularly to the ports of Felixstowe and Ipswich. If the Bill became law it would have repercussions for ports throughout the whole of Britain. It is important not to lose sight of that when we are discussing the Bill tonight.

In its expansion up the Orwell estuary the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Company has to acquire new legal and operational limits. If it acquires that new area, the company will be taken into an area of jurisdiction which, at present, belongs to the Ipswich port authority. That expansion will take a chunk out of the Ipswich port authority, so the Bill, in effect, alters the boundaries. Whereas Ipswich is a scheme port—that is relevant—Felixstowe is not. /*Interruption:*/ Therefore, the expansion takes place into an established area of registered dock work.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Did my hon. Friend hear the intervention from the Conservative Front Bench referring to the dock labour scheme? It appears that Conservative Members are very sensitive to these matters. Could it be that they are unwilling to underwrite by reasonable law and decent regulations the working conditions of men and women in this country, and that they wish to extend the principle which was turned around 70 or 80 years ago in this country?

Mrs. Clwyd: My hon. Friend has made an interesting point. I heard the intervention to which he referred, and I think that I should respond to it.

Perhaps the suggestion is that I have some pecuniary interest in the Bill. As the intervention made the point that it was something to do with the Transport and General Workers Union, I should make it clear at the outset that my interest in the Transport and General Workers Union is not a monetary one. I am sponsored by that union but I do not receive one penny in my pocket. If one looks at the register of Members' interests, one will see that, unlike those of some Conservative Members, my interests are registered in full; I want to encourage other hon. Members to do the same.

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): While my hon. Friend is accurately and correctly refuting some of the sedentary allegations that are being made from the Conservative Benches, will she draw the attention of the House to the debate on this matter that was held on 14 July 1986, when an impassioned plea against the Bill was heard from the hon. Member for Southampton, Test (Mr. Hill), who is not a member of the Transport and General Workers Union and who has never been seen in the front of a demonstration for better working conditions for dockers in Southampton or anywhere else?

Mrs. Clwyd: I thank my hon. Friend for his interesting point. It has apparently silenced Conservative Members; it must have wounded them deeply.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): Is the hon. Lady aware that in the last general election my right hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, Coastal (Mr. Gummer), in whose constituency this dock is, had posters put up for him by the dockers there? That shows what their real interest and concern is.

Mr. Snape: It goes to show.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. It would be helpful to the whole House and to me if the hon. Lady could now deal with the amendment.

Mrs. Clwyd: That would be a great pleasure, Madam Deputy Speaker. The point about the scheme ports is relevant to the argument. It means, in a nutshell, that if the Bill goes through, it will be used as the political vehicle to roll back the dock labour scheme without any negotiations. As far as I am aware, this is the first time that the scheme has been breached unilaterally in this way. That sets a bad precedent. Port workers in Ipswich certainly take that view, and the Transport and General Workers Union, which has a national policy of supporting and extending registered dock work, believes the same.

Mr. Michael Irvine (Ipswich): Might I remind the hon. Lady that the electorate of Ipswich at the last general election removed from the House of Commons the principal opponent of the Bill and substituted for him an hon. Member—me—who, during the election campaign, included in his campaign literature strong arguments in favour of the Bill. The people of Ipswich have therefore had the chance to pronounce their verdict on the Bill, and they have done so in its favour.

Mrs. Clwyd: I am sure that the electorate of Ipswich will have cause to rue the day that it elected the hon. Gentleman. When we have the next general election he will find that his slim majority was nothing to boast about at this stage in his brief career in the House.

The port of Ipswich and its workers operate under the scheme. That means that the authority has to be registered with the dock labour board. Dock workers, too, have to be registered, and have negotiated protection against redundancies. A negotiated disciplinary procedure operates under the scheme, as does a minimum wage—I am sure that there is not universal acclaim for that from Conservative Members. However, the minimum wage operates there, and there is also pay if work is temporarily not available.

No doubt Felixstowe will argue that it cannot operate non-scheme work in one part of its port and scheme work in another. However, that ignores the fact that the national scheme is being eroded unilaterally, without the semblance of any agreement. That has repercussions for ports throughout the whole of Britain. No doubt Felixstowe will argue that it needs to be entirely non-scheme to be competitive. That omits the fact that many scheme ports in Britain—there are about 80 of them—substantially improved their competitive performance. Some of those are east coast and Wash ports, such as Great Yarmouth, Ipswich, Lowestoft, King's Lynn and Wisbech.

This debate will doubtless range into general arguments about registered dock work and the scheme. For the sake of the Conservative hon. Members who may not be fully aware precisely of how the 1967 dock work employment scheme operates, and how important a development it was for dockers in this country, I shall briefly remind the House of the position. I shall not list all 80 ports—that would be stretching your tolerance too far, Madam Deputy Speaker—but I shall list some of the areas of the country where those ports are, because it is important to show their spread throughout Britain. There are scheme ports in Tyne and Wear, Middlesbrough and Hartlepool, in Hull and Goole, Grimsby and Immingham, and in the Wash ports; there are scheme ports in East Anglia and in London, in Medway and Swale on the south coast, and in Bristol on the Severn; in south Wales—I know most of these ports, as might be expected—there are Barry and Cardiff, Penarth, Newport, Port Talbot and Swansea. I think that every Welsh Member recognises how important it is to the dockers who work in those ports that they are registered under the dock workers employment scheme. There are scheme ports in the Liverpool area, Manchester, Fleetwood, Cumbria, west Scotland, Plymouth——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: In Workington.

7.30 pm

Mrs. Clwyd: —in Workington, Cornwall, Aberdeen and east Scotland. I hope that Conservative Members, when they see the scheme's benefits, will want to support its continuation and to promote the non-erosion of the scheme in other ports.

The scheme's essential element is limitation of entry to dock work through the requirements that port employers engaged in dock work should be registered with the National Dock Labour Board and that dock workers should be registered and through the restriction on dock workers to be registered dock workers. In addition, under the Docks and Harbours Act 1966, port employers in scheme ports are required to obtain a licence before engaging or employing a person as a dock worker. The scheme covers the centralised hiring and allocation of dock workers, a guaranteed minimum weekly wage for dock workers, a temporary unattached dock workers' payment for attendance for work if none is available, and a disciplinary procedure in relation to registered dock workers.

Dock workers can be dismissed from the industry only with the approval of the local dock labour board. Once registered, a dock worker—anyone who believes in good employment practice must support this scheme—is likely to enjoy absolute job security, unless he is convicted of misconduct or opts for voluntary severance under the relatively generous terms offered by the National Dock Labour Board.

The cost of the scheme is met from a levy of 3 per cent. on registered employers' gross wages bill. Additional Government grants and loans have been made available —I pay tribute to the Government for that—to assist in the financing of severance schemes, the latter having become an essential instrument in combating overmanning in the industry.

Mr. Cryer: Does my hon. Friend accept that Conservative Members cannot object to the principle, which she has just outlined, under which a levy is paid to provide enhanced redundancy payments? They support a similar scheme for steel workers which is provided under the European Coal and Steel Community programme and is supported through the treaty of Paris by the Common Market, which they avidly support, so Conservative Members cannot take issue with my hon. Friend on the point of principle.

Mrs. Clwyd: That is an important point. Those of us who know what happened with large-scale redundancies in the steel industry know how important that protection was. Given that there may be even more redundancies in the steel industry following what we have heard today in the House, people in all parts of the country are grateful for that provision.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: The hon. Lady is talking about a comparison between the dock labour scheme and Felixstowe. What are the wages in the Felixstowe docks? Are they higher or lower than in other docks in the scheme?

Mrs. Clwyd: I do not think that that is particularly relevant to the point that we are discussing. My argument is that there should not be an erosion of the policy which successive Governments have approved. The policy should not be eaten into by this kind of back-door, hole-in-the-wall approach to the problem throughout Britain. If that happens with this Bill, similar things will happen throughout Britain. That will be a negative development in the proper planning of port provision in Britain. I shall develop my argument and I am sure that the new Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) will gradually come to applaud our point of view.

The numbers covered by the dock workers employment scheme have fallen from a peak of 82,500 in 1951 to 12,438 in 1984, the last year for which figures were available. Employers are seeking 2,000 more voluntary redundancies over the next few years. Reductions in requirements for dock workers generally are due to a variety of factors, such as containerisation and the development of roll-on, roll-off facilities at ports. A reduction in the requirement for registered dock workers is attributable to business preference shifting in geographical terms from traditional ports such as Liverpool to those in the south-east, nearer foreign markets, and to some businesses taking their trade to non-scheme ports, which are often cheaper.

Non-scheme ports are often cheaper because the port employers are not paying the DWES levy and because the earnings of non-registered dock workers are less than those of registered dock workers.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: That is the answer for the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett).

Mrs. Clwyd: That is his answer.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The hon. Gentleman is not listening.

Mrs. Clwyd: He is not listening because he does not want to know the answer. He would have heard it had he waited just a little while.

The advantages of the DWES must be seen in their historical context when pre-DWES workers were without employment protection and often had a precarious existence. Consequently, importers and exporters suffered because the labour necessary for loading or unloading was not always available. Anyone who remembers the dockyard schemes when dockers were queuing and scrabbling for jobs would not want to see a return to that unedifying sight.

Protection for dock workers still exists, but the decline in dock work, the financial costs of the DWES, and difficulties encountered in reducing manning have contributed to undermining the position of scheme port employers vis-à-vis employers in non-scheme ports, who are unfettered by any restrictions on the use of labour.

The Bill gives added strength to the port employers' long-term ambition to whittle down the numbers and the geographical areas that come under the scheme's jurisdiction. I maintain that, if there is to be such a reduction, it should be within a national strategic framework, not in the way proposed in the Bill. Many similar measures in the Bill, such as those dealing with environmental policy, should be more properly discussed in the House by the responsible Ministers, rather than by bringing such a Bill in through the back door.

For many months, the Opposition have vigorously opposed this legislation. There were long sittings in Committee and eventually the Bill was considered on the Floor of the House. Because of various difficulties within the Government, we are dealing with it yet again. The principles which we enunciated at the beginning of the debate on the Bill still hold good. They are that environmental policy, ports policy and employment policy should not be determined in this way. Certain basic questions about the advisability of extending this type of scheme have never been properly answered. The need for the Bill has never been properly explained in Committee, on the Floor of the House or in written answers from the relevant Ministers. I hope that the Minister will not support bringing such important policy decisions forward in this hole-in-the-wall way. I appeal to Conservative Members to show their objection to the Bill and to support the amendment.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: I support the amendment. Perhaps I should start by making it clear to the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Irvine) that, while Ken Weetch fought hard against the Bill and for the interests of the people of Ipswich, who did not want extra traffic passing their homes or the disruption of the port facilities, Opposition Members also expounded much wider principles involved in the Bill. Many of us felt that the destruction of the natural habitat of wild birds was a matter of major national concern, as were the attempts to over-provide this country with container port facilities—particularly in view of the Channel tunnel proposals—and the attempt to disrupt the dock workers employment scheme. Those matters were of concern not merely to Ipswich and Felixtowe but to the country as a whole.

Opposition Members have always argued that for legislation such as this the private Bill procedure is inappropriate, first, because the procedures for debates in the House are unsuitable and, secondly, because it does not give people in the local community a proper opportunity to argue their case, as a planning inquiry would. Furthermore, the procedure lacks the vigorous discipline normally applied to Government or private Members' Bills which have to get through the House in one 12-month period. Earlier, on a point of order, I referred to the farcical nature of a procedure that allows us to be debating a Bill introduced in 1984—so that people petition against it on the basis of circumstances pertaining in 1984—three years later, when many of those circumstances have changed dramatically.

The hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) asked about the comparative rates of pay for dock workers inside and outside the scheme. He should examine more carefully the reasons why the dock work scheme was introduced.

[Mr. Andrew F. Bennett]

Some people in the scheme have made some sacrifices in the rates of pay that they enjoy but that has all been a part of the attempt to introduce an orderly dock policy and orderly employment arrangements as distinct from those that applied before the scheme. Before the scheme, the conditions and the exploitation of workers in the docks were appalling.

Mr. Cryer: Does my hon. Friend agree that, when comparing union and non-union labour, one should remember that union labour is essential? Without union-organised labour there is no incentive to keep rates of pay higher. As soon as trade union membership is taken away, the whole thing sinks. For example, Marks and Spencer is anxious to deter people from joining a trade union, but were it not for the fact that USDAW negotiates basic rates of pay Marks and Spencer would not have sought to pay above those rates to discourage people from joining the union.

Mr. Bennett: I thank my hon. Friend for that helpful intervention, and I look forward to further interventions from him, as he has considerable knowledge of employment legislation.

Before the dock labour scheme was introduced, people had to turn up each day in the hope that they would get work. That would depend on factors such as whether their face fitted and on whether they had a reputation for behaviour that suited the employer. On many occasions many more people turned up than were likely to be employed and wages varied substantially from day to day and from week to week. Those conditions were always intolerable, but as dock work declined and containerisation came in so that the number of people employed fell, they would have become more so had it not been for the dock work scheme. I pay tribute to the scheme because the scheme and the redundancy payments made available through it allowed an orderly rundown of the numbers employed in the industry to take account the new practices and the use of containers.

7.45 pm

It is a worrying and deplorable fact that, while the cost of the scheme has been borne by all the registered ports and their workers, one or two ports have managed to get a free ride and avoid any collective responsibility. Felixstowe is one of the ports that got that free ride and attempted to take work away from the other ports. Anyone who was concerned to see justice for those who work in the dock industry would have applauded the scheme rather than attacking the ports involved in it.

Sir Eldon Griffiths (Bury St. Edmunds): Would not the hon. Gentleman accept that, in broad terms, dock labour in Felixstowe is better paid and more secure than in most other ports and that if Felixstowe has succeeded in attracting more traffic it has done so because it is more competitive and people prefer to go there?

Mr. Bennett: I do not accept those arguments. I repeat that Felixstowe got a free ride, whereas all the other ports contributed to ensuring that the industry was organised in a reasonable way and that workers were not suddenly thrown on the scrap heap with no redundancy payment or exploited in other ways. If, on occasions, their rates for handling cargo were slightly higher and their rates of pay lower than in Felixstowe, it was because those ports took collective responsibility for the industry. It is worrying that Felixstowe seems to be proud of the fact that it showed no collective concern for dockers anywhere else or for other ports but simply hoped that it could prosper at the expense of others.

I know that Conservative Members like the idea of one person making a profit out of others' misery and suffering. However, Opposition Members and, I think, the majority of people in this country do not believe that that is the way to behave. That is the basis of our major objection to the Bill. It represents a further attempt to improve conditions for a small group of people involved with the Felixstowe Dock and Harbour Company and those who have taken it over and to allow them possibly to make further profits. Perhaps it will result in extra jobs in Felixstowe, although I understand that on the grapevine, at least, there is considerable concern that there will be a substantial number of redundancies at Felixstowe in the not-too-distant future. When economic circumstances make operations less viable, Felixstowe will discover that it would have been better to participate in the dock labour scheme which would have offered an organised way in which to run down the numbers employed.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: I cannot follow the hon. Gentleman's argument. The number of people employed in the registered docks has decreased, whereas at Felixstowe, which is not in the scheme, there was a 36 per cent. increase in the number of people employed between 1976 and 1983. If the Bill goes through, there will be further job opportunities — possibly a further 1,000. What is more, so far from being a dock without trade union representation, Felixstowe has 100 per cent. Transport and General Workers Union membership.

Mr. Bennett: The hon. Gentleman has made several points in his intervention to which I shall be delighted to reply. First, there has been a substantial change in dock practice. When I was a youngster, I used to go to Manchester docks from time to time, where a substantial amount of cargo was manhandled out of ships' holds. It was often passed along a human chain from the hold on to the deck and then on to the dockside. In some instances, carts were used to take the produce away to warehouses. Bags of flour and other produce were taken out of ships in that way. Since then, there has been a major revolution in the way in which cargo is handled. It is no longer handled physically by workers on the dock. In most instances, there is containerisation, the containers being moved by mechanical means that require considerable skill. This great change in the method of handling has led to a dramatic fall in the number of dockers required to load and unload.

How was that dramatic decrease in employment achieved? There was no free-for-all in which many dockers lost their jobs without compensation with no alternative work being offered. A dock labour scheme was introduced that brought about an orderly decline in the number of dockers employed. It produced reasonable compensation for those who lost their jobs and ensured that Britain had a modern dock system with modern handling equipment. It ensured also that the few workers who remained in the docks were able to be paid a decent wage. I contend that the scheme enabled those things to happen.

Mrs. Clwyd: Does my hon. Friend agree that the intervention of the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) is most surprising when we consider that unemployment in Pembroke is among the highest in Wales? His lack of sensitivity towards the problems of the unemployed is highlighted by his intervention. It provides further evidence of the north-south divide and the inability of Conservative Members to understand that we want to spread employment more evenly throughout Britain rather than concentrating it once again in the south-east of England.

Mr. Bennett: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for her intervention, but I hope that she will not discourage the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) from intervening. I think that the hon. Gentleman may serve a useful purpose in illustrating the arguments that are being advanced by both sides of the House.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: I assure the hon. Gentleman that I do not intend to join him in his filibuster. In other words, I do not intend to participate further in the debate. However, as the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) has referred to me and unemployment in the industry, I shall tell the House that my great grandfather, Tom Mann, was one of the leaders of the 1889 dock strike, when conditions were appalling. We are talking now, however, of a modern industry and not of conditions 100 years ago.

Mrs. Clwyd: What is the unemployment rate in Pembroke?

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: We are talking about a modern industry that uses containerisation and we are looking for more jobs. The hon. Lady talks about my constituency and high unemployment, and she is right to say that there is high unemployment in Pembroke. I would be delighted to have a company such as the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Company at Milford Haven, and I would be delighted to bring jobs there. I do not believe that artificial restrictions and restraints on trade at Felixstowe will help my constituents. I want to see a company in my constituency that is something like the Felixstowe company.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: I am not sure whether the hon. Gentleman has much hope of getting the likes of the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Company in his constituency. It would be difficult geographically to justify that, and there is the much more serious problem of over-capacity within the dock system.

Since the Bill first appeared before the House and our discussions this evening, we have seen the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's report on the P and O takeover of European Ferries, and a substantial section of the report is devoted to over-capacity. I have argued already that a dock labour scheme is necessary if we are to cope with over-capacity. When there is over-capacity, too much dock space, too many pieces of equipment for the unloading of containers and too many workers in the industry, it is crazy that we should be confronted with a Bill that is seeking to increase capacity. If capacity is increased at Felixstowe, it is inevitable that capacity will have to be reduced elsewhere. If the reduction in capacity elsewhere means that we end up with unused dock areas that cannot be used by wild birds that have been chased off the marshes and tidal flats at Felixstowe, wildlife will suffer accordingly.

Conservative Members say that it is ridiculous that we cannot have extra jobs at Felixstowe without losing them elsewhere. Is the hon. Member for Ipswich arguing that the volume of trade and dock activity can be increased overall? Account must be taken of the Channel tunnel development and the fact that volumes of materials entering and leaving the United Kingdom have tended to reduce although their value has tended to increase. This means that the likelihood of extra dockland capacity being needed is extremely remote. We have over-capacity, and it is likely that we shall see it increase because of the containerisation of so many products. It is likely that many containers will pass through the Channel tunnel rather than being shipped to ports.

It will be interesting to hear from Conservative Members whether they can give a guarantee that there will not be redundancies at Felixstowe. The rumour that is current at Felixstowe is that the labour force will face redundancies very soon. The hon. Gentleman shakes his head. Is he prepared to guarantee that there will not be redundancies at Felixstowe in the next six months? I shall be pleased to give way if he is prepared to give that undertaking. I am sure that the Felixstowe dock workers will be delighted if someone from the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Company or P and O were prepared to give the guarantee of no redundancies at Felixstowe.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Perhaps my hon. Friend should be clearer and say specifically that he addressed his comment to the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Irvine). Will he repeat what he said? He asked the hon. Member for Ipswich to give a guarantee to his constituents that there would be no redundancies at a particular dock in his constituency. The hon. Gentleman has refused to give that undertaking to the House and his constituents.

Mr. Irvine *rose*—

Mr. Bennett: It seems that the hon. Member for Ipswich would like to intervene.

Mr. Irvine: Of course I am not in a position to give guarantees. However, the hon. Gentleman should remember that the United Kingdom is now the fastest growing economy within Europe. A growing economy is the way to generate trade, and if trade is generated at the rate that has prevailed over the past three or four years, and if other docks are prepared to be as efficient, productive and hard working as the Felixstowe dock, there will be general prosperity.

Mr. Campbell-Savours *rose*

Mr. Bennett: I understand that my hon. Friend wishes to intervene.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The intervention of the hon. Member for Ipswich was important. The hon. Gentleman knows that one of the responsibilities and duties of a Member of Parliament is to keep in contact at every stage with companies in his constituency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The duties of a Member of Parliament are not relevant to the amendment. The hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett), who has the Floor, should confine himself to the amendment.

8 pm

Mr. Cryer: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. This has been a useful and important

[Mr. Cryer]

interchange, but I am worried that a Conservative Member has left his place to talk to other Conservative Members who have been seeking information. I hope that there is no attempt to intimidate Conservative Members and to prevent them from participating in the debate. One of the important principles of this place is that hon. Members should be free to air their views without any intimidation, arm twisting or any other influence to stop a free exchange of views within debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Any intimidation between hon. Members has nothing to do with the Chair. There will be no intimidation so far as I am concerned. Every hon. Member who wishes to speak will be called.

Mr. Bennett: It is regrettable that some Conservative Members are discouraged from intervening. If the hon. Member for Pembroke wishes me to give way again, I shall be happy to do so if he stands, but I shall not do so if he remains in a sedentary position. It would be unfortunate if the advice of the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) was to shout rather than to ask to intervene.

Government Members are promoting the extension of the Felixstowe dock, an area of outstanding natural habitat, on the basis that they clearly see the need for such expansion. One of the fundamental things that they should have done before they signed up with the promoters was to ask whether there would be any redundancies either at Ipswich or at Felixstowe. They should give a guarantee that there will be no redundancies at Ipswich or Felixstowe. We know that they cannot guarantee that there will be no redundancies elsewhere because of the existing surplus port capacity and the likelihood that, if the proposals go ahead, there will be even greater surplus capacity. I realise that Conservative members are not prepared to guarantee to the people of Pembroke and other parts of the country that there will be no dock redundancies, but I am amazed that they are not prepared to guarantee that there will be no redundancies in Ipswich or Felixstowe docks. If there are to be redundancies, I am amazed at their objection to the docks being within the dock labour scheme that will enable an orderly framework for such redundancies to occur.

It is sad that we have to debate the dock labour scheme when discussing an amendment to a private Bill dealing with one dockland area rather than being able to discuss legislation in a national context and examining whether the scheme is working well, how it can be amended and how we can ensure that all docks in the country participate in the scheme and make their contribution to the orderly reduction of manpower within the industry, rather than allow one or two people to opt out and freeload by not taking part in the scheme.

It would have been useful to look at the way in which the scheme operates within the rest of East Anglia and satisfy ourselves that the expansion at Felixstowe will not have a detrimental affect on Great Yarmouth, Ipswich or Lowestoft. It is also important to try to find out whether P and O has the resources to fund the development. In Committee, the then directors of European Ferries assured us that they were determined to go ahead with the expansion, that they had the resources to do it, and that it would take place in the near future.

In regard to the last group of amendments, we were told that it would take place so quickly that our proposals for a safeguard that it would have to go to the Secretary of State before the development could take place were unnecessary. It was argued that the company was waiting to go ahead. We quickly realised that European Ferries was not in quite the financial position that it had led the Committee to believe. It was in a difficult financial position, and a takeover emerged.

Rumour suggests that P and O has not been over-impressed by the way in which the Felixstowe docks were managed and is looking for considerable change. There seems to be some doubt about whether it has the money to develop the proposed dock, particularly when the company has surplus capacity in other docks around the country, as the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report suggested. There is a strong possibility that it does not intend to carry out the development but that it wants the option simply to have the Bill so that it can try to sell off Felixstowe dock and that, when it sells it, it can claim that it is a slightly more attractive asset because there is the possibility that, at some future date, someone will want to develop the tidal areas and extend the dock. There is no certainty that the company wants to continue with the development.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: Since the matter that the hon. Gentleman raised relates to the promoters of the Bill, may I say that I had the honour to serve as its promoter in the House. Before agreeing to resume promotion of the Bill in the House, I asked to see the chairman of P and O. I wanted to satisfy myself that the new owners of Felixstowe dock wanted to continue with the Bill and had the means to do so. I was totally satisfied by the chairman's personal assurances that that was the wish of the owners of Felixstowe dock and that resources were available. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will not disseminate rumours that he now knows to be untrue.

Mr. Bennett: I am delighted that the hon. Gentleman has assured us that the chairman of P and O is determined that the development will go ahead and that the rumours that it is trying to sell the Felixstowe dock and that there is no prospect of it going ahead on the basis that it is not prepared to invest the money are untrue.

Mr. Cryer: Will my hon. Friend bear in mind that Sir Freddie Laker, the chairman of a large aircraft company, gave similar assurances only a couple of days before Laker Airways went bust?

Mr. Bennett: I thank my hon. Friend for his intervention.

We had all sorts of assurances from European Ferries that it was in a position to go ahead with the development. It was quickly taken over, and one got a different impression of its financial viability. I refer to the report of the Mergers and Monopolies Commission. Obviously, I happily accept that the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds sought and received such an undertaking.

The House may still have a little doubt about the matter, but it will be extremely reassuring for the people who work at Felixstowe dock to be guaranteed that they are not likely to be subject to a sell-out and that their jobs will remain. I noticed that there was no undertaking that there would be no redundancies. Again, as the promoter, if he had wished to allay such fears, the hon. Gentleman

would have jumped up quickly and made it absolutely clear that there was no prospect of redundancies at Felixstowe. We can only draw our own conclusions if he is not prepared to give that undertaking. Perhaps he did not ask the chairman of P and O for an undertaking with regard to redundancies. I should have thought that he would have pursued that matter, since that rumour, together with the one about the company's future, are going around.

Did the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds ask P and O what its proposal was in regard to Southampton? It has considerable opportunities for expansion in Southampton. Did he find out what the balance would be between the ports of Felixstowe and Southampton? The implications of the Channel tunnel development certainly suggest that Southampton might become a more attractive port for container ships. They could call at Southampton to unload, using the Channel tunnel, rather than unloading at Felixstowe. No doubt P and O carefully examined such investment possibilities.

It still seems that, if P and O is concerned about the best interests of the docks and their operations in this country, it should not be too unhappy about having a dock workers' scheme extended to those ports of the development which come within the existing area of the Ipswich dock. That is basically the Opposition's argument in favour of the amendments. I suspect that my hon. Friends wish to participate in the debate, so I shall conclude my remarks in support of the amendments.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I do not profess to know much about this matter, and perhaps that makes me uniquely qualified to speak in the debate. My objections to the Bill arise from what happened a year and a half ago, when its promoters adopted tactics that were unbecoming to Parliament to try to secure its passage through a Private Bill Committee of the House. They know what I am talking about. I am sure that they are here today somewhere in the House, and they will remember that I made a point of visiting the Committee during its proceedings to see what was happening. They will know how people were appointed to that Committee. They will know that many of us objected in the strongest terms to the way in which it was presumed that Members of Parliament could be placed on a Committee and used to push through a Bill that could have been pressed in other ways.

As a result of that incident, we hope that the entire procedure will be changed. I am told that a Committee will be set up to examine the possibility of changing the procedure and, to that extent, the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Company has been more than successful, because it has contributed to ending a practice which many of us believed to be wrong.

The hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) made several interesting points. I shall address one of them before I venture into the body of my modest contribution. It relates to wages, salaries and conditions. The hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Irvine) suggested that the workers in the new port would be better off than those who currently work at Ipswich. Indeed, the hon. Gentleman suggested that those who work at Felixstowe now are better off than those who work at Ipswich.

Mr. Irvine *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Campbell-Savours: If that is not the case I stand to be corrected, but I thought that was what he said. I thought that his intervention was designed to prove to the House that the workers in the new dock company or in the expanded Felixstowe company would be better off than those at Ipswich.

That is not my understanding, and the hon. Gentleman's predecessor told us repeatedly that that was not the case. He said that they would be worse off, and he pointed to the representations made by the trade unions on these matters. The trade union briefs which my hon. Friends may have received today in no way argue the case for the company. We must presume that trade unions, by instinct, set out to protect the wages and conditions of the workers whom they represent. I must assume that, in the briefs which they have provided to those of us who take an interest in these matters, they are putting an objective case when they say that they do not want the development to go ahead in this form.

The trade unions give many reasons for their view. One is that the development of new container handling facilities in the United Kingdom while the present surplus capacity exists is completly unnecessary and will undoubtedly generate more unemployment, which will, under the current arrangements between the Government and the National Association of Port Employers, mean an initial cost to the taxpayer by way of severence and redundancy payments and the ongoing cost of unemployment benefits. Those are not my words, but those of the trade unions, which appear to oppose what is happening.

As a matter of background, they say

Sir Eldon Griffiths: Who says?

8.15 pm

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The Transport and General Workers Union. The hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) seems to wish to intervene, Madam Deputy Speaker. Perhaps you will invite him to do so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I do not invite hon. Members to speak. They seek to catch my eye.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: In that case, Madam Deputy Speaker, you will understand it if I ignore the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds.

According to the union, the cargo handling services provided by British ports have been drastically reduced since 1967. The most prominent of those ports are Liverpool, Hull, Glasgow, London and Bristol. The union says:

"The loss of jobs of registered dock workers has also been reflected in job losses to the other non-registered workers in the industry. The port employers and port authorities associated directly with these ports are at this time seeking to reduce the number of workers both registered and non-registered because of under-utilisation of the existing cargo handling facilities."

Mrs. Clwyd: My hon. Friend will be aware that the whole case for the Felixstowe development is the contention that traffic will continue to grow. Is he aware that that contention is not backed by any information based on the volume of container traffic that will be carried through the Channel tunnel? Is he aware that we have never been given an estimate of how much container traffic will go through the Channel tunnel, and does he agree that the case for national need has not been made out?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: All I know is that I have not received any of the evidence that one would have thought the promoters would submit to hon. Members before the debate. Perhaps the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds will give us the information to which my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) referred. Once again, we are being refused information which the House clearly recognises is important to the debate.

I am interested in the phrase,

"because of under-utilisation of the existing cargo handling facilities."

As I understand it, it means that some cargo handling facilities in the United Kingdom are under-utilised. I understand the phrase "under-utilisation" to mean available for use but not being used. Therefore, we must assume that if this development took place, it would further aggravate the

"current under-utilisation of existing cargo handling facilities within the United Kingdom."

The Minister was looking at me most attentively when I made my case, and then he shook his head. From that, I understand that he believes that what I am saying is of interest, but he does not agree with it. Perhaps the Minister will get to his feet and clarify the position for me, because it might help me in my later comments.

The Minister of State, Department of Transport (Mr. David Mitchell): I did not want to intervene in the debate now, but I was hoping to catch your eye, Madam Deputy Speaker, fairly soon. I was listening attentively to the hon. Gentleman. It is not self-evident that providing a capacity in a part of the country where there is no demand will ensure that demand is created when, in another part of the country, there is demand that one is seeking to suppress. The danger is that what does not go to Felixstowe will go to Rotterdam, not to the west country ports.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The Minister has spoken of providing capacity in parts of the country where there is no demand. However, as I understand it, the phrase

"under-utilisation of the existing cargo handling facilities"

does not refer to the prospect of creating further capacity in other parts of the country. It relates to existing capacity which is not being utilised. I put it to the Minister; if that capacity exists, why not use it?

Mr. David Mitchell *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Again the Minister shakes his head. I believe that his policy is to ensure the under-utilisation of capacity, for reasons which I do not quite understand.

Mrs. Clwyd: Does my hon. Friend agree that, given the evidence that the Minister has failed to produce, the Bill seems to be

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I do not think that it is a practice that we would wish to follow for a Member to go to the Chair to express views which he should express during the course of the debate. We have repeatedly asked

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It is perfectly in order for any Member of the House to approach the Chair, and that is not a point of order.

Mrs. Clwyd: Does my hon. Friend agree that the Bill appears to be introduced solely in the interests of the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Company, and not in the national interest as the promoters have tried to say in Committee and elsewhere? Their case has failed

Mr. Campbell-Savours: My hon. Friend is right. This whole affair is riddled with interests — people and organisations. That interest may be represented by the contribution of the company to the Conservative party — that fact was only drawn out during the proceedings on the Bill. My hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley was a member of that Committee.

I apologise profusely to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for presuming that the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) was raising matters which he would otherwise raise in the debate. Clearly, I was mistaken. As invariably when I am mistaken, I apologise, and I apologise to the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds for presuming that he was raising a matter, but perhaps he would care to raise it —

Sir Eldon Griffiths *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Obviously not.

I wish to deal with the background to this scheme as it relates to the Felixstowe proposals. Over the years debate has taken place about the lack of a national ports policy. Indeed, my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley referred to that.

There is a need for a national ports policy to ensure that where redundancies must take place they do so within an agreement between the Government, trade unions and the promoters of the particular ports. No such agreement currently exists in the United Kingdom. Such a national policy is needed for plans to develop the port industry. There is also an urgent need for new port developments to have regard to existing, available port facilities. Government direction should be given to developments of that nature. Clearly there is no Government consideration of existing available port facilities. Indeed, when the Minister intervened he was unable to suggest the existence of agreement between port authorities and trade unions on these matters. If I am wrong, I am sure that the Minister will intervene again.

The effects of containerisation, roll-on/roll-off and unitised cargo have already reduced the registered dock labour force from approximately 65,000 in 1967 to 12,000 at the present time. That represents a major sacrifice by our dock workers. Gone are the days when there was industrial action in every port in the country because of the inflexibility of the employers and the lack of understanding of the need for reasonable working conditions and indeed a guaranteed week for port workers. One would have thought that the changes that the Government are proposing and those changes which the port authorities are promoting would take into account the sacrifice of those dock workers and ensure the widest possible consultation with workers in particular ports, and specifically in the ports that we are debating today.

An equal loss of jobs has occurred within the non-registered labour force and in associated companies in the immediate vicinity of ports and docks. Government grants and loans under various Finance Acts have provided the money to pay for the cost of severence and redundancies. In the ports of Liverpool and London those costs amounted to £360 million. However, previously people were more willing to accept unemployment and substantial redundancy pay when there was alternative employment available. That is not the case today. Therefore, there is a national reluctance on the part of people employed in the docks to take a risk — if I may use that term — and place

their employment in jeopardy. A national scheme that underwrites the right to work and ensures some continuity of employment is obviously a major consideration when the trade unions consider the Bill and the proposals of P and O.

The recent decision by the Government to increase the assistance for severence and redundancy costs by £140 million suggests that they are convinced that more job losses are necessary. To what extent are the promoters of the Bill aware of the inevitable job losses that will occur despite the undertakings that some have given as to possible job creation? The promoters talk on the one hand of job creation, but on the other they plan to increase the amount of money available for redundancy. Some double talk appears to be taking place.

The use of the additional £140 million facility will include the removal of a debt of £45·5 million outstanding from the National Dock Labour Board that arose from previous severance costs in ports other than London and Liverpool. Part of the money will also be used for future severance costs in all ports until 31 March 1988 on a reducing scale. That started on 31 October 1985 at 100 per cent. of costs; it reduced to 75 per cent. from 31 March 1986, and has gone down to 50 per cent. for the final period until 31 March next year.

Should any employer decide to deregister during the two and a half year period, the whole of the cost of severing his registered workers will be met by the Government. Therefore, the Government are obviously bending over backwards to ensure that moneys are available. It seems to me that the Government are working to an unofficial policy of running down certain ports, making redundancies and even extending the tentacles of those port authorities that wish to operate outside the national dock scheme and thereby undermine the conditions of employment that have been built up over the years.

Mrs. Clwyd: Is my hon. Friend aware that there is no precedent in Britain for removing a small part of a dock area from that covered by the dock workers employment scheme when the remainder of that area continues to employ registered dock workers? If the Bill becomes law we will create a precedent.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I believe that this is an appalling precedent. So that the public clearly understand what is happening, let me explain that effectively we have here two separate organisations — one operating a national scheme, with laid down minimum standards of wages and conditions, and another authority, next door, operating what the unions would describe as a "lesser scheme". The Government are backing the organisation that runs the lesser scheme by allowing it to spread its tentacles into the area where better wages and conditions exist. That undermines the better employer.

8.30 pm

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: We must be careful about the use of the term "better employer". I understand that Ipswich docks have been owned by P and O for some time. Felixstowe docks are now owned by P and O as a result of its acquisiton of European Ferries. I understand that the P and O management is very satisfied with the way in which the Ipswich docks are managed. That is a scheme port and it is extremely efficient. I understand that the management was horrified when it went to Felixstowe dock and discovered the way in which it had been managed. The management were not impressed with it. Felixstowe is both outside the scheme and, I understand from P and O, is not very impressively managed either.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: When I talk about a better employer, I mean irrespective of ownership. The relationship with the trade union is underpinned by the national scheme, and that makes that port a better employer. If, as my hon. Friend says, P and O has expressed surprise at the distinction that exists, one must hope that if at some stage in the next century, the Bill is passed, P and O will seek to redress the imbalances that currently exist.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: P and O says that operations are better at Ipswich than at Felixstowe. It amazes me that we did not get a swift intervention from Conservative Members to say that they will accept the extension of the dock labour scheme to this port because it appears that it has brought about better management practices at Ipswich than at Felixstowe where the scheme does not apply.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: My hon. Friend is correct and I understand his point. Paragraph (8) of the preamble to the Bill says:

"It is expedient that the Dock Workers Employment Scheme 1967 should cease to relate to any part of the limits of the dock being the limits as previously defined and as further extended and redefined as aforesaid".

I understand my hon. Friend to say that P and O should have sought to amend that paragraph. If it believes that what is happening in Ipswich is so good, why has it not sought to delete that and perhaps to insert a clause guaranteeing the future of the dock workers employment scheme for the whole of the dockyard operations that it intends to manage in the coming year?

Mr. Cryer: Does my hon. Friend accept that, strangely enough, the position might well be the reverse of maintaining good management at Ipswich, because the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report for 1986 says, on page 44, at paragraph 764, that European Ferries reported that it would be possible for P and O services from Ipswich to be moved to Felixstowe. That would remove the traffic from that port down to Felixstowe, so perhaps P and O does not care about the dock-workers scheme at Ipswich, but will simply remove the traffic from that port.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: That will obviously be a problem, because if, in effect, one company has a monopoly in that part of the country it will be able to manipulate traffic to the port that best suits it.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: I think that perhaps my hon. Friend is a little out of touch with the way in which the proceedings work. At the stage at which European Ferries was making great claims for the possibility of moving trade from Ipswich to Felixstowe, it was making its own representations to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission about why the merger should go ahead. I think that it was only subsequently, when P and O took over the management, that it realised that all was not quite as well at Felixstowe as it might have been. Perhaps the possibility of a takeover and a move from Ipswich receded a little at that point. Obviously, that fear still exists for the people of Ipswich.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: It seems to be a case of horses for courses. The case that one makes seems to depend on the stage that one has reached in representations. My hon. Friend is obviously very knowledgeable in these matters, but it might well be that P and O has simply sought to change its tune because of the different conditions and the different groups that it has to convince. Whatever the case, we oppose the Bill, and I am sure that during the course of the debate we will be able further to advance and marshal all our other arguments.

Sir Eldon Griffiths (Bury St. Edmunds): I am anxious to help the hon. Gentleman because I admire the diligence with which he addresses these matters. We are dealing here with a portion of the estuary which at the moment has no registered or unregistered dock workers. It is simply mud flats. No work goes on there now. The question is what would happen if the Bill were to be given passage. Therefore, there is no debate about the present functioning of either port.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I understand that in its expansion of the Orwell estuary the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Company has to acquire new legal and operational limits. This will take it over into the area of jurisdiction of the Ipswich port authority.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: It has been revoked.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The hon. Gentleman says that it has been revoked. Perhaps he might like to explain that, because if that is the case I could cut 10 or 15 minutes from my speech. I should not like to delay proceedings on the Bill if the hon. Gentleman can expedite the matter. I am advised that this expansion will take a chunk out of the Ipswich port authority. The hon. Gentleman is shaking his head. If that is not correct, perhaps the matter could be clarified.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: My hon. Friend should be aware that there are two points about the dock labour scheme. There is the actual dock area where people will be loading and unloading, and there is the area that surrounds it, where there are controls and regulations about warehousing and other activities that go with that. It is true that at the moment in the area between the Ipswich port authority boundary and the Felixstowe port authority boundary which the Bill will change, nobody is unloading ships. That is because, as the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) said, it is mud flats. A change in those boundaries has implications even at the present time.

Mr. Campell-Savours: All these matters are very confusing, but I shall try my best to follow the case put by my hon. Friend. He is obviously very knowledgeable in these matters, as is my hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape), who, I am told intends to speak at great length because he has a complicated argument to advance and many points to marshal. I see that he has a list of ports, and I presume that he will explain to us the position in those ports in the event of the Bill proceeding. We ought to know what effect there will be on all the registered and unregistered ports in the event of the Bill proceeding.

Until 1980 British container ports were in a reasonably strong position, especially those on the south and east coasts. Deep-sea container trades were still growing, freight rates were high, the world economy was strong and container berths were available to match shipping requirements. Since 1980 the situation has changed for both shipowner and terminal operator. There is over-capacity in container terminals in the United Kingdom, the world recession has deepened, the growth of container operations has slowed and freight rates have fallen. Liner service competition has increased. This has resulted in customers having less money to spend on container terminal services, and because of over-capacity have established them to force down the price that they are prepared to pay. That situation will become worse in a short space of time as more and more of those ports come on stream and provide those facilities.

I ask the Minister whether, when all this is happening, and when jobs are being lost in the industry, it is right for a promoter to promote a Bill that exacerbates the position of trade union members who are employees of those companies, because those employees know that if the facts that I have relayed to the House are true, there must be accelerating redundancy to meet the increasing shortfall in traffic available in those areas.

London, Southampton and Felixstowe will have approximately 2 million TEUs annual capacity available, against a requirement of some 1,200,000 TEUs to be handled. I confess that I do not know what TEUs are. I should like the hon. Members for Bury St. Edmunds and Ipswich to tell me. I asked my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley and she could not tell me. My hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East knows, but he would not tell me. He said that I had to find out by other means. I do not think that my hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) knows, or he would have turned around and silently whispered it to me. I need to know what TEUs are, but nobody seems to wish to intervene to tell me.

We should add to this situation additional projected development of container handling facilities. This capacity increases to 2,200,000 TEUs by 1990. This does not take into account additional surplus capacity on the west coast, in Liverpool, Bristol and a number of other ports. There is also a need to consider the adverse effects on United Kingdom ports of the development of round-the-world container services and the resulting growth transhipment between continental ports and smaller east and south coast United Kingdom ports.

I know that unemployment is increasing in all parts of the country, even in some of those small ports in the south. I am told that unemployment is increasing in some Medway towns. Do not Ramsgate, Chatham and Rochester and, if I am not mistaken, Dover have unemployment problems? We do not have Labour Members representing those ports, but they deserve them, because unemployment is rising, and it may be that in some of those towns and communities the issue of unemployment is not being raised as regularly as it should be in the House by their respective Members of Parliament. Unemployment in those ports is rising.

A number of those coastal towns are developing port authorities and are most concerned about the expansion of other ports in the United Kingdom and, in particular, this port development. Again the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds shakes his head. Perhaps on this occasion he will rise to his feet and explain what concerns have been expressed to him and his hon. Friends in the Medway towns. While I understand that they are not members of the national scheme, they equally believe that they should

be given the opportunity of developing their port facilities, and they obviously feel threatened when those large operators move in, buy up, convert, transform and provide capacity additional to that which is already available within the United Kingdom, and when those port authorities take action that does not help the smaller ports in the development of the facilities in which local authorities often invest as part of local job creation measures.

8.45 pm

Sir Eldon Griffiths: As most of the smaller ports to which the hon. Gentleman is referring do not have the dock labour scheme, is he supporting them, or not supporting them?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: My hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) who is a fount of knowledge on these matters, tells me that a number of the Medway ports are in the national scheme. If they are in the scheme, I presume that they must be included in the list. I have refrained from reading into the record the list that my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley refused to read into the record. It is a document that my hon. Friend obtained from the Library, so it must be authentic. It lists all those ports where the scheme operates.

The list includes an area called Medway and Swale. Do I presume that that is the area that we are referring to here? If so, perhaps it should be drawn to the attention of the House that the area of the Conservators of the River Medway, the area of the Commissioners of Faversham Navigation, the area of the Conservators of Milton Creek, the harbour area of the Queenborough Corporation and a place called Whitstable—I presume that they are all in the same area—are all areas where the 1967 dock work employment scheme operates. We therefor have four authorities, all in Conservative constituencies, all belonging to a national scheme, and all of which must be concerned about the prospect—the Minister is nodding, I presume in agreement with what I am saying—of the promoters getting their Bill.

Mr. David Mitchell: Just so that the hon. Gentleman should not misread anything into the record, I was choking, not nodding.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I do not know whether the Minister was choking because of some physical disability, or because of my contribution. He might let us know.

As I look down the list of ports, I conclude that there must be a number of other ports that are concerned about those matters. I wonder what the ports of Middlesbrough and Hartlepool have to say about the development. The Minister said that there were not many ports in the right part of the United Kingdom—or at least that is what I understood he said when he intervened. He referred to the geographic location of ports that could compete with Rotterdam and ports across the Channel. I presume that the ports of Hull, Goole, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, King's Lynn, Boston and Wisbech also compete with ports across the Channel. I also assume that the port of Great Yarmouth, which is a dock work employment scheme 1967 registered port, has an interest in these matters. I cannot believe that they are falling over themselves in the hope that the development will take place.

I must say to those authorities that when we are discussing these matters, perhaps in 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993 and hopefully 1994 and 1995, they might think it appropriate to write to us to tell us what they feel about the development of a port outside the dock work employment scheme that may damage their interests.

I can say to all those port authorities that if they send their comments to me and my hon. Friends we will read them into the record, because that is where they should be. People should be given the opportunity of having their objections read into the record, so that the House can be informed of their concerns. If the trade union branches in those ports wish to write to us, we could arrange for their submissions to be read into the record on the back of a number of amendments that we would wish to table during future proceedings on the Bill.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): I wish to emphasise something that my hon. Friend said earlier about the Wash ports—Boston, King's Lynn and Wisbech. I know about these ports because I chaired the Committee dealing with the Fosdyke Bridge Act. Fosdyke was a small harbour seeking powers to take over certain jurisdiction aspects from Boston harbour. Boston harbour had to compete with, and was concerned about, continental ports.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: It seems to me that a number of hon. Members could have been in the Chamber tonight to represent their respective port interests, but they have simply not turned up—I do not understand why. This list of ports reads like a list from the *Official Report* of Members voting in a Division. A whole host of constituencies are not being represented in the debate.

Perhaps the hon. Member for Penrith and The Border (Mr. Maclean) who is a Scottish Whip representing an English constituency, and who has been seconded to look after this Bill, should be despatched to the Tea Room, the Bars and the Restaurants of the House to ask hon. Members to come to the Chamber to speak about these areas, all of which have the dock work employment scheme. This amendment is about the operation of that scheme in Ipswich and about the fact that if the Bill were to succeed—somewhere in the next decade—it would undermine wages and conditions in the ports that I have identified.

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde): I am sure the hon. Gentleman is not aware that in Fylde we do not have a port.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: What about Fleetwood?

Mr. Jack: That is in the Wyre constituency. If the hon. Gentleman had had the opportunity, as I have, to visit some of the smaller ports that he has listed, he would have noticed that the tonnage and the type of shipping that goes into those ports would not be affected adversely by the type of shipping that would benefit from the development in Felixstowe. In many cases the small ports accommodate ships of less than 1,000 tonnes gross registered tonnage and the types of goods that they carry would benefit from the expansion of the port and improved communications at Felixstowe. They could use the smaller ships already coming into their ports to bring raw materials or ship goods out. The two are complimentary. Felixstowe would not take the business of the smaller ports.

Mr. Campbell-Savours My geography is not perfect, but, as I understand it, the port of Fleetwood is near the hon. Gentleman's constituency. It may be within it.

Mr. Jack: Fleetwood, as I have already said, is in the Wyre constituency. Fleetwood's principal activities are roll-on/roll-off shipping across the Irish sea and fishing, and shipping would not be directly affected by the development set out in the Bill.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Now we are getting into complicated matters. Roll-on roll-off is a very interesting term. It often includes the use of arctic tractor units, where containers are placed on trailers to lorries. It is where

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. This is a very interesting explanation, but I hope that the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) will now get back to the amendments. We have had a lot of fun so far.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: These are important matters, because Fleetwood is on the list of ports with a dock work employment scheme and it would be affected by the development of Felixstowe. The hon. Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack) is arguing that Fleetwood would not be adversely affected. He argues that it would be to its advantage to see the development of the Felixstowe harbour. I put it to him that the roll-on/roll-off traffic coming into his port might be traffic diverted from the port of Felixstowe. However, whereas it came in as roll-on/roll-off to Fleetwood, it might come in as straight container traffic to Felixstowe.

Mr. Jack: The development of efficient forms of transport to Europe via the port of Felixstowe is of particular benefit to the north-west, in which the Wyre constituency is located. Many of our industries have sound businesses exporting to Europe, and efficient transport via the port of Felixstowe—not by a long, circuitous route from Fleetwood, which would add to the cost and make those goods uncompetitive—would be of positive benefit to the many good things happening in the north of England.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I am finding it hard to follow the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am finding it extremely hard to follow this argument. We should now get back to the arguments on the Bill.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: The best interests of the dock labour scheme may well be served by being able to carry out dock activities and take advantage of the Channel tunnel, if we ever have it. It would be far more in the interests of the dockers at Fleetwood to pack containers to be taken by rail all the way to Europe than to send them to a port such as Felixstowe. The problem is that the Felixstowe development will destroy a valuable natural habitat to develop a port area when, at the Government's insistence, all the containers can be sent by rail, thus enhancing the labour scheme in the ports if they stick with containers.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: As usual, my hon. Friend brings the richness of his knowledge to our proceedings. He takes me into an area that is relevant, Madam Deputy Speaker. My hon. Friend referred to a Channel port. I have always been a vigorous supporter of the Channel tunnel. Indeed, I have always said that I should like an eight-lane motorway to be built across the Channel to facilitate the fastest access to the European Community.

Mr. Tony Banks: My hon. Friend goes too far.

9 pm

Mr. Campbell-Savours: My hon. Friend says that I go too far, but the point is that in the event that we want a viable Channel crossing, we must ensure that the maximum amount of traffic is available to use it. I should have thought that the development of a port in this way must affect to some extent the amount of traffic that will be available to go through the Channel tunnel.

The constituents of the hon. Member for Fylde would be far better served by a viable Channel tunnel, or whatever arrangement is finally made, whereby his producers have rapid access to the European Community, than by the development of the port of Felixstowe, which would provide for the shipment of goods abroad by a much slower route. It would be a more expensive arrangement. There will come a time when much of the traffic will go through a Channel port, and costs will fall when the tunnel is paid for.

Mrs. Clwyd: Given the substantial financial investment that the Government have made in reducing capacity at a time of excess, is it not lunacy to create additional capacity?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I am sure that my hon. Friend was listening to what I said at several stages of my speech. That is precisely my case. Today there is an under-utilisation of capacity, yet the Government support the principle of increasing capacity. They are using a geographical argument, that the present capacity is in the wrong part of the United Kingdom. The Minister is obviously concerned about the Channel tunnel. He is pressed by his hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) all the time. The latter is a bitter opponent of the Channel link, yet the Minister wants the development to take place as soon as possible. I should have thought that he would take that into account when setting out ports policy for the United Kingdom.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. As the issue before the House is whether the dock labour scheme shall or shall not apply to an area of the estuary within an imaginary line drawn from Shotley Spit buoy and Fagborough cliff to Stoke bridge, I wonder whether you think that we are going just a little wide.

Several hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I think that I might be the best judge of that, thank you very much.

Mr. Tony Banks *rose*——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: My hon. Friend wishes to intervene.

Mr. Tony Banks: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way. He said that the Government seemed to support the Bill and were doing so in the interests of increasing capacity. Surely there is a much more insidious political reason behind the Government's fervent support of the Bill and the distinguished attention of the Minister this evening, when I am sure he has other more intriguing things to do. He is certainly dressed for more intriguing activitives than coming to the debate. Surely the more insidious objective for the Government is to use the Bill as a political vehicle for rolling back the dock labour scheme. That might be the reason why the Government support the Bill so strongly.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: That is precisely the view expressed by the Transport and General Workers Union, which wrote to hon. Members expressing concern about the Bill. It was the union that said:

"Whereas Ipswich is a Scheme Port, Felixstowe is not. The expansion, therefore, is into an established area of registered dock work. It means, in a nutshell, that the Bill is the political vehicle for rolling back the Scheme without negotiation. It is the first time that the Scheme has been breached unilaterally like this. It sets a bad precedent."

Sir Eldon Griffiths: Rubbish.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The hon Gentleman says "Rubbish" from a sedentary position. He is saying that this is not a political vehicle for rolling back the dock work employment scheme without negotiation. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman can point to the nature of the negotiations that took place with the trade unions in Felixtowe which leads him to believe that they support the rolling back of the scheme in the way that it is being rolled back. Once again the hon. Gentleman is shaking his head, yet he knows that that is true. The TGWU nationally is concerned, just as the TGWU in Ipswich is concerned, and it has written to us to express its concern.

My former hon. Friend, Mr. Ken Weetch, is here today. He has come to Parliament to set out his views. He feels so angry about these matters, and so angered by the fact that the company has used private Bill procedure in the way that it has, that he has made the journey to brief me and my hon. Friends on these matters and to ask us to vote and speak in favour of amendments and to do whatever we can to undermine the Bill's passage where it adversely affects his former constituents, and, indeed, his constituents, as they will be after the next general election.

When my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley commenced her elegant contribution, she referred to her sponsorship by the TGWU. I also have a connection with the TGWU. I am a member of that union. I am a member of the branch in my constituency where buses are made. TGWU people in ports in different parts of the United Kingdom feel angered by these matters. They have, in many areas, written to hon. Members asking us to meddle with the proceedings this evening, or perhaps others might say to help the Bill on its way, although I do not know where to.

I am not sponsored by that union so I have no financial interest to declare to the House. I simply declare that I am a member.

Mr. Cryer: I have an interest to declare in that I am a member of the TGWU. Since this is a Bill to empower the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Company to construct works, I should also declare an interest in the Keighley and Worth Valley light railway. I have five £10 shares. They have never paid a dividend and, so far as I know, there will be no traffic from that railway to the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Company and never has been.

Mr. Snape: I apologise for interrupting my hon. Friend so early in his peroration but is not that a stark warning of the dangers of dabbling in capitalism?

Mr. Cryer: Let me make it clear for the record that the Keighley and Worth Valley railway is a co-operative effort and has never paid a dividend because it is run largely by volunteers who want to see the railway succeed and have no intention of lining their pockets — unlike, I suspect, the people who are promoting the Bill.

The amendments have been put forward in a constructive way. As a recent re-entrant to Parliament — [HON. MEMBERS: "Retread."] I was trying to choose a more elegant word than retread.

I was about to thank my hon. Friends for initiating this debate because, as a recent re-entrant to Parliament, I was not privy to the previous arguments about the Bill. I am grateful to them for bringing to my attention the opportunity for taking part in a Bill which, I suspect, but for their attention, would have gone through on the nod, with the promoter simply moving each clause as necessary. That is a bad way of dealing with anything in Parliament.

I should like to reiterate what some of my hon. Friends have said about this poor and shabby method of attempting to remove the dock labour scheme from a section of an area that is to be a port and, therefore, from a port. If we are to examine our entire port system, we should note that we cannot do so through the promotion of a private Bill.

The problem gets still worse. As I said at the beginning of the debate, there is a Standing Order that allows private but not public Bills to be carried on from one Session of Parliament to the next. However, this is a different Parliament from the one that entered into discussions on this Bill. All public Bills fall with the old Parliament, and no old Parliament can commit successor Parliaments, except in this respect. We are committed to a Bill that seeks to remove the provisions of the dock work labour scheme. That is a revolting prospect and the method by which that is sought is revolting also.

The scheme provides for negotiated protection against redundancies. I am sure that those hon. Members who support the Bill would like negotiated protection against redundancy when elections come round. I am sure that those Conservative Members would like other provisions of the dock work labour scheme, such as a minimum wage. After all, the minimum wage that they have sought is £22,000 per year, which is rather more than the dock workers receive. There have been some criticisms from Conservative Members that such a dock work labour scheme might provide some type of guarantee to which they would be opposed. However, they want to guarantee that their salaries are available every month. Why should that not apply to the employees of the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Company?

Hon. Members who support this amendment seek nothing more than that similar standards should apply to dock workers as apply to Members of Parliament — not the same level of salary but simply that that salary should be paid regularly. It would be undignified for hon. Members if, for example, the Whips said to them, "There is a Standing Committee upstairs at 10.30 next Tuesday. Those who get there first will be paid, but those who cannot make it up the steps, those who have a bit of a hangover, those who are idle, those who are crowded out because they cannot get in, those who are simply pushed aside, those who are too late or who cannot get there for whatever reason will not be paid." If that happened, I am sure that Members of Parliament would say, "That is a terrible system. It is awful and unfair."

Mr. Tony Banks *rose*

Mr. Cryer: When I have finished my sentence I shall certainly give way to my hon. Friend. Hon. Members would be right to oppose such a system.

Mr. Banks: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way. His line of argument is most interesting. Prior to the dock labour scheme, the situation was much worse. It would not simply be a question of who got there first but, as the port employers used to do, the question then would be to decide of the people who got there, which individuals would get a job. Can my hon. Friend imagine a situation where, if he managed to get upstairs to the Committee corridor, the Whip who was standing there would decide that that hon. Member could serve on the Committee, but that another hon. Member could not? Although I have just got into the Whips Office and would always prefer my hon. Friend, I have a sneaking suspicion that there would be a few others who would feel that his face did not fit.

9.15 pm

Mr. Cryer: I was just coming to the question of patronage. There is a certain healthy disregard for it in the House, although Conservative Members seem prepared to ask plenty of questions with great frequency and fervour in the hope of preferment.

Employers decide whom they will select. Those who arrived for jobs first, perhaps because they did not have an injury caused by manual cargo handling or perhaps because they could run more swiftly than the others, then faced the difficulty that if they spoke out against their employer, he would not choose them next time. If their face did not fit, they were not chosen. Everyone will accept that that is a degrading, inhumane and thoroughly objectionable system for those who are earning their livelihood. That is the system which Conservative Members are seeking to restore by supporting these amendments.

The dock work labour scheme was established with the specific aim of ending a system of casual hiring and firing which for years disgraced our docks. Employers felt it to be advantageous. If the men tried to form a union, the shop steward and members of that union would not be hired. If they complained of dirty toilets on the docks, they were not wanted. Anyone who raised any sort of criticism was not hired the next time hiring and firing came round, and that was every day of the week. Any criticism that was raised could be used as a pretext for hiring and firing because employers had absolute power over their workers. Therefore, it is important to adduce these arguments and show the difference between the two sides of the Chamber.

Conservative Members wish to return to the principles of the 19th and early 20th century. Naturally, they will not say so. They say, "Things at Felixstowe are good and we treat our people with care and dignity." They treat workers with care and dignity to such an extent that the promoter cannot guarantee the jobs of any of those who work at Felixstowe or guarantee that this development will not result in redundancies. He has not even stood up and said, "I cannot give a guarantee, but I shall fight if there are any proposals for redundancies." He would not lift a finger if there were redundancies. He might issue a press release saying that the redundancies were terrible, but he would not lift a finger, nor, I suspect, would any other Conservative Members. Their talk of concern is hypocritical. They are in the business of subjugating ordinary working men and women.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Rubbish.

Mr. Cryer: Earlier in the debate hon. Members said that there was growth in the economy and more traffic through the ports. Yet the Government who make these boasts have not achieved the output levels that they inherited in 1979. That is why more factories have been destroyed than were destroyed by Hitler and why in every city we have deserts where people once worked. The Government are conniving in this. Indeed, the Secretary of State for the Environment stood at the Dispatch Box and in his usual sneering manner said,

"Local authorities must cut back."

That means putting people on the dole. The dock work labour scheme—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I enjoy the word "back". I might remind the hon. Gentleman that we should now move back to the amendment.

Mr. Tony Banks: There are no spots on his back.

Mr. Cryer: I have a good skin, too.

Yes, Madam Deputy Speaker, I was coming back to the dock work labour scheme. It is just that I was ensnared by the intervention of an hon. Member who drifted in and aroused my ire. I apologise for that, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I shall not be ensnared again. I am concerned about the dock work labour scheme; I have already said that it provides negotiated protection against redundancies — that is reasonable — and a minimum wage. Indeed, the House voted for a minimum wage only last Tuesday. The scheme provides a guaranteed wage; and I have elaborated on the position of casual hiring and firing. One of the consequences of casual hiring and firing that besmirched our dock industry until 1967 was the fact that those people who were not hired were not paid. So the men who went to the hiring went back home to tell their wives and children that they did not have any money that day because they could not get work. I do not know what the hon. Gentlemen who are opposing the amendments think about that, but I believe that it is a humiliating and degrading thing for any man or woman to be in the position of having to go back and tell his or her family that they have been rejected — not for any good reason, but by the arbitrary fiat of an employer using a system that gave the power of absolute patronage, terror or humiliation over workers.

The dock work labour scheme was not given — it was argued and fought for by workers who wanted a better passage through life on this planet than suffering the daily humiliation of having to be hired and fired and facing the employers' arbitrary decisions. That was why they organised. Tom Mann, who will be turning in his grave at the fact that his great-grandson is a Conservative Member of Parliament, and who was a man of principle and generosity, fought — others like him did, too — to create the dock work labour scheme, which was his crowning achievement and that of all those workers. That is why the amendments are so important and why the dock work labour scheme should be retained. It should be retained so that employers and workers are registered, and that is important, too.

One of our biggest difficulties in the workplace is the loss of hours, not through strike action — an idea much promoted by the Government — but through industrial injury. In any average year between four and 10 times more days are lost through industrial injury than through strike action. One might have thought, therefore, that the Government would have been concerned to promote legislation to reduce industrial injury, but they have

promoted only legislation against trade unions. There is much greater possibility that registered employers and dock workers will be properly trained in manual handling, because much of their work involves it. Figures vary, but the Back Pain Association suggests that 15 million people are affected by back injuries each year — I put down some questions about that subject for answer tomorrow. If employers are registered, they and workers can be required to provide training—workers need training, too —and there is an obligation on workers in the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to carry out their duties safely as far as is reasonably practicable.

Casual employees are much more likely to suffer industrial injury than those in a properly organised scheme. That can be seen in many industries, but I shall name only one to demonstrate the importance of the dock work labour scheme. Even this Government have tried to register the people who dismantle asbestos buildings. They have not done this terribly well, but they have produced a list, although virtually everyone can get on it. Because asbestos is accepted as a dangerous substance, the Government have tried to have a registration scheme, just like the dock work labour scheme.

Workers can be dismissed only with the approval of the dock labour board, and that is reasonable. We remember the old image of the 19th century capitalist walking into a factory and saying, "That half is sacked today." Some Tory Members might like that romantic image of the hire-and-fire entrepreneur who presses ahead irrespective of the damage he is doing to human beings, but we have eroded that idea over the years. We accept that the consideration that must be given to people is at least as great as that given to, for example, the installation of new machinery. It is absurd that the consideration of the installation of new machinery should be put on a level with the all-important consideration of humanity.

The provision for dismissal with the dock labour board's approval is a vital safeguard to prevent arbitrary dismissal on a pretext because of a grievance caused by a personality difference, which, as we know, does happen. The practice of requiring the dock labour board's approval of dismissals is an important safeguard which should be instituted for every employment system. That provision is made in legislation in France — not outrageously Left-wing France but Right-wing France.

Mr. Tony Banks: My hon. Friend is giving us good examples of how the dock labour scheme benefits the work force, but he must give the other dimension. Progressive employers—some still operate in the 80 scheme docks—can see advantages from the dock labour scheme. My hon. Friend should put that dimension in his argument as well.

Mr. Cryer: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for drawing my attention to that fact. There are generous and idealistic employers who genuinely seek to work with people, as opposed to those who continually seek confrontation. However well-intentioned my hon. Friend is, the point is that we are confronted with people who are deeply opposed to the dock work labour scheme. It may come as a shock to my hon. Friend, but they want these amendments, which have been put forward with care and consideration by my hon. Friends, to be defeated. I have tried to argue about how rational people could oppose the dock work labour scheme.

Mr. Tony Banks: I again point out that there are a number of dock employers in other parts of the country who are as deeply opposed to the Bill's provisions as my union, the Transport and General Workers Union.

Mr. Cryer: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I only wish that those employers would bring their influence to bear on hon. Members, so that the entrenched vicious dogma which is so often exhibited by the Conservatives is changed. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) that there are in the Conservative party and on the Conservative Benches some people who would say privately, "The dock work labour scheme has many good points." They know that there is no place for them in the Government. They know that they will receive only sneers and hard stares, perhaps vilification and abuse, from the hard Right which now swamps the parliamentary Conservative party.

9.30 pm

Mr. Campbell-Savours: My hon. Friend was appealing to people in various parts of the country. I see that the House now has the benefit of the added expertise of the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) who is a former parliamentary agent. He used to promote Bills such as this and has inside knowledge of these matters.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I do not think we should go down that road this evening.

Mr. Cryer: I am grateful to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for keeping me on the straight and narrow.

I was discussing the fact that dismissals could be made only with the approval of the dock labour board. That is a very important point. My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) drew my attention to the fact that there are employers — indeed, I know employers — who are sympathetic to the scheme and who want their workers to enjoy decent terms and conditions of employment. They are employers with a conscience. It is a pity that some of them have not moved into the Conservative party in recent years; I rather suspect that they have moved out.

Under the provisions of the dock labour scheme, redundancy terms are provided under a levy system. When my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) introduced the argument, I compared the docks with the steel industry, and I should like to elaborate that point because it is important. Conservative Members cannot oppose the dock labour scheme on principle, because the redundancy terms that apply to it are almost precisely the same as those applied under the European Coal and Steel Community, which was established by the treaty of Paris of 1955. It has now been taken over by the EEC and is administered by the Commission. That scheme allows for a levy on steel enterprises, and they pay for redundancies. Unfortunately, as a result of Conservative policies, hundreds of thousands of steel workers have been made redundant. They have been cushioned, although not greatly, by the scheme because it has provided for an organised reduction.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley said, the number of registered dock work employees has fallen from 82,000 in 1951 to 12,438 in 1984. Those who oppose the amendments cannot argue that the dock workers have resisted redundancies. Alas, such schemes have sometimes promoted planned reductions of manpower, although I

[Mr. Cryer]

am sure that in this case it is right. Since the Redundancy Payments Act 1965, factories have been closed and workers have not resisted the closures because of the redundancy payment terms.

I do not like that state of affairs. Workers should have the opportunity to oppose closures by sit-ins, strikes, demonstrations and petitions. They should be able to use all the democratic means open to them. Redundancy provision sometimes discourages that because people are prepared to accept redundancy. I should have thought that that argument would appeal to the Tory party as it is so keen on redundancies — we have had 2 million in the manufacturing industry, mostly in the north, since 1979. Conservative Members must bless the day when redundancy schemes came along to encourage workers to accept redundancy. Why do they not accept the dock work labour scheme redundancy provisions, paralleled as they are by the European Coal and Steel Community redundancy scheme that is promoted by the Common Market, which has so many adherents on the Government Benches?

Conservative Members used to pour forth a great deal of praise for the European Economic Community. I notice, however, that the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) does not enter the Chamber too often these days to defend the system. Nonetheless, the Prime Minister said only this afternoon that we shall be sticking to the EEC, even though there does not seem much good reason for so doing. She said that we are supporting it, and among the provisions that we shall be supporting are the European Coal and Steel Community redundancy terms under the levy system. Conservative Members should have seen the parallel.

I suggest that if the Prime Minister discovers that Conservative Members voted against the amendment, when there is a parallel policy that she supports, they might find that they have not done their careers any good. One or two new Conservative Members have raised a few points of interest in the debate in response to the amendment, and other Conservative Members have been among them—I suspect that the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) is one — saying, "Keep your mouth shut, we want the discussion on the amendment to be concluded." The hon. Gentleman might have said it rather more elegantly than that, but I do not think so.

The newly elected Conservative Members have obeyed that injunction and they will oppose the dock work labour scheme provisions. These are promising lads who have come down from Ipswich and Stafford, for example. Their careers will go up in smoke because of the Prime Minister's patronage. It is an arbitrary patronage for there is no appeal against it. It is the sort of patronage that was used by employers before the scheme came into operation. I suspect that it is a patronage that they do not like too much because they have no appeal. One blink of that hard, gimlet eye and they have had it. There is no appeal, and no amount of grovelling will get them back in the pecking order. Surely they should support a dock work labour scheme that prevents that sort of patronage being suffered by ordinary working men.

Under the levy system, given the parallel that I have been discussing, steel enterprises pay a levy. What about those who do not pay a levy? They cannot provide the redundancy terms that their workers would like to cushion them against redundancy. Therefore, the workers in the non-scheme sectors of the steel industry have a worse deal than others as the workers in the non-scheme sector of the ports industry have a worse deal on redundancy than those in scheme sectors. There is at least a worse deal potentially.

Even if there is not a worse deal in the non-scheme sectors, it is essential that there is a scheme to provide a basis of comparison. Some employers who are not in the scheme may say that they do not want to be in it because they provide better terms and conditions. Better than what? They claim that their terms and conditions are better than those that apply under the scheme. If the scheme is taken away, working conditions will be driven down because there will be no basis of comparison.

It is essential that we should retain the dock work labour scheme. As my hon. Friends have said on several occasions, we do not view the clause as a straightforward provision in a private Bill that is promoted by one corporate body. We see it as a means of creating a precedent. There are Conservative Members who will say, "There is a major port that is outside the scheme. We shall use it as a precdent for driving the dock work labour scheme out of existence in the United Kingdom." There will be those who claim that that is an exaggerated claim, but I point to the amount of trade union legislation that the Government have pushed through that can be described only as vindictive and anti-trade union.

Mr. Robert Rhodes James (Cambridge): You ain't seen nothing yet.

Mr. Cryer: I hear a Conservative Member say from a recumbent position, "You ain't seen nothing yet." Could we have a more vicious attack on organised men and women? If the hon. Member for Cambridge (Mr. Rhodes James) wishes to intervene in the debate, he is entirely welcome. He is a wet in the Tory ranks. What does the hard Right think of that?

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Does my hon. Friend appreciate that the hon. Member for Cambridge (Mr. Rhodes James) has received considerable interest from his constituents about who owns the land in the development?

Mr. Cryer: My hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) has corrected me. As a re-entrant to Parliament, I am grateful for his intervention. Naturally, since a lot of the debate took place while I was resting, as they say——

Mr. Tony Banks: Is that what they do in the European Parliament?

Mr. Cryer: Yes.

Mr. Cash: My hon. Friend the Member for Cambridge (Mr. Rhodes James) represents the wet docks, and I represent the dry docks.

Mr. Cryer: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for pointing out that the hon. Member for Cambridge, when he sees a dock labour scheme and wishes to oppose it and, by analogy, wishes to eradicate it, along with the trade union rights that have been built up over the years, represents the moderate wing of the Conservative party. Other Conservative Members wish to see such eradication with verve and drive.

Some hon. Members have said that such a tiny section of a private Bill will not be used as an example to attract

a dock work labour scheme. The comments that have been made tonight entirely justify the Opposition's claim that it will be used as a precedent.

Mrs. Clwyd: I am following my hon. Friend's speech with great interest. He has raised many excellent points. As he described himself as someone who has re-entered the House, is he aware that the force of conviction on the Opposition side of the House in opposing the Bill is such that, according to my investigations, the House has spent more time debating this private Bill than any other in the past 20 years? I am sure that my hon. Friend will agree that the message must be clear to the promoters of the Bill.

Mr. Cryer: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising that point. Many hours were spent in debate when I was not in the House. To bring the Bill back at this stage seems to be a fruitless use of parliamentary time. I am grateful to my hon. Friends who have raised that issue.

My hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) is desperate to make a contribution. He has many important points to bring to bear on the measure.

The Bill is being promoted – along with the wretched business of removing the dock work labour scheme – to extend dock capacity. Yet we know full well that there is an excess of capacity. We can only turn to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission 1986 report, which states that the promoters of the Bill

"told us that although European Ferries might have monopoly rights at the ports it owned, it had no monopoly of ports generally. It told us that there was a surplus of ro-ro terminal capacity in the United Kingdom at both North sea and Irish sea ports, as there was also in respect of lo-lo capacity".

With that evidence that is presented to Parliament, Government Members put forward a Bill tonight that is designed to wreck the provisions that have been built up over many years. Unfortunately, because of time limitations, brought about by many interventions from the Government Benches, I cannot go into the details of excess capacity any further. My hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East is anxious to make a contribution. Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker – I beg your pardon, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry for not giving you credit for wearing your wig so gracefully. I therefore conclude my remarks and urge my hon. Friends to carry on the argument against such a wretched Bill and to support the useful amendments.

9.45 pm

Mr. Snape: Unlike most previous Opposition speakers in the debate, I do not declare that I am a member of the Transport and General Workers Union. As you will know, Mr. Speaker, I am a member of the National Union of Railwaymen, and over the years my union and the TGWU have not always seen eye to eye about transport matters. But after listening to every word of the debate, I am thoroughly convinced by the reasonable and succinct way in which the case for the amendment has been made, and it would only be proper for the official Opposition to support it, unless the Minister of State can convince us – he will have to be a bit more convincing than he was in an earlier intervention – that we are wrong.

The basic proposal behind the Bill is that Felixstowe dock must be extended to cater for the expansion of container traffic. Those who are in favour of the Bill argue that it is in the local and national interest that we cater for this potential growth.

Mr. Rhodes James: That is right.

Mr. Snape: The hon. Member for Cambridge (Mr. Rhodes James) has not had the benefit of hearing every word of the debate. That was the Minister's contention. Indeed, he said that unless the Bill goes through, the growth in container traffic might be switched to Rotterdam, not to other United Kingdom ports, whether in the dock labour scheme or outside it. That other nautical character, the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash), who has just sailed in on the dawn tide, obviously agrees with the Minister. But the Government have not produced a shred of evidence to show that there has been an enormous growth overall in container traffic or, if there is this enormous growth, that the refusal to expand the facilities at Felixstowe will mean that the traffic would go to Rotterdam and the other continental ports about which the Minister warned us so luridly.

We hear similar arguments all the time in this place. When newspapers go bankrupt, we are told that there must be an immediate takeover or the foreigners will move in. When British Airways is privatised and given carte blanche to act as a predator throughout the civil aviation industry, we are told that it must be allowed to take over British Caledonian because the foreigners are knocking on the door. They never seem to ask themselves why, if the foreigners are knocking on the door, the Government neglect British industry in such a way as to make chunks of it available to those wicked foreigners about whom we are continually warned. All the evidence on containerised traffic is against the thrust of the Government's argument.

Traffic at Felixstowe has grown rapidly in recent years, but that has been the result of the takeover by Felixstowe of traffic that used to pass through other ports. Two processes of substitution have been at work in the United Kingdom ports during the past 17 years. The first is the takeover of conventional cargoes by containers. The second is the tendency towards concentration of those cargoes in the south-east, with special emphasis on Felixstowe and Southampton.

I have referred to Southampton and the impact of the proposed development on that part. Indeed, from listening to the interventions of Conservative Members, one would think that the only concern of the Labour party was with the dock work regulation scheme, or with the future prosperity and expansion of the Transport and General Workers Union.

However, it is not just Labour Members who have expressed concern about the proposed growth at Felixstowe and the terms of the Bill. As I said earlier in an intervention during the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd), I noted that the hon. Member for Southampton, Test (Mr. Hill) – no notorious Left-winger – has spoken in previous debates on this matter to warn of the dangers.

Mrs. Ann Clwyd: Where is he?

Mr. Snape: I do not know; it is a matter for him.

However, on 14 July 1986, the hon. Member for Test was present when this saga was rolling along. Apparently, it has rolled along for some time and will continue to do so for some time in the future. What did this great Left-winger, the protector of the Transport and General Workers Union, this would-be smasher of capitalism, have to say about the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Bill?

[Mr. Snape]

During the debate, the hon. Member described himself as a moderate Right-winger. He is certainly not a member of the Transport and General Workers Union.

In that debate he said:

"Is it wise to create a giant container port when increased employment in that area will result in more unemployment in other areas? I do not say that Southampton cannot meet the challenge, because I believe it can. We have tremendous advantages over Felixstowe, including a wonderful geographical position and almost a double tide which remains high for some hours. We can easily work deep draft container ships and there is no delay in services at the Southampton container port."

That is despite the fact that the dockers of Southampton are members of the dock work scheme to which the Conservative party takes such enormous exception.

The hon. Member went on to say:

"The overprovision of container berths will present problems, even though we in Southampton feel that we may not be able to cope with what we hope will be the future demand. We are making progress on the container side. It may be said that we are looking for the cessation of competition, but this all goes back to the Government's lack of a common ports policy."

Mr. Tony Banks: My hon. Friend is making an extremely telling point in giving that quote. However, is he absolutely certain that the hon. Gentleman who said that in July last year would still say that today, given the fact that he is now a Minister and that——

Mr. Rhodes James: The hon. Gentleman has got the wrong chap.

Mr. Banks: I have the wrong fellow. My hon. Friend should have given us more of a clue.

Mr. Snape: If my hon. Friend is incapable of studying "The Times Guide to the House of Commons", he will not know the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Come on. Give us a clue.

Mr. Snape: I am not allowed to give the hon. Gentleman's name, as it would be unparliamentary, but it is the sort of thing that one climbs up from time to time. I shall leave the rest of it to the imagination of my hon. Friends.

The hon. Member for Test, in common with my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) was a member of the European Assembly for some years. Indeed, in the same speech, he said:

"My right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) appointed me the chairman of transport and regional planning for Europe." — [*Official Report*, 14 July 1986; Vol. 101, c. 750.]

That is an impressive post, Mr. Speaker, that neither you nor I in those distant days in the Whips' Office would have dreamt of aspiring to. The hon. Member for Test actually reached those dizzy heights and, having acquired the necessary experience in the European Assembly, made his pronouncements about the Bill. It is significant that a self-confessed Right-winger, someone with much experience in transport, should say what he did say about the implications of the Bill for his constituency and for the port of Southampton.

There is no great feeling in the Department of Transport or the Department of the Environment that this Bill is necessarily essential. When it was being considered in Committee a submission was made on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Secretary of State for Transport. The submission was made, as these things are, by a civil servant, a Mr. P. G. Iredale, and the submission is dated 18 June 1985. Mr. Iredale made his submission in the non-emotive language so beloved of civil servants. However, in some way such language is appropriate in what is sometimes a heated Chamber and an excitable cockpit of political views.

In paragraph 8 of his submission, Mr. Iredale said

"But it is possible that there are other ports, for example Southampton, Tilbury or Harwich, which could provide a service of much the same standard without having to encroach upon any designated area in order to secure the necessary space. The Committee may wish to consider among other things whether the expansion of Felixstowe would create a unique national asset or whether if Felixstowe were not expanded services of similar standard and reliability would in practice be provided elsewhere without environmental disadvantages."

That was the opinion in 1985 of those two great Departments of State, yet the Minister of State warned us tonight about the dire consequences of rejecting the Bill. Despite being a member of the Conservative party and, therefore, following false political doctrines, the Minister of State is basically a sensible fellow. I can well understand him disagreeing with his former boss, the right hon. Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley), the Secretary of State for the Environment. Most sensible people disagree quite frequently with the right hon. Gentleman.

I can well understand that in the calm, measured cloisters of the private office of the Secretary of State Mr. Iredale sat down and thought, "How can I compose a paragraph in this document that I will put before the Committee that will illustrate the misgivings of civil servants?" Of course, civil servants always know better. He must have thought, "How can I compose a paragraph that shows civil servants' misgivings about this project without making it too apparent that I think that my Secretary of State is crackers?" I well understand that any civil servant would want to express such a sentiment in a way that would not readily be perceived as being such a blunt description of the Secretary of State for the Environment, although most hon. Members would recognise that as a not too inaccurate description. Once he has finished with the poll tax, crackers is the mildest epithet that might be aimed at him.

I must not be distracted from the amendment. The other significant impact of this Bill will be on the west coast ports. In an intervention the hon. Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack) said that the provision of better facilities at Felixstowe would benefit, presumably, not only the port of Fleetwood but the west coast ports generally.

I must not praise the Minister of State too much, but I agree with him on one point, although we will not take every hon. Member with us on it. We both agree on the desirability of the provision of a rail-only Channel tunnel. I want to know from the Minister what impact that tunnel would have on the west coast ports. I referred to this during the course of the Committee stage of the Channel Tunnel Bill.

It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned

Debate to be resumed on Thursday 22 October.

Northern Ireland (Charities)

10 pm

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. John Stanley): I beg to move,

That the draft Charities (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 29th April, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

The background to this order is as follows. The Northern Ireland Department of Finance and Personnel, which is the charity authority for Northern Ireland, has for some time felt that certain minor changes in the existing charity legislation, most of which dates from 1964, would be desirable. Similar thoughts prompted the Finance and Personnel Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly to begin an examination of charity law in Northern Ireland. Having taken evidence from interested parties, the committee produced a report on this subject which was adopted by the Assembly in 1985. The report made a number of recommendations for changes in the present system of charity law. Although the Government were not able to accept all of those recommendations, it was clear that some of them would be advantageous to charities in Northern Ireland and should be put into effect.

Simultaneously, Parliament was considering and updating the law in England and Wales through the Charities Act 1985. Although certain of the provisions of the Act are appropriate only to the system of charity law in England and Wales, others could be of use in Northern Ireland. The order, therefore, stems partly from the England and Wales Charities Act 1985 and partly from recent studies in the Province to update charity legislation.

May I now take the main provisions of the order in turn? Article 3 is very closely based on the provisions of the Charities Act 1985 and relates to local charities for the relief of poverty which are at least 50 years old. It provides that the trustees of such a charity may pass a resolution altering the trusts of the charity if they are of the unanimous opinion that the existing trusts are obsolete, useless, or impracticable and that an alteration of the trusts is required in order that the charity's resources may be applied to better effect. The new trusts must not be so dissimilar to those of the original as to constitute an unjustifiable departure from the intentions of the founder of the charity, and the procedure is subject to the agreement of the Department of Finance and Personnel.

Article 4, which is also based on part of the Charities Act 1985, relates to charities with an annual income of £200 or less and provides that the trustees of such a charity may unanimously, and again with the Department's agreement, transfer their charity's assests to the trustees of another charity with similar purposes to be held and applied as the property of the latter charity.

Article 5, which again is based on the Charities Act 1985, relates to very small charities with an endowment of £25 or less and an annual income of less than £5. The Article provides that the trustees of such a charity may, if they all agree that the charity's property is too small for any useful purpose to be achieved by the expenditure of its income, pass a resolution that the charity ought to be freed of any restriction on the expenditure of its capital. They can then spend the charity's capital as well as its income for its objects and thus bring the charity to an end.

Article 6 is based in part on the recommendations of the Northern Ireland Assembly's report and is divided into four parts. Article 6, paragraph 1, relates to section 13 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 1964 under which the Department of Finance and Personnel may make cy pres schemes altering the purposes of a charitable trust where the original purpose has failed for any reason. The expression "cy pres" is a Norman French term and has come through usage to mean "as near as possible". The essence of the present doctrine is therefore that if a gift is given with a general charitable intent the law shall not allow the failure of a particular mode of trust to defeat the testator's intentions but will allow other charitable purposes to be substituted that are as near as possible to the testator's original intentions.

The making of a cy pres scheme is a function which belongs traditionally to the Chancery court. The object of giving this function as well to the Department of Finance and Personnel in respect of very small charities was to save those charities the cost of the court proceedings which would either seriously reduce the resources of the charity or result in the virtual cessation of the charity because the trustees felt that they could not afford the expense of court proceedings. The department's power to make a cy pres scheme is at present restricted to charities whose assets do not exceed £5,000. This asset ceiling was set 22 years ago and an upward revision is long overdue. In line with the recommendation in the Northern Ireland Assembly's report, it is proposed to increase this limit to £50,000.

Article 6, paragraph 2, relates to section 14 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 1964. It occasionally happens that when preparing his will a charitable donor so misdescribes the charity which he had in mind as to make it difficult for his personal representatives to be certain where the money should go. Section 14 authorises the personal representatives to transfer the gift to the department which, after inquiry and subject to the approval of the Attorney-General, will transfer it to whichever charity or charities appear to be appropriate, having regard to the donor's intentions. This section can be used only where the value of the gift does not exceed £250, and it is proposed to increase this limit to £2,500.

Article 6, paragraph 3, relates to section 24 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 1964 which is concerned with mixed trusts. These are trusts which fail because they include both charitable and non-charitable objects. This particular problem was highlighted in England in the 1940s in a series of court cases of which the best known is the Diplock case. In this case a testator left the residue of his estate amounting to more than £250,000 for

"such charitable or benevolent purposes"

in England as his trustees or executors should in their absolute discretion select. It was held, following a number of previous decisions, that because the term "benevolent" was wider than the term "charitable" the executors were entitled to apply the fund outside the sphere of charity and it was ruled that the gift was not a charitable gift. The net result was that funds already distributed had to be recovered from various charities in Sussex and sent to a distant cousin of the testator in Australia, whom he may never have known — lucky man that he was.

Section 24 of the 1964 Act provides that in such circumstances the whole of the gift is to be applied for charitable purposes in accordance with schemes made by the Chancery court or, if the value of the gift does not exceed £5,000, by the department. Under article 6, paragraph 3, this limit is increased to £50,000.

[Mr. John Stanley]

Article 6, paragraph 4, introduces a new section to the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 1964 which will allow future changes in the financial limits in sections 13, 14 and 24 to be made by order subject to affirmative resolution. This will enable the monetary limits to which I have referred to be altered more readily in response to changes in the value of money.

Article 7 relates to the way in which land and periodical payments charged on land are valued for the purposes of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 1964. Under the existing section 32 of the 1964 Act, they are to be valued as prescribed multiples of the net annual value of the land concerned. This is not a very realistic system, since the net annual value does not respond very rapidly to changes in the actual market value of land, and it is proposed that by means of article 7 the existing section 32 will be done away with and replaced by a new section. The new section 32 will provide that the value of any land or periodical payment charged on land for the purposes of the Act shall be assessed by the commissioner of valuation.

Article 9 has been introduced to close a potential loophole in the existing charity law. At present it is possible that a charity that is a company or body corporate, and has power to alter the instruments establishing it as a body corporate, could alter those instruments in such a way as to allow property given for charitable purposes to be used for purposes that are not charitable. That situation has not yet arisen, but it would clearly be undesirable for charity property to be diverted in that way and article 9, which is based on section 30(2) of the Charities Act 1960, which applies in England and Wales, will prevent that.

Article 10 relates to a transfer of functions from the Department of Health and Social Services to the Department of Finance and Personnel. At present the former Department, under the House to House Charitable Collections Act (Northern Ireland) 1952 has power to issue exemption orders that allow the organisers of large-scale house-to-house collections for charitable purposes to carry out those collections without having to obtain permission from each police district. That function is presently exercised by the Department of Health and Social Services as one of its miscellaneous licensing functions, but it is felt that it would be more appropriately exercised by the Department of Finance and Personnel, which has general responsibility for charity matters in Northern Ireland, and article 10 will transfer it to the latter Department.

The three schedules contain pro forma resolutions of the types that can be passed by the trustees of certain charities under articles 3, 4 and 5. It is felt to be desirable to provide them, partly to save trustees the trouble of drafting their own resolutions, and partly to ensure that the charities that take advantage of those articles pass resolutions in a consistent and legally sound form.

Those are the main points of the order. It is a difficult and complex area of law. I am sorry to have detained the House briefly to explain the provisions, but I believe that they will be of considerable interest to lawyers and trustees of a considerable number of charities in the Province. I felt it right to explain the provisions carefully to the House and to people outside. I therefore commend the order to the House.

10.12 pm

Mr. James Marshall (Leicester, South): I welcome the Minister's full explanation of the details of the draft order. It has shed far more light on the order than prevailed hitherto in my mind, having attempted to read the draft order before the debate.

I should like to ask the Minister about the recommendations that the Northern Ireland Assembly proposed in 1985 on the modernisation of charity law. The Minister said that some of those recommendations had been accepted and others were rejected or not placed in the draft order. I am sure that some right hon. and hon. Members who are in the House this evening will make great play of the recommendations that are omitted. If we accept that the people who know best on these matters are the people in Northern Ireland, will the Minister give his reasons for accepting certain recommendations and including them in the draft order and rejecting others? It is of paramount importance that if the House is to overrule the views of local politicians in the Province, the reasons for doing so are made absolutely clear.

We welcome and support the order and have no intention to vote against it if a Division is called.

10.13 pm

Mr. Tim Yeo (Suffolk, South): I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Minister on his lucid exposition of the order which was admirably brief. It could not have been done more concisely or speedily.

I should like to comment on two or three of the order's provisions as well as on a couple of omissions. However, I should like to say, first, as a Member of Parliament representing a constituency in East Anglia, and in the light of some of the remarks yesterday after Scottish Question Time, that it is important that occasionally we have the chance to take part in debates on Northern Ireland. Nothing could symbolise our commitment to the union more effectively than for mainland Members to be able to contribute to such debates.

The Charities Act 1985, as my right hon. Friend pointed out, seems to have been the forerunner of three of the provisions in the order. That Act started life as a private Member's Bill in the other place. I had the opportunity of being responsible for its speedy passage through this House. So speedy was its passage that we did not get the chance to debate it on the Floor of the House: we merely had one Committee sitting upstairs. Just to put your mind at rest, Mr. Speaker, I am not seeking, by the device of this order, to debate those measures in any detail now. However, had the House had the chance to examine the Charities Act 1985, it might have wished to be a little bolder in its approach.

I want, in particular, to refer to articles 4 and 5 of the order which reflect clauses in the 1985 Act. Article 4 has, as my right hon. Friend mentioned, a limit on £200 a year as the income level above which charities cannot take advantage of this article, which allows them, in effect, to merge with another charity. Similarly, article 5 has the limit of a permanent endowment of not more than £25 and an annual income of not more than £5 if a charity wishes to spend its capital.

Those limits are ludicrously low. We have more than 100,000 charities in England and Wales. Unfortunately, because of the inadequacy of our registration system in England and Wales nobody knows exactly how many

charities we have, not even the body that is responsible for keeping the register. Out of more than 100,000, fewer than 50 have been able to take advantage of the 1985 Act in the two years in which it has been in force.

If we were to extrapolate those figures to Northern Ireland, where it is estimated that there are about 9,000 charities, we might assume that the benefits of articles 4 and 5 could be used by perhaps five charities over the next two years. Therefore, it is not exactly a measure which will make great progress towards reducing the number of small charities, simplifying the administration, relieving the burden on trustees and so on. I am disappointed at the inadequacy of the 1985 Act which is now reflected in the order. No risks at all would be run if those financial limits were multiplied by 25 or even 50; if charities with an income of up to £5,000 a year were allowed to merge with other charities, or if charities with an endowment of £500 or £750 or with an income of up to £150 a year were allowed to expend their capital.

No terrible disaster would follow from allowing charities of that size to take advantage of these provisions. Indeed, under the order, they would be able to take these steps only if they had the approval of the Department of Finance and Personnel, just as in England and Wales charities are only able to use the measures in the 1985 Act if they have the approval of the Charity Commission.

Therefore, there is a safeguard, even if charities significantly larger than those at present covered by the order were allowed to make the changes, either to merge or to wind themselves up. No great abuse would follow from that. Indeed, in view of the Government's rejection of other much more urgently needed reforms, which would curb genuine abuses among charities, the Government's timidity in this respect is disappointing. I am sorry that Northern Ireland has not been able to be much bolder in its approach. It could have set an example which in due course might have been followed by the rest of the United Kingdom. In that sense, I am afraid that the order represents a missed opportunity.

I refer now to the omissions that concern me. My right hon. Friend has already referred to the report of the Northern Ireland Assembly, "The Modernisation of Charity Law in Northern Ireland." I am afraid that I had not previously been aware of that report, but I have had a chance to consider it this week. It seems in many ways an excellent report, containing some recommendations that, as my right hon. Friend has pointed out, are incorporated in this order. I should like to comment on two of the recommendations that it contains.

First, the report rightly refers to the need for a register of charities in Northern Ireland. It seems most extraordinary that the Department of Finance and Personnel, which appears to be the Department that is primarily responsible for the supervision of charities, cannot produce a list of the charities that it supervises. So far as I can tell, only the Inland Revenue could tell us which charities currently operate in Northern Ireland that is, if the Revenue would be willing to tell us. The Revenue normally refuses quite rightly to give information about any taxpayer, whether an individual, corporation or, presumably, a charity. Of course, charities are not taxpayers except in the unfortunate sense that they are liable to VAT. I do not see how anyone could claim that adequate supervision takes place if the organisations to be supervised are not known. It is most unsatisfactory.

A public interest is at stake. Every taxpayer in the United Kingdom is indirectly a compulsory financial contributor to charities by virtue of the fact that substantial amounts are lost in tax revenue because of the tax concessions that charities enjoy. I am sure that such concessions are supported by hon. Members of all parties. However, as I have said, every one of us who is a taxpayer contributes, indirectly to a number of charities, some of which are in Northern Ireland. I am delighted about that, but it seems unsatisfactory that if I, as a taxpayer, in the United Kingdom wished to see a list of the charities to which I contribute in Northern Ireland, no one could supply me with that list.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): My hon. Friend is arguing for equality of treatment as a taxpayer between this part of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. However, in his previous submission he said that there should be a difference. Will he explain why he takes a different view, being for equality of taxation on the one hand, but stating on the other hand that there should be differences? Is not that playing into the hands of those Unionists who argue that we should have similarity of treatment when it is clear that there is a good case for ensuring that we have something which, if not slightly dissimilar, is similar enough to ensure parity within the United Kingdom as a whole?

Mr. Yeo: My hon. Friend reads too much into my argument. In my earlier remarks, I suggested that Northern Ireland could offer an example to the rest of the United Kingdom by being a little bolder in allowing larger charities to merge or to wind up than happens at present in England and Wales. On taxation treatment, I emphasise that I am not always talking about taxpayers in England and Wales, because the same is true of taxpayers in Northern Ireland, who would not be able to obtain the information that should be available. I do not think that a point can be made on this about promoting the Union.

There is a need in my view, and in the recommendations of the report of the Northern Ireland Assembly, for a register of charities in Northern Ireland. Indeed, in England and Wales we have just received a report on an efficiency scrutiny by Sir Philip Woodfield, who held a senior office in Northern Ireland in his Civil Service career. Unfortunately, the terms of reference of his efficiency scrutiny required him only to take note of the position in Northern Ireland. It is a pity that someone with such a detailed knowledge of Northern Ireland was not invited to comment in more detail on the administration of charities there.

Be that as it may, it is worth bringing to the attention of the House the fact that prominent among the recommendations of Sir Philip Woodfield's scrutiny, which was placed in the Library of the House last week, is a series of conclusions that would require much tighter administration of the register of charities that is maintained by the Charity Commission in this country. At the very moment when the Government receive those recommendations, it seems a pity that they have not taken the opportunity to introduce at least the basic outline of some form of register of charities in Northern Ireland.

Naturally, my right hon. Friend will point to the cost involved. In the evidence given by the Department of Finance and Personnel to the assembly Committee which produced the report two years ago it was suggested that

[Mr. Yeo]

20 extra staff would be required to set up a register. If there are 9,000 charities in Northern Ireland, the Committee is saying that each member of staff is capable of registering only 450 charities. That does not seem a heavy work load. I would be rather disappointed if I was contracting this out and the tenderer said, "For every 450 charities, I need an extra member of staff." That seems a ludicrously low rate of productivity.

If someone asked me to do the job, I would not register any charity with an income of less than £1,000. That would probably wipe out about half of them immediately, leaving about 4,500 charities. I would conduct the exercise over three years, so would register about 1,500 charities a year. I should have thought that that would have needed a staff of no more than three. Each of that staff of three would be asked to register two charities on each working day. That does not seem to be an excessively onerous work load. If we followed the suggestion in Sir Philip Woodfield's scrutiny for England and Wales, we could charge every charity on the register, for example, £50. If we are dealing only with charities with an income of more than £1,000 a year, that sum does not seem too excessive as a once-and-for-all registration fee. The 4,500 charities would thus provide an income of £225,000. Even on the salaries which the Northern Ireland Office might have to pay civil servants, three people could probably be hired for three years to conduct this exercise. Therefore, the argument of the cost of the register being a reason for not going ahead with it is wholly fallacious.

The second recommendation of the report of the Northern Ireland Assembly deals with the question of which body is responsible for supervising charities in Northern Ireland. I understand that at present it is the Department of Finance and Personnel. The report suggested that the Charity Commission, which at present deals only with England and Wales, should have its writ extended to cover Northern Ireland. I have some sympathy with that recommendation, although I understand that because of the different legal structures it may be a rather difficult exercise. I certainly have reason to believe that it would not be particularly welcomed by the Charity Commission.

An alternative recommendation if the first were not possible is to have a counterpart body in the Province which would fulfil the same sort of functions as the Charity Commission fulfils in England and Wales. That seems perfectly possible. In any event, it does not seem entirely satisfactory that the Department of Finance and Personnel is responsible for supervising charities.

I hope that my right hon. Friend can at least assure the House that he will reconsider these two matters, particularly in the light of what I hope will be a positive response from the Home Office later in the year to Sir Philip Woodfield's recommendations on the organisation of the Charity Commission and its responsibilities covering England and Wales. If my right hon. Friend can give us that assurance, we can look forward to the system of regulation of charities in Northern Ireland being put on a sounder footing.

I say that, not because I believe that vast abuses are taking place in Northern Ireland. I have no reason to believe that, and I hope that that will never be the case but because if charities throughout the United Kingdom are to be able to play the enlarged role which the Government have constantly said that they would like them to play. I welcome that and if they are to continue to enjoy what I hope will be increasing tax concessions, it is essential to sustain public confidence. Both the public and the Government must have confidence that charities are subject to adequate scrutiny and regulation. Therefore, I hope that my right hon. Friend can give the House those assurances.

10.29 pm

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): I assure the hon. Member for Suffolk, South (Mr. Yeo) that there is always a welcome from the Official Unionist Benches for anyone from any part of the United Kingdom who contributes to debates on Northern Ireland. We should like to think that we would contribute more often ourselves in the House and bring informed comment to the debates.

I welcome the Minister of State to his new capacity as the Minister responsible for the financial aspects of Northern Ireland affairs. Although he suggested that the order stemmed from the Department, it had an earlier incarnation, in that it started rolling from the Northern Ireland Council of Social Service, which is now the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action. That body sent the order to the Minister concerned; it sent a copy to the Northern Ireland Assembly, and from there we began to move on it as well.

It is interesting that one of the few positive things in the report of the Northern Ireland Assembly that the Minister has been able to incorporate in the order is the error that we discoverd in the submission from the Department of Finance and Personnel — a misprint which gave £5,000 as £50,000. We recommended that that £50,000 should be the cy-pres ceiling. That is one of the few positive suggestions from the Northern Ireland Assembly that have been incorporated, which is fascinating.

I am not sure whether the Minister's presentation reflected a desire to be succinct and to help the lawyers outside the House or a weariness—I share it—with the order. If I could speak with the tongues of men and of angels and convince the House that the hon. Member for Suffolk, South was right to say that there should be a register and a Charity Commission in Northern Ireland, it would not make a bit of difference—the provision must go through. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) said this afternoon, we are going through a charade. As he is older than me, he said that he is no longer playing charades.

I want to put on record tonight the fact that the House has been unwilling to incorporate a Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. It is an abomination that the Department of Finance and Personnel a Government Department — should be responsible for the charities of Northern Ireland. There would be an uproar here if charities became the responsibility of the Treasury instead of the Charity Commission. There is something wrong with people's charities being administered primarily by a Government Department. It is equally an abomination when one considers that Sir Philip Woodfield's report, to which the hon. Member for Suffolk, South referred, has recommended the extension of the charity commissioners of England and

Wales to Scotland. The laws of Scotland are more different from those of England and Wales than are those of Northern Ireland. There is something more hypocritical than usual going on in politics when we are told that the Government want to bring Northern Ireland into line with England and Wales when that seems cost-effective thereby running down our outstanding educational institutions, to which tribute was paid today in the House while on the other hand, when the Northern Ireland Assembly asks that the charity laws of Northern Ireland be brought into line with those of England and Wales, that cannot be done. No rational explanation has been given as to why not.

I want to put on record our utter dissatisfaction with the way in which we are treated. The Northern Ireland Assembly was set up by the House to bring forward recommendations. One hon. Member, who because of his professional background and earlier incarnation has taken an immense interest in charities, said that he was not aware of this report until this week, yet, by the laws of this land, it has been tabled in the House. As the Chairman of the Committee that piloted one report through the Assembly, I realise how many hours have been wasted. Almost 25 years have to pass before there is an opportunity to reform the law. The last opportunity was in 1964. We have been told that it will be years before some of Sir Philip Woodfield's recommendations can be implemented. It is tragic that the House is going through this charade when, by holding back a little and accepting the concrete recommendations put to the Government, we could have had a fine charitable law to guide and help.

In the meantime, the Inland Revenue will continue to say what is a charitable body and what is not. It is interesting that the Revenue was not able to come before the Northern Ireland Assembly Finance Committee to give evidence so that we could evaluate its input. The body that administers the law, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, likewise was not able to give evidence to the committee.

I welcome the fact that one or two of the smaller items have been accepted by the Government, but the order contradicts recommendation 8.1(e) of the Assembly's report. Paragraph 5.12, says:

"nor should piecemeal legislative action be taken on specific purposes".

There should be proper reform of the charitable laws in Northern Ireland. I regret that that has not been done.

The order tackles none of the issues and provides no means of guiding new charities and effectively overseeing their work and the spending of funds. It evades all the matters of concern and avoids questions raised from experience of the Charity Commission for England and Wales. I have no qualms about the way in which the average charity in Northern Ireland is administered. Those who do the work do it remarkably well. There is always the possibility of mistakes being made, but it is sad that the part of the nation with the highest per capita rate of charitable giving is left apart from the rest of the nation and the charitable laws that guide the rest.

10.38 pm

Mr. Stanley: With the leave of the House, Madam Deputy Speaker, I should be glad to respond briefly to the points raised by hon. Members.

The hon. Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Marshall) asked why we had rejected various Assembly proposals. I understand that a voluminous document has been prepared and submitted to the Assembly, explaining why a number of the proposals were rejected. I shall be happy to obtain a copy and send it to the hon. Gentleman for his holiday reading *[Interruption.]* in October. We are grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, South (Mr. Yeo) for giving us the benefit of his great expertise and experience of charitable matters and charitable law. He mentioned the financial limits in articles 4 and 5 of the order, which follows the Charities Act 1985. I understand what my hon. Friend said, but I can only put it to him that those who designed and structured that Act were clearly mindful of the need to ensure the greatest possible protection for the wishes of donors, especially those who give relatively small sums. I understand that my hon. Friend feels that we have been too cautious, but I am sure that he will understand that transferring small donations to a charity other than the original beneficiary is a sensitive matter.

My hon. Friend mentioned registration. I am aware that the matter has been considered. In paragraph 6 of their 1982 annual report, the Charity Commissioners made it clear that a register does not provide proof that all registered charities are bona fide. It said:

"We are not making moral judgments. Nor does registration imply that we are satisfied that an institution will be well managed, or that we are giving it a kind of Consumer Association seal of approval".

I assure my hon. Friend that almost all requests for information about charities that are addressed to the Department of Finance and Personnel can be answered satisfactorily without recourse to a register. The point at issue is whether the utility of a register outweighs the considerable cost of its production.

My hon. Friend questioned whether the cost of producing a register would be as high as has been suggested, and I listened to what he said about it. I should like to reflect on what he said, take further advice and write to him. I shall place a copy of my reply in the Library as the House is about to go into recess.

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East): Is the Minister saying that he has ministerial responsibility for the administration of charities? If so, where will he draw the line when answering questions in the House?

Mr. Stanley: I understand that the Department of Finance and Personnel is the body responsible for matters of charitable law in Northern Ireland. In so far as there is ministerial responsibility, we shall discharge our responsibilities to the House.

My hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, South also considered whether the Charity Commission should be extended to Northern Ireland and whether the Department of Finance and Personnel should continue to be the body responsible for the administration of charitable matters in the Province. As he is aware, there is a substantially different corpus of law on charities in Northern Ireland.

The hon. Member for Belfast, South (Rev. Martin Smyth) said that consideration has been given to extending the Charity Commission's work to Scotland where the same legal arguments might apply. I shall consider that matter in the light of what has been said tonight. I am grateful to the hon. Member for adding to my knowledge of the history of these proposals. I was not aware that the inadvertent adding of a nought had been carried through

[Mr. Stanley]

into the legislation. I am delighted that there is at least that result of the deliberations of the Northern Ireland Assembly in which he was engaged.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved.

That the draft Charities (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 29th April, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

Northern Ireland (Limitation)

10.45 pm

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. John Stanley): I beg to move,

That the Limitation (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 2nd April in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

This draft order is based on the 24th report of the Law Reform Committee entitled "Latent Damage", implemented in relation to England and Wales by the Latent Damage Act 1986. It also amends the law of limitation in respect of libel and slander actions in Northern Ireland.

The general principle underlying the law of limitation in most developed legal systems is that a plaintiff must commence a civil action for damages within a particular period if he is not to be debarred from doing so. In Northern Ireland, as in England and Wales, the general principle is that the limitation period starts to run against the plaintiff from the date of the accrual of his cause of action, that is, from the date when he first has the right to bring the action. In negligence cases, other than personal injury cases, which are outside the scope of the order, the general limitation period is six years. The six-year period starts from the date when damage first results from breach of the duty of care. In many cases the damage follows quickly upon the negligent act and is perfectly obvious. But there are cases where the damage does not occur, or where it is not discoverable, until after the six-year period has expired.

The Law Reform Committee considered that the present law was unjust from the point of view of both plaintiffs and defendants. As far as a plaintiff was concerned the six-year period might well elapse before the potential plaintiff could reasonably be aware that he had a right of action. This might occur in the case of a defect in the foundations or structure of a building. But it might equally apply to professional advice, for example by a solicitor or accountant, damage from which might not become apparent until well after negligence had occurred. At the same time the system could also prove unfair to a defendant because damage could start arising many years after the act of negligence had taken place so that he might not be in a position either to contest the claim on the basis of his records or to meet it with adequate insurance cover.

The order closely follows the Law Reform Committee's report. Article 3 takes account of the committee's principal recommendations. First, the ordinary limitation period of six years should be subject to an extension which would allow the plaintiff three years to commence an action from the date of discovery of significant damage, or the date on which he could reasonably have discovered it. Secondly, non-injury negligence claims should, in the absence of deliberate concealment on the part of the defendant, be subject to a longstop which would stop them being initiated after 15 years had elapsed from the breach of duty of care.

Those recommendations are further developed in article 4 by two consequential provisions. The first makes special provision for the situation where the plaintiff comes under a disability, for example unsoundness of mind, after a cause of action for negligence has occurred. The second provision disapplies the 15-year longstop from negligence cases in which there is deliberate concealment on the part of the defendant. In such cases, as now, the six-year period does not begin to run until the date when the plaintiff first discovered, or could have discovered, the concealment, whatever the date.

Article 5 enables persons who acquire property which is subject to latent damage to have a right of action in respect of that damaged property. Although this provision provides for the accrual of a new cause of action to each successive owner at the time when he acquires the property, it is subject to the same limitation periods as the original cause of action, including the longstop. Again this flows from the Law Reform Committee's principal recommendations.

Finally, I said that the order makes some changes in respect of limitations in libel and slander actions. Article 6 takes account of the changes made in England and Wales in section 57 of the Administration of Justice Act 1985 by reducing the limitation period in libel from six years to three. As it happens, the limit of slander is three years under the existing law in Northern Ireland. So this change makes all limitation periods for defamation actions of the same length. In addition, like section 57 of the English 1985 Act, it provides for a new extension of one year, for which leave of the High Court is necessary, where certain facts were not known to the plaintiff until after the three year limitation had expired.

This order is most technical, but I believe it is a useful piece of law reform. It has been welcomed on consultation. I commend it to the House.

10.50 pm

Mr. James Marshall (Leicester, South): I thank the Minister for his full outline of the draft order. As he rightly said, the order is technical, but it is a useful law reform measure, which we welcome in this House, as it was welcomed in another place. However, the Minister will be aware that in the other place Lord Fitt expressed some concern about the way in which such matters were discussed in Northern Ireland.

I shall refresh the Minister's mind. Lord Fitt made three points: first, that insufficient attention was given to law reform in the Province; secondly, that there was inadequate scrutiny, despite the kind of assurance which the Minister gave the House and which his noble Friend gave in another place; and, thirdly — this is the most important point — that there is no Northern Ireland voice on the Law Commission. Lord Fitt gave a great deal of attention to these points, particularly the third one. Will the Minister respond to the concerns that were expressed in another place? We welcome the draft order. It is a technical improvement upon existing law in the Province.

10.51 pm

Mr. Stanley: With the leave of the House, perhaps I can reply to the hon. Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Marshall). The hon. Gentleman referred to inadequate debate and scrutiny. When he began his remarks, I thought that he was referring to the degree of debate and scrutiny in the House. As he knows, that matter has been raised by many hon. Members since the new Parliament started. We have responded, and the matter is being considered through the usual channels. However, the hon. Gentleman went on to a more specific point, and that is the adequacy of Northern Ireland representation on the Law Commission. That matter is not within my ministerial

[Mr. Stanley]

responsibilities. Therefore, I shall make further inquiries. I shall certainly consult my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on that point.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Limitation (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 2nd April, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

Northern Ireland (Powers of Attorney)

10.52 pm

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. John Stanley): I beg to move,

That the draft Enduring Powers of Attorney (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 6th April, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

Perhaps it would be for the convenience of the House to discuss also the following motion:

That the draft Enduring Powers of Attorney (Northern Ireland Consequential Amendment) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 6th April, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

The two orders, the substantive order and the consequential amendment order, are based on the recommendations of the Law Commission's report No. 122 entitled "The Incapacitated Principal". They closely correspond to the Enduring Powers of Attorney Act 1985 that applies in England and Wales.

As the House knows, a power of attorney is an arrangement whereby one person, the donor, grants another, the attorney, power to act on his behalf. Under present law, a power of attorney automatically comes to an end if the donor becomes mentally incapable. That is the time when he may well be most in need of someone to manage his affairs. The only course open to his relatives in such circumstances is to apply to the Office of Care and Protection in the High Court for the appointment of a controller. That procedure has recently been improved with the coming into operation of the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. But is it, of necessity, a formal procedure which can be both time-consuming and expensive.

Against that background, the Law Commission recommended that the law should be changed to provide for a special kind of power of attorney, known as an enduring power of attorney, which would be capable of continuing regardless of the donor's mental condition. The commission devised a detailed scheme, with built-in safeguards for the donor, the attorney, and third parties dealing with the attorney. That scheme is closely followed in the order before the House. It should provide a relatively informal means of managing a mentally incapacitated person's affairs without resorting to administration through the High Court under the mental health legislation.

Article 4 of the order sets out the framework of an enduring power of attorney. Unlike an ordinary power of attorney, an enduring power will have to be in a prescribed form. It will have to be executed by both the donor and the attorney. It will have to contain certain explanatory information making it plain to the donor the nature of the power which he is creating. It will contain a statement that the donor has read that information or had it read to him.

Central to the scheme is the role of the court. The attorney has a clear duty under article 6 to take steps to register the enduring power in the Office of Care and Protection of the High Court as soon as he has reason to believe that the donor is mentally incapable of managing his affairs, or that he is becoming so incapable. But before applying to the High Court for the registration of the enduring power, he must notify certain specified relatives as well as the donor himself unless the court allows him to dispense with notices to certain persons. The notification requirements allow the recipients of notices to

challenge the application for registration on the important grounds specified in article 8, paragraph 5. These are that the power created by the instrument is not a valid enduring power or no longer subsists, that the application is premature because the donor is not becoming mentally incapable, that fraud or undue pressure persuaded the donor to create the power, and that the attorney is unsuitable. Any challenges would be determined by the High Court.

On the registration of an enduring power, the donor is effectively presumed to be mentally incapable and can no longer revoke the power unless and until the court confirms such a revocation. The affairs of the donor are almost completely in the hands of the attorney, although the court has a supervisory role and may exercise certain functions in relation to the donor's affairs. These are set out in article 10. As an ultimate sanction, it must cancel the registration of the enduring power if it is satisfied that any of the grounds mentioned in article 10, paragraph 4, have been proved.

So far, I have dealt principally with the safeguards which the order provides for the donor. But it is important that third parties such as any purchasers of the donor's property should be able to deal with the attorney in good faith, confident in the knowledge that any such transactions would be effective and not liable to be set aside. Article 11 provides the necessary protection. It also protects the attorney who acts in good faith.

The purpose of the draft Enduring Powers of Attorney (Northern Ireland Consequential Amendment) Order is simply to amend section 7(3) of the English 1985 Act which provides for the reception of office copies of English-registered enduring powers throughout the United Kingdom as evidence of their contents and of the fact that they have been registered. The consequential amendment order extends the same evidential provision to office copies of Northern Ireland-registered enduring powers.

The draft order has been welcomed by those who have commented on it, and I commend it to the House as a useful law reform measure.

10.59 pm

Mr. James Marshall (Leicester, South): Once again I must thank the Minister for his full explanation of the order. I hope that it does not become too much of a habit, and every time the Minister speaks I respond by complimenting him on the way that he has spoken and the explanation that he has given.

I welcome the enduring powers of attorney order and the consequential order. The Minister and the House are aware of two things: first, that we all want to go home; and, secondly, that the Enduring Powers of Attorney Act 1985 has been well received in England and Wales and has been widely used. It fulfils a real need in England and Wales, and I am sure that it will fulfil the same kind of need and serve the same useful purpose in Northern Ireland.

In another place my noble Friend drew the attention of the Minister to a number of lessons that had been learnt since the English Act was passed. My noble Friend sought an assurance that when the Northern Ireland Office drew up the regulations dealing with the order the lessons learnt in England would be taken into account. I repeat that question to the Minister tonight. When the Northern Ireland Office draws up the regulations under the order, will it take into account all the lessons learnt in England and Wales since the 1985 Act was brought into effect?

Mr. Stanley: I am extremely pleased to give the hon. Gentleman that assurance.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Enduring Powers of Attorney (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 6th April, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Resolved,

That the draft Enduring Powers of Attorney (Northern Ireland Consequential Amendment) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 6th April, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

PRIVATE BILL PROCEDURE

Ordered,

That, in accordance with the Resolution of the House of 16th June 1986, in Session 1985-86, a Select Committee of seven Members be appointed to join with a Committee to be appointed by the Lords to examine the processes of enacting Private Legislation and to consider whether:

(a) there are any matters of a kind at present dealt with by Private Bill which could more appropriately be dealt with some other way, taking account of the interests both of Promoters and other affected parties;

(b) any changes are desirable in Private Bill procedure; and

(c) any amendments are desirable to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act 1936 and the procedure thereunder;

and to consider whether any amendments are desirable to the Statutory Orders (Special Procedure) Act 1945.

Ordered,

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records.

Ordered,

That the Committee have power to appoint specialist advisers either to supply information which is not readily available or to elucidate matters of complexity within the Committee's order of reference.

Ordered,

That the Minutes of Evidence and Memoranda reported from the Joint Committee on Private Bill Procedure, on 11th May 1987, in the last Session of Parliament, be referred to the Committee.

Ordered,

That three be the quorum of the Committee.

Ordered,

That Mr. Tony Banks, Mr. Sydney Chapman, Mrs. Ann Clwyd, Sir Anthony Grant, Mr. Patrick McNair-Wilson, Mr. Roger Moate and Sir John Stradling Thomas be members of the Committee—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c

BUILDING SOCIETIES

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.)

That the draft Building Societies Investor Protection Scheme (Maximum Protected Investment) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 2nd July, be approved—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

Question agreed to.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

Health Inspection of Meat and Poultrymeat

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 102(5) (Standing Committees on European Community documents.)

That this House takes note of European Community Documents Nos. 8006/86 and 10530/86 on health inspection of meat and poultrymeat; and supports the Government's intention to argue for arrangements which take full account of the United Kingdom's position and for charges which do no more than recover actual costs incurred.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

Question agreed to.

Trunk Roads (Selby)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

11.2 pm

Mr. Michael Alison (Selby): May I start by saying that I enjoy double good fortune in this debate — first, by having secured this slot so near to the end of our summer sitting and, secondly, that the Minister designated to reply is my hon. Friend the Minister for Roads and Traffic. He is a most conscientious and assiduous member of the Department of Transport team. I am especially grateful to my hon. Friend for having taken the trouble, in the past fortnight, to travel incognito over some of the roads that are the subject of this debate.

This evening my remarks will largely concentrate on the need for an early start to the Selby bypass. My hon. Friend the Minister may think that I am wasting his time and that of the House by pushing on a door that is already open as the Selby bypass is provided for, because it features explicitly in the recent White Paper "Policy for Roads". I must remind my hon. Friend that a Selby bypass was planned and projected as long ago as 1938 — I have official correspondence to prove that — yet it never materialised. Later that bypass was described as "programmed or in preparation" in the Department of Transport report entitled "Roads in England" published in March 1969. That was nearly 20 years ago.

It maintained that status until the 1975 White Paper, when it was described as being in "the preparation pool." That proved to be a drowning pool. Later still, the 1978 White Paper stated that construction of the Selby bypass would start in the period 1981 to 1983. Where is it today? It is still a paper project in the 1987 White Paper, nearly 50 years after it was first mooted.

The Minister will understand the need for me to bring this matter to the attention of the House and to press him to make a clear and unequivocal declaration of intent. Will he now say categorically that the Selby bypass will not slip back, as it has so often in the past, but will be started at the latest in the period designated for it in the 1987 White Paper?

I wish to press the Minister further. In a letter dated 20 January 1987, one of the Department of Transport's regional officers wrote to the county surveyor of North Yorkshire county council stating explicitly that the constraints controlling the 1991 start date for the Selby bypass were not lack of finance but delays occasioned by the usual statutory procedures relating to the line of the road, land acquisition and so on. The Minister should spare no effort to accelerate these procedures and thus secure an earlier start date. If he does not do that, a 1991 start date will mean our having to wait at least until 1994 before Selby can hope to see any benefit from a bypass. That is six and a half years away.

One means by which vital time could be saved, and at a stroke, would be by the Minister agreeing to the use of the concurrent rather than the consecutive procedure concerning the publication of the line, side road and compulsory purchase orders involved. In pleading for this telescoped procedure, I have the total backing of the North Yorkshire county council—the strategic planning authority for the area and the Minister's local agents—the similar backing of Selby district council, the local planning authority, and the overwhelming backing of the

local people involved. A vast amount of discussion, consultation and agreement have occurred and reached completion. The time is now ripe for action.

I hope that the Minister will agree to the telescoped procedure I have proposed. I hope that he will also undertake to bleed, so to speak, the bureaucratic procedures of his Department of the customary float times that are often included to cater for unforeseen eventualities —the double checking of his agents' works and so on. My aim—I hope I can engage the Minister's committed aspiration to the same aim—is to secure that the Selby bypass scheme is moved into the 1987 White Paper's list of schemes, with a planned start of construction not later than March 1989.

I will now flesh out the rather narrow and skeletal arguments of procedures and programming that I have been using, with a reminder of the real human dimension that lies behind them. Conditions in the town centre of Selby for pedestrians and road users alike are atrocious. Three trunk roads—the A63, the A19 and the A1041—intersect in the town and two of them are funnelled through the notorious Selby toll bridge.

On the Abbey side of the toll bridge the trunk road is so narrow that two big wagons moving in opposite directions are liable to decapitate pedestrians—mothers with prams, for example — with their wing mirrors overhanging the narrow pavements. That accidents do not happen more regularly is due almost certainly to the fact that such wagons are more often stationary than moving, or moving at a snail's pace, thanks to the delays occasioned by toll collection on the bridge.

This is not meant to be an argument in favour of the toll bridge delays. On the contraty; the existence of this wooden 18th century swing toll bridge astride a major national trunk road must be one of the most bizarre and unacceptable anomalies in the whole network of such roads for which the Minister is responsible. The delays, dangers and costs occasioned to Selby and its locality, indeed to the whole nation, are intolerable.

I mention just two drawbacks. First, unique additional costs are imposed on local industry. Selby is potentially a commercial growth point, given that the district embraces the largest and most modern coalfield in Europe and three of Britain's largest fossil fuel electricity generating plants. But the Selby toll bridge has turned the district into a locality not to be cultivated but to be avoided. In a recent approach by the Selby district council to the 22 companies located in the area, inquiring about financial losses occasioned by the toll bridge, some extraordinary responses were received. One company said that the cost to its customers and itself occasioned by toll charges and toll bridge delays amounted to £40,000 annually. Other smaller companies reported costs running into many thousands of pounds. Imagine the incentive this constraint provides in terms of extra marginal cost to a company considering a move to or an expansion in Selby. They might as well be offered the plague as an incentive. Yet, there are some 3,000 unemployed in the Selby district.

Secondly, I should mention the safety hazard. British Coal in particular is actively concerned about the delays that the toll bridge might occasion to mine rescue vehicles having to travel fast in an emergency. It would be no use suspending the tolls temporarily in such a situation. It is the persistent existence of immense stationary tailbacks of jammed vehicles for miles on either side of the bridge that is the real hazard, not only for mine rescue vehicles but for fire engines and ambulances as well. All those facts are additional to the usual cost benefit analysis that underpins my hon. Friend's priority rating for bypasses and add weight to my plea that every nerve should be strained and every ingenuity deployed to secure a start for the Selby bypass during the year 1989.

Finally, I hope that my hon. Friend will register one or two slightly wider factors. Developments on or connected with other roads locally will affect the life of the Selby disrict in the next few years. Improvements already taking place or completed on adjacent sections of the A19 trunk road at Riccall and Barlby and, further afield, at York —the outer ring road — and Eggborough will tend to attract even more traffic to Salby. A nightmare is threatening the nearby town of Sherburn-in-Elmet, which I believe my hon. Friend may have travelled through. There, the British Gypsum company has suffered a flooding setback to its on-site quarry, and it is having to bring in 7,700 tons of gypsum per week by road—350 lorry loads a day—from its Newark quarry. That makes a Sherburn and South Milford bypass the Selby district's highest priority after the Selby bypass. The Sherburn bypass is a county responsibility and project. However, transport supplementary grant from my hon. Friend's Department is a crucial factor, and I hope that he will take note of the Sherburn problem.

Traffic in Yorkshire has been growing faster than the national average—45·4 per cent. between 1970 and 1985 compared with 41·4 per cent. for Great Britain as a whole. My hon. Friend should have Yorkshire — the premier county—written on his heart, with an arrow through it marked Selby. His name will then be written with gratitude on the hearts of the tens of thousands of my constituents on whose behalf I speak in this debate.

11.14 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Peter Bottomley): I cannot think of anyone whom I would prefer to engage the attention of the Government in a necessary bypass for his constituency than my right hon. Friend the Member for Selby (Mr. Alison). I had the privilege of following him at the Department of Employment, although he was of a higher rank than I, and I have admired, as hon. Members on both sides of the House have, the work that he has done as Parliamentary Private Secretary to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in the past four years. Together with the needs of Selby, the heart of his constituency, this makes me almost rejoice in the opportunity to spell out some of the relevant information on the timing of the Seby bypass, and to make some rather more general points about the road and bypass programmes.

The House will want to join me in paying tribute to the service that has been given by my right hon. Friend. Selby is well known, partly because of the change in the name of the constituency on the occasion of the last boundary changes, partly because of the great abbey there, and partly because of the growing development of the fossil fuel power stations, and the general growth in the area. My right hon. Friend said that my name might be remembered when the bypass is opened, but it is his name that will be remembered for the persistent way, both in public and in private, in which he has pursued the case for Selby.

My recent visit to Yorkshire for other purposes gave me the opportunity to go through Selby. I have with me the receipt for the 7p toll that I paid. It did not increase public

[Mr. Peter Bottomley]

expenditure, because I paid for it out of my own pocket, and was happy to do so. I look forward to the time when those who want to visit Selby and need to go there can do so without delays, and those who want to go past it can, without inflicting their vehicles and their presence on the people of the town.

The difficulty comes not solely because of the existence of the historic swing toll bridge but because Selby needs a bypass. That was clear not only from the time of the Armitage report on heavy lorries, but also, as my right hon. Friend has said, in 1938. The difficulties in the middle and late 1970s came in large part from a shortage of cash. The 1975 roads White Paper was almost the signal for the invitation to the International Monetary Fund to help the then Government run the economy, and the programme became delayed, as the amount of Government money for national roads was cut in half between 1974 and 1979. That was not the sole factor but a contributing factor.

In 1984, a public consultation document said that the reasons for the bypass were the shared use of the town centre by the community of Selby and through traffic which, together with the operation of the tolled swing bridge, caused problems that could not be solved using the existing roads. The Department asked for the views of local people on where to put this new road and where to put the traffic. The two suggestions were not decided on by local people with unanimity, or even a great deal of pleasure. There was the northern route, which was too short, and the southern route, which had the effect of separating one part of the community from the other.

The Department went away and did some work, and I was delighted to be able to announce a year ago the line of this route. It was difficult to put that forward with confidence, because the economics of roads vary with the length and the amount of time that traffic is able to save, together with an estimate in the value of the drop in traffic casualties. It is always a bit heartless to put a value on the savings or the loss of human life and the injuries concerned, but we need to have some yardstick, and that is the best that we can have.

Having put forward that line, I believe that a great deal of work needs to be done. We need to examine the soil and carry out a topographical survey. We also need to study the origin and destination of traffic because that becomes important not only for planning the precise route of the road and the junctions, but to give the Department of Transport a good case at any subsequent public inquiry.

We then move on to the design and preparation of orders. My right hon. Friend referred to using concurrent or consecutive procedures. He will know that the Department is keen to save time whenever possible. It is not difficult to go for concurrent procedures when we have a small non-controversial scheme. Such schemes will still have objectors because there are always people whose garden, farm or land is affected by the proposal. There are times when it is sensible, because it will save time, to choose the concurrent procedures. Unfortunately, this is not one of those cases.

There are two reasons why it would not be right to use concurrent procedures in this case, although I fully accept and understand the reason why they have been proposed. First, to use concurrent procedures would mean that it would take longer for the orders to be produced because more work would have to be done. Secondly, for a road that it likely to be six miles long, there would certainly be an inquiry. I should formally be advised to say that there might be one, but everyone in the House knows that there certainly would be an inquiry. If the independent, impartial inspector recommended a modification, that would destroy all that work that had been done. We would not have to go back to scratch in planning the road, but we would have to do so in drawing up the orders. So it is wise for us, and likely to save time in the end, to go for consecutive orders.

I hope that the description of the work that is already in hand will demonstrate to the residents of Selby and people living further away who at present have to go through Selby that this is by no means a paper project. It is a larger bypass than was proposed in 1984 and it will require more work. There is no need for me to go in great detail through what happens afterwards. I shall summarise by saying that when we have done our further work we shall explain what we are proposing. People will have the the chance to object, and then we enter the inquiry process.

We can never be precise about how long it will take to get through those necessary processes and statutory procedures. I emphasise that there is a democratic element, that people who are adversely affected can object to Department of Transport proposals. Normally that leads to a public inquiry where their views can be heard by someone who is independent of the Department. We take the inspectors' recommendations seriously. We do not invariably accept them, but normally we try to because that is the way to take some of the controversy out of road schemes. My right hon. Friend is absolutely right in saying that there is near unanimity on the need for a bypass, but I suspect that when it is put forward people may feel that they want to protect their own interest by raising objections.

I refer to the general problems of planning road schemes. It normally takes about 13 years from the proposal for a road to building it. We believe that we are saving time on that. We have had the advantage of a review by an outside expert. We shall continue to apply those recommendations, plus our own experience, to cutting out necessary time in preparing road schemes, including the Selby by pass.

We can never guarantee to keep to a timetable. I have the experience of going round the country and hearing about assurances given infrequently by myself, but more usually by my predecessor or her predecessor, occasionally by Ernest Marples and once or twice by Hore-Belisha, which could almost be one of the 1938 proposals mentioned by my right hon. Friend. The reason why we can go ahead with proposals such as the Selby bypass is partly that we have more money.

It is certainly true that, with more than 160 schemes presently in the programme, the ones that we have been completing in the last few years have been made possible by the way in which the economy has been run. But that general economic argument will not bring much comfort to the people whose interests have been so well argued this evening by my right hon. Friend.

My right hon. Friend referred to conditions in one or two of the surrounding communities. The Riccall and Barlby bypass is nearing completion and I am most grateful to my right hon. Friend for agreeing to conduct the brief opening ceremony later, when I know that the one he would really like to be attending would be that for the Selby bypass. The environmental benefit which will come

to the villages of Riccall and Barlby will be considerable and they are exactly the same environmental improvements and benefits which Selby needs.

We build bypasses for three simple reasons. The first is to aid economic development, whether we are talking about inner-city areas, where better access is needed, or particular parts of Yorkshire, because Yorkshire is too large to be seen as one community, although it is a mighty county. The second is for the environmental benefit of putting through traffic on a through road, preferably one which bypasses the community.

The third reason, to which my right hon. Friend referred, is to save life and limb. In general, a bypass will cut road accidents by about 25 per cent. It makes possible traffic management arrangements within the community that has been bypassed and that helps to bring about the kind of reduction in road casualties that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State was able to announce on Monday when he said that the number of injuries and deaths had fallen by 12 per cent. in the first quarter of this year. In part, that is a reflection of the continuing bypass programme.

I want to pay tribute to the staff of the Department of Transport's regional office who spend most of their time trying to explain to me, and through me to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and other colleagues, why it is not possible to conjure up a road overnight. A six-mile bypass is longer than normal. The approximate estimated cost of the Selby bypass at over £10 million is a reflection of the substantial work that will need to be done by the successful contractors when we let tenders. For that work to go ahead we need to do the preparatory work as fast and as early as possible.

My right hon. Friend referred to the need to get rid of toll bridges on trunk roads. We hope to be able to get rid of the last two toll bridges by the Selby bypass and one other. Although my right hon. Friend did not mention it this evening, I have considered the point that he has made on other occasions about buying out the toll. The cost of that would be substantial and, if added to the cost of the bypass, might make the project uneconomic. My brief experience of going through Selby showed that the problems arise because of the combination of the bridge being a swing bridge, the toll collection and the inadequate width of the road in Selby. Together they cause the irritation and the economic disadvantage which the Selby bypass would remove.

My right hon. Friend referred to the A162 and the Sherburn-in-Elmet and the South Milford bypass scheme. That is a North Yorkshire county council scheme, as my right hon. Friend said. I understand that work is expected to start in the early 1990s, but I am in no way able to comment on that prospect because it is a local authority road, not a national one. It is too early to say whether the bypass would attract sufficient priority for transport supplementary grant support and I hope that that will not be regarded, to use the vernacular, as a cop-out but an accurate description of the situation.

We ask local highway authorities each year to put in their transport policies and programmes. We look at what they propose for transport supplementary grant — in effect, a taxpayers' payment of approximately 50 per cent. of the scheme. It is a competitive situation, and involves looking at the way in which the local highway authority orders its priorities and the benefits of different schemes across the country. In general, we look to give individual support to schemes costing over £1 million, which are of more than local importance, and which contribute to the movement of heavy goods vehicles.

I do not want to dampen prospects in any way, but it is too early to be able to give the type of assurance that I know that my right hon. Friend would wish me to give. Nothing would please me more than to be able to give the assurance on timing for which my right hon. Friend asked. We are talking of perhaps a year or so before we can come forward with the results of the work that is going on at present. We shall then need to look forward to the period of explanation to the public, to the opportunity for objections, to the inquiry on the line and side road orders, and then move on to the compulsory purchase orders and to the prospect of a shorter inquiry on those. I am afraid that there is no way in which I can say what the result of that inquiry will be, because otherwise it would not be as independent and impartial as we would want.

My right hon. Friend has done a service to his constituency and especially to Selby by raising this subject. I hope that my remarks are of some comfort to him. We are taking the problem seriously. Like him, I look forward to the opportunity of travelling along and admiring the new bypass, and of being able to enjoy Selby without heavy goods traffic passing through it.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at half-past Eleven o'clock.

House of Commons

Friday 24 July 1987

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PETITION

Primary Schools, Southwark

9.34 am

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): I beg leave to present a petition on behalf of parents, relatives, friends, governors and staff directly concerned with the education of children in primary schools in Southwark. Fifteen hundred signatures are appended to the petition, which complains that there are a number of primary schools

"which are or have been without their required number of teachers for days, weeks or even in some cases terms; that local children are being deprived of their entitlement to education including the right to be able to go to school; that it is unacceptable for children to be sent home because of the shortage of teachers; and that the education authority and Her Majesty's Government have a legal and educational responsibility to bring this crisis to an end."

Wherefore, on this last day of our term and of the school term, the petitioners pray that our

"honourable House urge Her Majesty's Government to ensure that there are sufficient good permanent teachers to fill all teaching places at our primary schools, in particular by September 1987; ensure that sufficient teachers are trained so that we never again have shortages of the present magnitude; ensure that the administration, direction, and organisation of the teaching profession and of the education service is made a priority for the next academic year and that housing authorities are charged with the responsibility of providing sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of teachers; and ensure most importantly that the teaching profession is once again restored to a status and a position where young people are able, eager and ready to become teachers in our capital city.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray etc."

To lie upon the Table.

British Caledonian Airways

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn. *[Mr. Lightbown.]*

9.36 am

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): I am grateful to the House for the opportunity to raise the matter of the British Airways bid for British Caledonian on a motion to adjourn the House. The subject was raised in the House on 16 July by my hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair), who said that trade union members first heard of the matter on their car radios. I know that the Government have made great play of giving the trade unions back to their members and have stressed that their policy of privatisation has involved many employees in direct ownership of major concerns. I shall have more to say about that in the later stages of my remarks. I shall deal with the trade unions' legitimate worries about the conditions of the merger. The workers are rightly anxious about their jobs and employment prospects.

One of the ironic aspects of the proposal is that I represent a constituency with high unemployment and I note the involvement of Lord King. He is the chairman of Babcocks, which is involved in Rosyth dockyard where, apparently, the rights and wishes of the workers were and are disregarded, first when Babcocks received the management contract for the dockyard and now when another company, FKI, has made a bid for Babcocks.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to consider the Civil Aviation Act 1979 and some of the remarks of the former right hon. Member for South Down, Mr. Powell, during that debate. He said:

"When the House passed a series of nationalisation statutes 30 years ago, on what was called the Morrison model, it initiated a constitutional innovation which took some decades to digest. Eventually, though imperfectly, the House has come to grips with the problem of exerting proper control over the old-style nationalised industry, both on capital account and on its operations, without destroying the notion of a semi-commercial operation which was embedded in the statutes that set up such industries." [*Official Report*, 19 November 1979; Vol. 974, c. 66.]

Over a period the Government have divested themselves of ownership and control of a number of state enterprises because of the need to finance tax cuts and reduce the public sector borrowing requirement. The list is long and the few examples that I shall give are well known to the House — the British National Oil Corporation, Cable and Wireless, Rolls-Royce, British Gas and British Telecom. We know that British Airways is involved as well. I echo Enoch Powell's remarks about the imperfect method that we adopted to control these organisations, but at least there were searchlights of public scrutiny that could be used to investigate the operations of massive publicly owned concerns, many of them being public utilities that served the nation.

Few will argue that in terms of public consumer satisfaction there have been dramatic changes for the better in the operation of British Telecom, for example, British Gas or British Airways. The Labour party has not found a satisfactory or adequate answer to its present rejection of the Morrisonian concept, but it is patent that the idea that these massive monopolies can be left entirely in the private domain to determine their market operations will not stand any detailed analysis.

During the exchanges on 16 July my hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield quoted from the Civil Aviation Authority's report on competition policy in 1984. It is a formidable document that will be well known to all hon. Members who are interested in these matters. I accept that there have been many changes since 1984, however, and that things have moved ahead, especially interchanges in the international economy. I accept also that these developments permit modifications of such strictures as appear in the sixth paragraph of the report. Nevertheless, for a benchmark I intend, with the approval of the House, to quote that paragraph. It is rather long but it has a thrust that I consider to be germane to the debate. It reads:

"It is sometimes argued that a single major British airline would be stronger than a multiplicity of airlines in competing with those other countries. In the United States it is the big airlines, with strong hub systems, that seem to be coming out on top in the deregulated environment. It is typical of most foreign countries that each has only one international flag carrier. There are, however, serious risks and substantial disadvantages in the pursuit of a single airline policy. A single

[Mr. Dick Douglas]

British international airline competing with its counterparts in Europe and in many other countries within a closely regulated framework of bilateral air services agreements would have less incentive to develop markets or to introduce new products that were of no interest to its commercial partners and would, in particular, be more likely to neglect the needs of would-be passengers with relatively limited available means, as is the case for example in Germany today and as was the case with the predecessors of British Airways, when the competition from other British airlines was much less than it is today. There would be a greater likelihood that a sole British international flag carrier would sooner or later become, again, a high-cost and high-fare operator, competing in terms of products rather than price. Such an airline, enjoying and indeed requiring a protected environment, would be exposed, as British Airways and its predecessors were in the past and as many European airlines are today, to the upward pressures of labour costs and low productivity."

That is a formidable stricture. I welcome the ministerial view that there have been changes since 1984, but they are changes that do not permit the Government to stand back and let the market take its course. As I have said, there have been many changes in the international economy that compel a modification of outlook, but to the best of my knowledge the Government have adhered, in the main, to the thrust of the 1984 outlook, at least until the past few weeks.

In a stirring speech, the right hon. Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley), who before becoming Secretary of State for the Environment was Secretary of State for Transport—if anyone can imagine the right hon. Gentleman making a stirring speech—at the International Aviation Club at Washington DC on 14 February 1986 said:

"we have to maintain some safeguards in relation to domestic competition. We have got an unbalanced situation. BA represents about three quarters of our industry. We cannot be indifferent if airlines go out of business in the United Kingdom. In view of the inequalities of scale, we have to hold the ring."

I do not know whether the Government have changed their policy in the past few weeks but I imagine that they have. In what direction has their policy changed? Later in his speech to the International Aviation Club the Secretary of State said:

"Both BA and BCal are used to competition. They thrive on it where opportunities are fair and equal, and they back me to the hilt in my campaign to maximise competition and minimise bureaucratic intervention in matters which ought to be the province of commercially orientated airline management."

The thought of anyone backing the right hon. Gentleman is mind boggling, but it is probable, indeed possible, that that happened.

The Secretary of State talked about not being indifferent about airlines going out of business, and I have some questions to ask about that. On 16 July the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster said:

"We have known within the Government about the possibility of this bid for about a week." [*Official Report*, 16 July 1987; Vol. 119, c. 1278.]

I am not privy to such discussions, but presumably both British Caledonian and British Airways made representations to the Government and gave some indications of their financial and trading position. I imagine that British Caledonian did that especially in terms of the short-term prospects of returning to profit if it remained independent.

We have been told that if British Caledonian remains independent, its main hope of returning to profit is likely to be largely dependent upon further continuing sales of assets and job losses. If that is the position, were the Government indifferent? If they were so informed, what was their response? Did Ministers say that the only solution was to go ahead with the merger with BA, giving, in effect, a tacit, if not clear, indication of their approval of the merger? Or did they say, in contradiction of what was said by the previous Secretary of State for Transport, the right hon. Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury, that they were indifferent to what happened? They either had a view on the merger and expressed it to the companies or they did not. What concern did the Minister show for probable job losses? Did Sir Adam Thomson, if he was present at any of these discussions between the Minister and British Caledonian, explain what had brought about the dramatic change in British Caledonian's attitude to British Airways? As early as 9 January 1987 Sir Adam was quoted in the *Financial Times* as saying:

"British Caledonian and our political supporters will be looking towards the Government's airline competition policy and those who administer it to be the strong unassailable arbiters of true competition and fair play in a British air transport industry where all airlines are privately owned but in which one, by virtue of its historical background, is six times the size of its nearest rival."

Did any Ministers or the staff calculate what the difference in size would be between the proposed merged concern and the nearest United Kingdom rival now? I suspect that when Ministers were told of the proposal they said, in effect, "We cannot do anything for you, British Caledonian. Just let the market take its course." I doubt whether the companies were even told that the Office of Fair Trading was to be asked to consider the matter.

The difficulty that we all have to face is that jobs are threatened and that the survival prospects of a major industrial concern that has enjoyed our support are pretty limited if the merger does not take place. We all know that anything that comes from the Director General of Fair Trading could be subject to ministerial veto. Anyone who has studied the Fair Trading Act, 1973 cannot but come to the conclusion that the matter should be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. However, when the director general has weighed up all the balances, the fact will remain that serious pressures have been brought about through no fault of the company, caused by changes in the world oil market and events in Libya and elsewhere. The company is in serious difficulties. The Government are therefore likely to veto any proposal from the Director General of Fair Trading that the merger be referred, and it will go ahead. However, for good reasons, I very much doubt that my suspicions will be confirmed this morning.

Real-world economics are making nonsense of the Government's so-called competition policy. The comments by the CAA to the Office of Fair Trading that I have read in today's newspapers clearly indicate that, if the merger goes ahead, all the previous views expressed about airline competition policy will be as naught. The House ought to take a stringent view and examine the concept of safeguarding consumer interests in a new environment.

I am not concerned about the consequences for my own party. Economies of scale are important, and the need to finance costly equipment and highly technical assets drive a company towards such economies. I should like to know the Minister's view on that. What assurances can he give about the ordering of equipment by British Caledonian? If the merger proceeds, will British Caledonian's orders for

Airbus also proceed? Has the Minister inquired about that? Those of us with an interest in the employment position are especially anxious.

Above all, we know that markets are not free. I have never been lobbied so much on any issue that has been discussed in the House. That lobbying has come from both the companies and the trade unions, and I do not object to it. However, any idea that matters such as this are open to the free play of market forces is for the birds. These are political issues and, as such, should be subject to political ventilation in the House. The Government's privatisation measures have comprehensively removed vast monopolies, many of them providing public utilities, from the searchlight of public scrutiny. The decision not to intervene, and to veto any proposals from the Director General of Fair Trading, is a political decision.

Let me end on this note: the Government's argument was that we should give the airline back to the people—to the shareholders and the workers. A moment's examination of British Ariways' balance sheet shows how farcical that is. I may not be as good as I used to be at doing my "goesintos", as I used to say when I was at Hills Trust school in Govan, but my information is that British Airways has about 400,000 shareholders, of whom 0·2 per cent. own 50·3 per cent. of the shares. That means that 80 or 90 shareholders own half the company. Whatever decision the Government make, massive monopoly power will be given, in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, to a handful of folk. We are told that that is in the public interest. That is for the birds. No hon. Member on either side of the House who is genuinely worried about the public interest should advocate standing back and letting market forces operate without saying or doing anything about it.

As a lifelong trade unionist, I am 100 per cent. in favour of trying to preserve jobs. However, I am also a consumer, with the national interest to consider. That is especially important to my party. We cannot always yield to producer interests; sometimes we must stand back and ask ourselves, "What power are we giving to these people?" I do not know what my party's policy will be, later, but I know that to continue perpetually with privatisation, while misleading ourselves into believing that there is some aura of democracy about it because the market determines the position, cannot be justified in the Mother of Parliaments.

9.55 am

Mr. Terry Dicks (Hayes and Harlington): I am grateful to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) for this opportunity to speak. Let me first declare an interest as a shareholder of British Airways, and also as the Member of Parliament representing Heathrow.

I believe that there has been some misunderstanding over the merger. It is intended to give British Airways an opportunity to compete more effectively in the international markets, and, in that sense, the issue is not about domestic competition. However, if the merger is not allowed to go ahead, British Airways will have great difficulty in competing in world markets.

There is no need whatever to refer the merger to either the Office of Fair Trading or the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. The approach by British Airways to British Caledonian was based purely on the financial aspect. It must be borne in mind that British Caledonian was experiencing bad financial problems. It may interest the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West to know that there was some potential for the takeover of British Caledonian by a foreign airline. That would have been the worst thing that could have happened to British aviation. It is far better that the number one airline in the country, and indeed the world, whose planes fly in and out of its hub at Heathrow—the world's biggest international airport—should come together with British Caledonian, with a view to producing, as I am sure it will, a competent and highly effective international airline.

Lord King and Mr. Colin Marshall have done an excellent job at British Airways not only for the aviation industry and the airline but for the workers, many of whom are shareholders and are very happy with the turnaround that those two men have brought about. For politicians, most of whom could not organise a good booze-up in a brewery, to start interfering in a highly complex, technical matter does a great disservice to the aviation industry. The House should mind its own business when it comes to a properly organised merger such as this. We must allow British Airways to get on with the job as it is fit and competent to do.

9.58 am

Mr. Anthony Steen (South Hams): I thank the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) for kindly allowing me to intervene for a few minutes in this important debate, and I congratulate him on being fortunate enough to obtain this slot today.

I am entirely opposed to the merger going ahead without reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. I speak for a sizeable number of hon. Members on both sides of the House who feel that there is no point in setting up an Office of Fair Trading and a Monopolies and Mergers Commission if we do not listen to what they say and follow the machinery that we have installed to deal with matters such as that that came before the House and the country a week ago.

I am also critical of the timing of the announcement, one week before the House rises for the summer recess. I suspect that that timing was deliberate, designed to limit discussion and possible opposition. It coincides with the timetable for CAP-500 in 1984, when the debate about competition in civil aviation raged for over a week just before the House rose. The result was disastrous. The Government's decision in 1984 has resulted in this proposed merger.

British Airways has put an ultimatum before the country. It says that if it is not allowed to take over British Caledonian immediately, without reference to the public watchdog, the company will go bust and its offer will lapse. Let me examine its offer. It is three times the asset value of British Caledonian. Who pays three times the market value for any company? Only those who want a monopoly and are prepared to pay more than anyone else. British Airways wants a monopoly in the civil aviation industry.

It is not just a question of having a monopoly stake in the civil aviation industry. I am told that the chairman of British Caledonian will receive a golden handshake of between £2·5 million and £3 million and that the institutional investors stand to gain £100 million. Are we prepared to allow a merger that will benefit the chairman of British Caledonian and the institutional investors? It

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would be good for them, but it would be bad for the travelling public and for prices. It would also be bad for competition and for the independent airlines.

Lord King says that he welcomes competition, but with over 91 per cent. of all the international routes he knows that nobody will be able to compete with him. He says that he welcomes competition at Gatwick and Heathrow. Of course he does. He knows that he controls the critical peak hour slots at both Heathrow and Gatwick. The independent airlines can fly into Gatwick and Heathrow only outside peak times.

The European Commission has said that it is to take action to deal with anti-competition practices in aviation. If British Airways merges with British Caledonian, it will make our demands about anti-competitive practices a sick joke. It is feared that British Caledonian will be bought by a foreign airline, but that cannot happen. Because of the Civil Aviation Act 1982, only a 49 per cent interest can be bought by a foreign airline.

British Caledonian could be perfectly profitable if it were properly run, under new management. If inefficiency could be eliminated, because of the under-utilisation of aeroplanes and buildings, if trade union dominance could be brought under control and if a realistic price were to be paid for it — not £230 million but £80 million or £90 million — it could be competitive again and become a second force in this country.

The new conglomerate of British Airways and British Caledonian would dominate both international routes and domestic services. It has a stake in some of the feeder airlines, such as Brymon, it has dominance over Stolport and it dominates the computer and ramp handling networks. The civil aviation industry will go rapidly into decline if a massive conglomerate runs our civil aviation industry.

As for the mega-carrier argument, the only mega-carriers are in the United States. Cathay Pacific and Singapore Airlines, the most successful airlines, are roughly the same size as British Airways. This matter must go before the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. If it does not, our civil aviation industry will be damaged.

10.4 am

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): I congratulate the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) on introducing this debate. What he said made a great deal of sense and it ought to be considered by my hon. Friend the Minister. I have three questions to put to him. Do the Government intend to comply with the provisions of the Monopolies and Mergers Act 1965? Do they not accept that, according to the Act, an organisation that carries 90 per cent. of the passengers, over 85 per cent. of the freight and over 84 per cent. of the royal mail must be judged to be a monopoly? If he does, should not the matter go before the Monopolies and Mergers Commission?

My hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington (Mr. Dicks) said that it is not for politicians to interfere in commercial matters, but if, as the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West suggested, Lord King is about to run an omnibus through the law of the land that should not be allowed to happen. If this merger goes through, it will tear in half the Conservative party's policy on which I fought the last general election. We made it clear that our privatisation policy would continue, but if this merger is allowed to take place, that policy will be torn in half.

A large part of the argument has centred around the mega-carriers, but the mega-carrier business is nearly always internal business. Outside America or Japan, British Airways is as big as any airline and can compete effectively. It does not need British Caledonian.

I greatly admire what Sir Adam Thomson has done at British Caledonian. I hope that British Caledonian will be allowed to compete. It has made British Airways great. British Airways needs competition. Competition is what the Conservative party has always stood for. I hope that it will continue to follow that policy.

10.7 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. John Butcher): I congratulate the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) on raising such a topical matter for debate. The House should ventilate clearly its views on competition policy and the implications of the proposed merger as they affect that policy.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington (Mr. Dicks) for his speech. He has a reputation for tenaciously defending his constituents' interests. He, with the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West, is interested in creating and preserving jobs. My hon. Friend the Member for South Hams (Mr. Steen) adopts a rigorous approach. He understands that it is excruciatingly difficult for Ministers at the Dispatch Box, faced with such a reference, either publicly to endorse or publicly to denounce the views that he has expressed. Such a discussion would be more appropriate, perhaps, in the Tea Room. My hon. Friend the Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery) also referred to fundamental issues with which I shall try to deal.

I have listened with great interest to the variety of opinions expressed. Those who are against a merger support a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. The House will understand why I must refrain from addressing the detail of the arguments in this case. As my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster told the House in response to a question last Thursday from the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair), the Director General of Fair Trading plays an important advisory role in merger cases such as this. My right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State is awaiting the director general's advice on whether this case should be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission for further investigation, and it would therefore not be right for me to prejudge any advice that he may give by expressing any views about the merits or otherwise of the proposed merger at this stage. I am, however, sure that the director general will take into account the views that hon. Members have expressed in the debate. Of course, any hon. Member is entirely free to make such points directly to the director general's office, but I have no doubt that the director general will closely examine the *Hansard* report of the debate.

Mr. Steen: Will the Minister send it to him?

Mr. Butcher: In response to my hon. Friend's sotto voce intervention, I shall indeed be the postman in that regard. I draw his attention to the comments already made.

In the time available to me it might be helpful if I outline to hon. Members the statutory procedures that are in place for considering mergers and merger proposals and the criteria that are taken into account in examining their actual or likely effect.

The Fair Trading Act 1973 established a three-stage procedure for the scrutiny of mergers. The first stage involves the Director General of Fair Trading and his office. The director general has a duty under the Act among other things to keep himself informed about merger situations qualifying for investigation and to advise my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State whether they should be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. But, as hon. Members have said, my right hon. and noble Friend takes the decision whether to refer a merger and his consideration of the issues involved forms the second stage in the process. The Secretary of State is not bound by the advice that he receives from the director general; he has discretion whether to refer a merger, although clearly, in making his decision, he will attach considerable weight to the advice that he receives from the director general.

What, then, are the factors that the Director General of Fair Trading and my right hon. and noble Friend take into account in considering whether a reference to the MMC would be appropriate? I refer to the issues that have been raised by the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West and my hon. Friend the Member for Honiton. Section 84 —it is still current and is still being applied in policy terms — of the Fair Trading Act stipulates that, in determining whether a merger may be expected to operate against the public interest, the Monopolies and Mergers Commission shall take into account all matters that appear to it in the particular circumstances to be relevant, including specific factors such as the desirability of maintaining and promoting competition, the interests of consumers, the effect of a merger on prices and technical and product development, the entry of new competitors into a market, employment, and export competitiveness. The public interest is more or less thus defined and its criterion is thus cast wide.

Mr. Douglas: Will the Minister assure me that he will write to me about the Airbus matter?

Mr. Butcher: I shall refer to that in a moment.

The director general therefore turns his attention to all aspects of a merger that may have a bearing on the public interest, and my right hon. and noble Friend will also take into account all relevant factors in reaching his decision.

Our policy on references to the commission, however, remains that announced by my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit), in July 1984, that merger references would be made primarily on grounds of competition, having regard to the international context. That reflects our belief that competition encourages productive efficiency, increases consumer choice and ensures that the customer — whether industry or the man in the street — gets value for money. But that does not mean that the director general and my right hon. and noble Friend do not look at non-competition aspects of mergers or merger proposals. Nor does it mean that our policy is never to make references on grounds other than competition. Although such cases have been the exception rather than the rule, there are examples, notably Elders IXL's bid for Allied Lyons, which was referred in 1985 on grounds of the "leveraged" financing of the proposal.

There is then the question of what happens when my right hon. and noble Friend decides whether to refer a merger to the commission. If his decision is that it should not be referred——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. I have to remind the Minister it is now 10.15. Would he bring his remarks to a very swift close?

Mr. Butcher: Without your guidance, Madam Deputy Speaker, I had assumed that I had a further six minutes to reply to the matters that have been raised.

Sir Peter Emery: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. We are on the Adjournment debate. In an Adjournment debate, the timing factors are agreed as a matter of convenience, not absolute. As we lost some time at the start of the debate — the matter is of national importance — I ask the House to agree that the Minister's speech should continue for another five or six minutes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It is not for the House or for me to give away other Members' time. These Adjournment debates are strictly timed. I can be lenient to the extent of giving the Minister an extra minute to wind up. That is why I gave him a warning that I would give him precisely that minute.

Mr. Butcher: I am grateful to you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am sure that the House welcomes your ruling on the matter.

We have not laid down any stipulation about whether the current pattern of ordering should continue. Of course, that is a downstream employment issue that will have to be considered. I reassure the House that that ostensibly side issue of major importance will be borne in mind, I assume, by the director general and my right hon. Friend.

The question——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Mr. Andrew MacKay.

Central Berkshire

10.17 am

Mr. Andrew MacKay (Berkshire, East): I welcome my hon. Friend the new Under-Secretary of State to the debate. I am only saddened by the fact that the first time that she and I are to have an exchange across the Floor of the House will not be a more pleasant occasion. This is the only time when I am in fundamental disagreement with the policies of a Government whom I robustly support. My hon. Friend's Department and her colleagues have made several errors of judgment recently.

I shall refer to the history of the problem of excessive development in central Berkshire, raise three specific constituency points and conclude by explaining that the problem is not parochial or a local issue, but one of national importance that affects other Government policies. I stress that feelings are running extremely high throughout central Berkshire, not just in my constituency, but in those of my hon. Friends the Members for Wokingham (Mr. Redwood), who hopes to catch your eye shortly, Madam Deputy Speaker, and for Reading, East (Sir G. Vaughan), who would have liked to be present today and wishes to be associated with my remarks.

I make it abundantly clear that we are not Luddite and opposed to any development in our area. We understand that there must be development and that life must go on. We are not trying to protect our own interests and ignore the national interest. However, in recent years we have been positively inundated with new housing developments. The previous Secretary of State for the Environment, Mr. Patrick Jenkin, was good enough to take up my request to fly over central Berkshire in a helicopter. He was horrified by what he saw—a complete urban sprawl developing from Greater London and Slough throughout central Berkshire and heading towards Reading and Swindon.

We have a new town at Bracknell. I do not think that it is unfair and unbiased of me to say that it is the most successful of our new towns. However, if we are not careful it will expand into many delightful rural villages, such as Warfield, Binfield and Winkfield Row, and on into the neighbouring constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham. The people who live in the town of Bracknell or in those village communities will have little green space and will be living, as I have said, in a total urban sprawl.

I refer now to our specific complaints. We are in the process of preparing the central Berkshire structure plan. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State will be aware that I gave evidence a year ago this month to her inspector and said that I believed we should have a zero option on the increase of development in the structure plan. Twelve months have now passed, but the structure plan is not yet available in its final form. We are led to believe that it will appear fairly shortly. We have had discussions with my hon. Friend's colleagues on this point and I have no wish to dwell on that now. However, we were amazed to find that two outstanding appeals in my constituency, one in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham and another in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Reading, East, had been recently allowed.

I shall refer only to the two appeals that affect my constituency, one on the Carnation Nurseries site at Winkfield and the second at Wicks Green in the village of Binfield. Apart from thinking that it is fundamentally wrong to change the nature of those villages by allowing such massive expansion, I was appalled to learn that the appeals were allowed by the Secretary of State, when we all know that the structure plan is pending and that it will be published sooner rather than later. It seems totally irresponsible to have allowed those appeals when neither the developers, my constituents nor myself have any idea of what the Secretary of State will think proper for the size of future developments in central Berkshire. I believe that the right policy would have been not to allow those appeals, but to await the results of the structure plan.

The granting of those appeals was wrong because, as I have said, they have fundamentally changed the nature of the villages concerned. They are destroying some of the few remaining green field sites in central Berkshire and putting the most unreasonable stresses on roads, schools, hospitals and other services. It is all very well for the developers and for the Secretary of State to go ahead with such developments, but nobody helps us to improve the roads or to increase the number of hospitals or schools —far from it. We are left with the problem and it is my constituents, not the Secretary of State, the inspectors or the developers, who suffer accordingly.

More specifically, I ask my hon. Friend whether she is aware that, along with my constituents, my district council at Bracknell and all my parish councillors, I favour the zero option in the structure plan. Assuming that we are not successful in the zero option, can we presume that the houses that the Secretary of State has allowed to be built at Wicks Green and Carnation Nurseries and on the two sites in the Wokingham district council area will be included in any number of houses that is mentioned in the structure plan? The Secretary of State would add insult to injury if we found that not only had those two appeals been granted, but that we were asked for additional houses in the structure plan because the houses allowed under the appeals could not be included.

I refer now to an area which may well be sub judice, so I shall be careful about what I say. I appreciate that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State will be unable to respond. We are all aware that other appeals are pending. I ask my hon. Friend to request the Secretary of State to ensure that those appeals are disallowed, at least pending the publication of the structure plan so that at last note will be taken of local opinion, voiced not only by hon. Members but by every elected representative in Berkshire.

I give a warning, because I wonder why some of my councillors bother to stand for election. What is the point of serving on a planning committee if every time that one makes a decision that does not meet with the full satisfaction of the developers the developers immediately go to appeal and all too often the appeals are allowed? Quite frankly, I wonder whether I should advise Bracknell district council, the royal borough of Windsor and my parish councils that in the interests of my ratepayers, and to save some money, they should cut the number of their planning officials and abolish their planning committees.

There seems no purpose in electing local people to represent our views on planning, only to have them constantly overruled by somebody who has not even set foot in the area and who has no knowledge of local problems. That is deeply frustrating and insulting to those who, for no financial reward, give up a great deal of their time to serve the community on parish, district, borough and county councils. I want to make it absolutely clear to

the House that we are undermining local government by riding rough shod over it and allowing planning by appeal. That is immensely damaging and should stop as soon as possible.

I turn now to the national issues. I strongly support the Government's policy of rejuvenating the inner cities. At 3 o'clock in the morning, after our famous and magnificent election victory, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister stood on the steps of central office and said that there was much work to be done and that her priority was the inner cities. I suggest that my right hon. Friend's priority is being thwarted by Ministers at the Department of the Environment.

At one time in my earlier career I was a director of our family housebuilding business, so I know a little about development. I advise my hon. Friend that if a developer has a choice between building on a green field site in Berkshire or elsewhere, or reclaiming some difficult inner-city site, he will opt – naturally and rightly – for the shire county green field site. He is right to do so because he must think of his shareholders, employees and himself. My criticism is not of the developers, but of the Secretary of State and the Ministers who have bent over backwards to help the developers. If we are successfully to rejuvenate the inner cities, and to do so with the help of the private sector, as the Government rightly want, we must discourage unreasonable and unnecessary development in the shire counties. If we do not do so, we shall not succeed in the inner cities.

Some people suggest that we have a north-south divide. I do not believe that, and I do not want to rehearse the arguments as to why I do not believe it. But, and a big but, I have no real unemployment in my constituency, nor does my hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham. My knuckles are regularly rapped by employers who say to me, "I have still shortages. How do I find cleaners, computer operators and a thousand other employees?" If we encourage development in the south-east, we shall discourage it in regions where there is genuine unemployment. It is in the national interest that unemployment is fought, but there is no fight in my area.

One can go to a jobcentre in Bracknell and find 400 vacancies at any one time. I do not buy the argument that if multinationals or small companies cannot set up in Thames valley they will immediately leave for the continent. They will go willingly to the midlands, the north, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, provided they are discouraged from coming to Thames valley and are told by the local authority that there is no room for expansion. They will then move to other areas, where house prices are cheaper, the environment has not been as spoilt as ours has been in recent years by these appeals being allowed, and where there is a plentiful supply of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labour. That is why we should oppose excessive development.

We referred to five years' supply of land. In allowing the two appeals to which I have referred and, I suspect, my hon. Friend's case, the reason given was that we perhaps did not have five years' supply of land in Bracknell or Wokingham. What is five years' supply of land? How long is a length of string? I do not know. The implication is that we must always have a five years' supply of building land to develop. When Carnation Nurseries is developed, some other plot must be produced to replace it, and on we go. The logical conclusion must be that every last piece of land will get used. When we have a complete concrete jungle, I am not sure what we do about it.

I cannot believe that we can continue to say, "Every area of so-called growth in the south-east must have a five-year supply of land," whether it be for 5,000 or 500 houses. I do not believe that it is right or proper to carry on building across our environment so that there is no open space and the communities, villages and towns that I represent are wholly destroyed.

I hope that the Minister will pass to the Secretary of State and the Minister for Housing and Planning the grievous concerns of my constituents. I hope she will make it abundantly clear that we are worried, not just for ourselves, our children and grandchildren, but because Government policies to tackle unemployment and to rejuvenate the inner cities will not and cannot work while this crass stupidity continues to allow appeals on the development of green field sites in central Berkshire.

10.33 am

Mr. John Redwood (Wokingham): I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay) for allowing me time in this important debate and for the forthright, clear way in which he expressed our joint anxieties. The anxieties of Wokingham are very much those of Bracknell, but while we like and admire Bracknell, we do not wish to grow closer by physical development. A green wedge is needed between settlements, otherwise the danger of growing urban sprawl from London to well beyond Reading will arise. That will be the direct result of the policies pursued by those who determine appeals in the Department of the Environment.

Wokingham district has not been unco-operative in recent years and in the past six years we have seen some 10,000 new houses constructed. That is a 27 per cent. increase in the housing stock on 1981. It is a massive development on a huge scale and has completely changed the nature of many parts of the rural Wokingham district. The district has not resisted development on every site or every opportunity for new housing. The case recently determined against the district on appeal illustrates how dangerous and damaging it can be for appeals against the council to be successful when it has pursued a sensible policy.

The Keep Hatch development which is now to go ahead because of appeal, for example, was one of the two sites examined by the district council. It opted reluctantly, and a little against its will, to allow development at Glebelands. It did so in the belief that some new houses had to go somewhere; that it was best able to make the decision locally, although it was wildly unpopular for it to do so; and that it would be backed up by the Department of the Environment seeing the importance of retaining the Keep Hatch site safe and as part of the important green barrier between Wokingham and Bracknell.

What was the point of the council making that difficult decision and allowing some houses to be built on a slightly less sensitive site when all its plans were blown sky-high by an appeal decision, which was bad planning and bad politics? The natural reaction of my district councillors in Wokingham must be to say that in future they will not be prepared to identify sites because, if they identify sites and make careful decisions between sites, rejecting some as

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being wholly unsuitable, it is possible that on appeal the developers will succeed because of Department of the Environment decisions.

As my hon. Friend said, this is important because it is of major and national significance. By allowing the recent rate of growth in Wokingham without making resources or plans available for improving local health services, schools and the road network, grave problems are produced locally. At the same time pitiful problems of decline are experienced in our inner urban areas from which people are busily migrating. We then reach the ridiculous position where there is insufficient hospital and school accommodation in the high-growth areas. We then incur the financial and political costs of closing schools, hospitals or wards of hospitals in inner London and even in urban centres elsewhere in the south-east. This is not to mention the north and the north-west which desperately need jobs, enterprise and houses and already have the public facilities, which, however, are under pressure because thousands of people are decamping to the south-east because of the planning policy being pursued.

A district council faces an additional difficulty if a developer is given permission on appeal when the district has not wished to see the development take place. Its bargaining power to influence the nature and style of the development and to enjoy some of the benefits which would accrue to the developer from the profits of that development is lost. How can a local council demand a reasonable provision of infrastructure — shops, roads and other facilities — if planning permission has been given on appeal without any thought to the gain that will be made by the developer or the way in which some of that gain could be enjoyed by the local authority and the local community? One of the great advantages of allowing sensible local authorities to make decent decisions for their community is that they take all such factors into account.

Local authorities can strike a deal with the developer, if development must go ahead, that ensures that some of that gain can be used for the provision of infrastructure and those services that the development clearly requires. We are in danger of losing all that bargaining power if we reach the stage where planning decisions are made on appeal and not where they should be made, in the elected chambers of local authorities.

I believe that there is a distinction between planning for green field sites and planning for urban or rundown areas. I find it curious, in Berkshire, for example, that the population of Reading town is falling and yet my hon. Friend the Member for Reading, East (Sir G. Vaughan) has discovered that planning permissions are granted on appeal for the rural areas of his constituency. It seems strange indeed that, in the middle of the fastest growing and one of the most economically successful areas of the country, the prime town is still experiencing net migration while all the rural areas are in danger of being despoiled.

I would like to add my voice to that of my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East in asking the Minister and the Ministry to take on board a few specific points. When appeals come up in the future on green field sites, will the Ministry bear in mind that they are different in kind from the appeals of restrictive local councils in urban areas, trying to stop prosperity coming back to derelict areas? Therefore, the Ministry should take a much harder view of the appellant's case and more often than not it should presume — indeed, in every case in areas such as Wokingham — in favour of the local council that has made a sensible decision about those green field sites. It is important that the number of houses that have now been granted against us on the Keep Hatch site should be reduced in any future target that may be imposed or voted upon us for development under the new structure plan. It is important that the new structure plan is brought in quickly; I would like to see the Ministry make rapid progress on that. I urge that the structure plan takes into account the massive development that has already taken place. There is a need for a period of quiet and calm to shake down those developments to ensure that local services are adequate for the job that they now must perform before major new expansion is embarked upon.

I should like to think that the Ministry will also take into account the fact that the local council has done a good job by the local community and has not always taken the easy option. The Ministry, with its responsibilities throughout local government, should be able to distinguish between pure Luddites and councils that are in difficult circumstances but are doing a good job and take into account the views of their local area.

I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this debate. I do not wish to constrain the Minister's time because there are many important points that we would like my hon. Friend to answer. Above all, we want the outrageous level of growth checked and we want a better deal for central Berkshire.

10.43 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mrs. Marion Roe): I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay) for his initial kind remarks and I am grateful to him for raising the subject of development in Berkshire, which I know is a matter of great concern to all the other hon. Members in that county and to a great many people who live there.

My Department is fully aware of the anxieties felt in Berkshire about the impact that development, particularly housing development, has had on the strains put upon roads, schools and hospitals and those caused through the loss of the countryside. Berkshire Members have been assiduous through deputations to successive Secretaries of State, and indeed in previous Adjournment debates in 1983 and 1985, in ensuring that we are in no doubt of the strength of local feeling about those matters.

Of course, we fully recognise the very significant expansion that has taken place in Berkshire, particularly in central Berkshire. The county has seen the successful development of Bracknell new town and the emergence of Reading as a major business centre. The attractions of the county to developers are only too obvious; proximity to Heathrow, the M25 and the M4 corridors and not least the quality of the environment that has justified the county being called "Beautiful Berkshire".

Not all the factors promoting development are necessarily disadvantageous. They have contributed significantly to the growth of a strong, active, buoyant economy, with one of the lowest rates of unemployment in the country. Berkshire is acknowledged as a centre for high technology development with an international reputation that attracts inward investment to this country. The nation as a whole has reason to be grateful for the contribution that business in Berkshire is making to the regeneration of the national economy. However, there is

a price to pay for economic success, in the effect that the development needed to support the growth of business, industry and population must have on the environment and character of the area.

There is a need to take stock regularly to ensure that the pace of development does not exceed the capacity of the area to absorb it without damage or without creating serious imbalances between the provision of employment and housing and the provision of services. I also take my hon. Friend's point that we need to look carefully at the possible consequences for other less advantaged areas of the concentration of economic activity in counties such as Berkshire.

When my hon. Friend raised the question of development in Berkshire in the House in December 1983 he was advised that the proper forum for consideration of the future levels of development in the county was the then impending review of the Berkshire structure plans. Since that time the county council has submitted proposals for a replacement structure plan for the whole county to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and that is now under consideration.

The county's objective, set out in the plan, is to secure as sharp a decrease as possible in housebuilding rates. I need not tell my hon. Friends how much interest these proposals have raised. My hon Friend the Member for Berkshire, East and his colleagues the hon. Members for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) and Reading, East (Sir G. Vaughan) attended and spoke eloquently in support of the county council at the examination in public, held in July last year. Clearly, that demonstrates how important this issue is.

My right hon. Friend and I are very much aware of the need to reach decisions soon about future development in Berkshire. The existing structure plans are out of date and do not provide a satisfactory basis for controlling the levels of housing and employment development. The report of the panel that conducted the examination in public has taken longer than we had hoped. However, as soon as its report is received we shall move as quickly as we can to publish any modifications to the county council's proposals. I can assure my hon. Friends that I am anxious that there should be clear and sound planning policies worked out for Berkshire to assist in proper planning control.

Two particular concerns have emerged from this debate: the recent appeals decisions which have been issued allowing housing development in central Berkshire; and the suggestion that allowing development in Berkshire is inconsistent with the Government's policies for regeneration of the inner cities. I will take the appeals first.

My hon. Friends will be aware that we are still within the period when decisions on two appeals could be subject to legal challenge. My comments must take that into account. I should also say that in two appeals — Shipnell's farm and Wicks Green, Binfield — there has not been a final decision. The appeals have been referred back for consideration of agreements on various matters.

I think a main concern is that we have actually dealt with those appeals while the whole question of future housing levels has yet to be decided in the structure plan. Certainly the decisions would be easier if the replacement structure plan had been approved. However, it would be quite unreasonable to freeze decisions on all appeals during the process of reviewing the structure plan.

My right hon. Friend has a duty to consider planning appeals which are made to him, and he must do this having regard to all the relevant considerations —

Mr. Andrew MacKay: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mrs. Roe: I have a great deal to cover, and I hope that my hon. Friend will allow me to complete it. If I have not covered any points, I will issue a follow-up letter.

Mr. MacKay: May I make a brief intervention?

Mrs. Roe: Perhaps later. May I get on now?

As I said, my right hon. Friend must have regard to all the relevant considerations, which will include the fact that there are structure plan proposals. Action may be taken against him in the courts if he unreasonably delays decisions on appeals.

In deciding the appeals in question my right hon. Friend was aware of the local view that there has been excessive development in central Berkshire. I may say, however, that the county council is not proposing that there should be no further housing development in the county. The number of houses involved in these appeal decisions is not, in our view, inconsistent with, or a threat to, the total housing provision proposed by the county council.

The difficulty, which I appreciate, is that the development is being allowed in areas not favoured by the local planning authorities, but my right hon. Friend has had to have regard to the inspector's conclusions about the housing land supply and the suitability of the sites for housing. What I can make clear, which I hope will be helpful to my hon. Friends, is that any houses which are allowed on appeal in the period before a replacement structure plan is approved will count towards whatever total housing provision is decided in the plan and will not be additional to it.

My hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East mentioned the need for a five-year supply of land. I assure him that the Department of the Environment does not intend an unlimited continuous supply of land for housing. The size of the five-year supply is limited by the total housing provision set in the structure plan.

My hon. Friend also mentioned the north-south divide. It is not as simplistic as north versus south; rather it is the inner cities in the north, with Labour councils, which have problems. Indeed, in the north there are areas of prosperity where the quality of life is similar to that in Berkshire.

On the other question regarding our policies for the inner cities, I recognise my hon. Friend's concern that development allowed in Berkshire may be denying deprived areas the opportunity of attracting that development. There is no convincing evidence that restraint of development in economically attractive areas encourages investment in less attractive ones. The danger is that the investment may be lost to this country altogether. Our policy is aimed at securing new investment in the inner cities, not in preventing investment in areas such as Berkshire. The economic success of Berkshire is important to the country in attracting investment, in encouraging enterprise and in helping to provide the national resources which will enable initiatives to be made to help other areas. We need to be careful not to sacrifice that achievement.

I do not agree that there is a conflict between our policies on inner cities and allowing housing development

[Mrs. Roe]

elsewhere in the country. We would, of course, hope that developers would make use of sites in inner-city areas where those sites are available. Our registers of unused and underused publicly owned land show that there are some 15,000 acres of such land in London and the south-east: almost half of this land has been assessed as having a medium to high development potential.

We make derelict land grant available to both the public and private sectors to encourage the development of derelict or unused land in urban areas, thus relieving pressure on green field sites. This year, about £3·6 million has been set aside for reclamation in south-east England, including London and East Anglia.

A considerable amount of housebuilding has been taking place in London docklands. By 31 March 1987, 4,250 homes had been completed on sites prepared by the London Docklands Development Corporation, more than half of which were priced at or under £40,000. About 3,350 private homes are currently under construction on Docklands Development Corporation sites, and 2,350 have been built on non-development corporation sites, with about 2,050 under construction. The totals are 6,600 homes completed and 5,400 homes under construction.

The ordnance survey record of land use changes in 1986 shows that, nationally, 46 per cent. of land developed for residential use was previously developed or was vacant land in built-up areas. In the south-east, this proportion was 54 per cent. while in Greater London it reached 86 per cent. These figures illustrate the extent to which housing demand can be met within existing urban areas. I assure my hon. Friends of the strength of the Government's commitment towards the regeneration of the inner cities and making the best use of urban land.

Our achievements in the inner cities, and by way of the use of urban land and re-use of derelict land, will not, by themselves, provide adequate land to meet the housing and other development needs of the existing populations of counties in the south-east; and most projections show that that population will continue to grow. Other land will have to be found, but our firm view is that this can be achieved without serious damage to important environmental interests. This was explained in the regional strategic guidance set out in my right hon. Friend's letter of 19 June 1986 to the chairman of the south-east regional planning authorities, Lord Sandford.

Mr. Redwood: Is my hon. Friend aware that the current rate of development in London is still insufficient to prevent a net migration? Is she aware that she is agreeing with my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay) and me in saying that more can and should be done in the cities? We are looking for more urgency to get those thousands of acres in inner London back into housing use.

Mrs. Roe: That point has already been noted by my Department and by others involved in housing, as I am sure my hon. Friend is aware.

The key to resolving the planning problems faced in central Berkshire is to complete the process of revising the structure plan, and I have already said that we shall do all that we can to speed this up. My hon. Friends may rest assured that all the representations that have been made will be most carefully considered, as will the panel's report and recommendations. When my right hon. Friend's modifications to the plan are published there will, of course, be an opportunity for comment on the modifications.

Mr. Andrew MacKay: Appeals are pending on which decisions might have to be made before the structure plan modifications are announced by the Secretary of State, and my hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (Mr. Redwood) and I agree with the Minister that it would be unreasonable for everyone concerned if we delayed those appeals. We say that they should not be allowed pending the publication of the structure plan amendments. That is a very different matter, and that is what I want my hon. Friend to take on board.

Mrs. Roe: I have noted my hon. Friend's point carefully, but he will understand my position and the fact that I am unable to comment further.

The matters which have been raised in this debate are important. We fully understand the pressure for development in Berkshire in those areas outside the green belt and the areas of outstanding natural beauty. The essential task now is to set the right levels for future rates of development which are best for all the interests in the county.

The difficulties being experienced in the administration of planning control in central Berkshire have been exacerbated by the length of the structure plan process. The development plan system is undoubtedly too cumbersome. It engages too many resources and is too slow both in the preparation and approval of plans. My right hon. Friend has published proposals in a Green Paper for a thorough revision of the system, and I am pleased to say that the response has shown general agreement that the system needs changing. I am sure that a more responsive development plan system would have gone a long way to avoiding the sort of problems now affecting Berkshire.

Chile

10.59 am

Mr. Pat Wall (Bradford, North): I understand that on Monday 13 July Admiral Toribio Merino visited the Foreign Office and met the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Enfield, North (Mr. Eggar). Admiral Merino—so I understand—flew into London in semi-secrecy via Israel, a route previously taken by Colonel Oliver North. While I have no wish at this stage to add to the controversy that is raging on both sides of the Atlantic about covert activity, I wonder whether these military gentlemen always use the same travel agency.

It is hardly surprising that the Foreign Office has not sought publicity about the visit of a founder member of the Chilean junta, a man who was directly involved in the disappearance of hundreds of civilians whose whereabouts are unknown to this day. He was a Minister who put his warships at the disposal of the junta as prison and torture ships for Chilean civilians. His crimes were on a par with those committed by Klaus Barbie, whose trial was coming to a conclusion when Admiral Merino visited Britain.

A Conservative Government justified the Falklands war on the ground that it was a war for democracy against the Argentinian junta of General Galtieri. That Conservative Government supplied arms to the Argentine dictatorship—arms that were eventually used against British forces in the Falklands. This Government, like previous Conservative Governments, continue to supply arms to the bloodstained dictatorship in Chile. The Government may wish to keep quiet about their relations with Chile, but I believe that the House is entitled to a full account of recent discussions with leading members of the junta; and the nation, too, is entitled to that information.

First, did the discussions with Admiral Merino concern the supply of arms to Chile? I suspect that the answer will be no, but I shall continue to harbour doubts. If arms were not discussed last week, they certainly must have been at the beginning of June, when General Fernando Mathei, commander-in-chief of the Chilean air force, visited Britain. His visit was made in a mad rush, because of the possibility of the return of a Labour Government and the immediate cessation of arms sales to Chile—just as the American Congress is forbidding its Government to sell arms to Chile; just as Felipe Gonzalez, the Spanish Prime Minister, has vetoed further arms sales to Chile; just as President Mitterrand of France is opposed to arms sales to Chile; just as Italy, which has not replaced the ambassador that it withdrew from Santiago in 1973, will not supply arms to Chile.

What is the current state of arms sales to Chile from Britain? Has the destroyer Fife now joined the three other county class destroyers in service with the Chilean navy? When HMS Glamorgan was handed over in Portsmouth last year, it was reported that that gave rise to a brief mutiny among the Chilean sailors. Do the Government have plans to sell military aircraft to Chile to replace its aging fleet of Hawker Hunters?

In 1973 the Chilean military, with the aid of international big business and the CIA, overthrew a democratically elected Socialist Government. Thirty thousand people were slaughtered. Thousands were imprisoned and tortured. Trades unions and workers parties were banned, democratic rights were abolished, and the most unspeakable atrocities were conducted in the Santiago football stadium. The junta had its friends in the Conservative party and in the press.

The Times, which was nominally "The Thunderer" in those days—not the "Murdoch Murmurer"—welcomed the overthrow of the Allende Government. Chile was to be a capitalist paradise with no workers parties, no meaningful trade unions and a free market economy. Milton Friedman and his Chicago school of gangsters—or rather, economists—were given free reign. The spiritual and economic gurus of Thatcherite economics provided a temporary paradise for sections of big business—especially the multinationals. Within a short time, that led to the virtual bankruptcy of the Chilean economy and appalling hardship, not only for the mass of working people, but for large sections of the middle class.

According to official figures, unemployment in Chile is 18 per cent., but according to most foreign observers it is really more like 30 per cent. In addition, about 20 per cent. of the population obtain seasonal work only. For those in work, the average working day is 12 hours. No national factory regulations or safety conditions exist. Safety equipment such as boots, helmets and ear muffs is not supplied, and workers are forced to pay for such equipment themselves. It is estimated that at least 30 per cent. of the population are undernourished. On one reckoning, it is thought that a healthy diet in Chile for a family of five for a month would cost the equivalent of £120.

Taking an example that was featured in the national press of one workers' district in Santiago, the average family income is £29 a month, but only fewer than one quarter of the people there have any kind of job. There are also reports of many workers' districts and shanty towns around the major towns where, in order to survive, communal kitchens are organised to ensure that the population manage to have at least one meal a day. That does not include weekends, when most families exist on only tea and biscuits. One in three children in Chile are anaemic due to the poor diet, yet 30 per cent. of doctors are unemployed.

As a result of the continuing repression and worsening living standards, there has been an upsurge of open opposition to the dictatorship of the junta in the past few years. Strikes by re-emerging trade unions have multiplied, as have demonstrations in all the major urban areas. Even during the Pope's visit to Chile the vast religious rallies became anti-junta events, with continual chants of "Its going to fall," and pitched battles between youth and the police. Many hon. Members will have seen the brutality and the use of tear gas by the police during the Pope's visit. Large sections of the middle class now openly defy the regime in Chile—including sections of that class that helped to bring Pinochet to power in 1973. Teachers and doctors have held strikes, and bus owners and lorry drivers who supported Pinochet in 1973 have held demonstrations against the regime.

As ever, the answer from the junta has been yet more cruelty and repression. Hugo Pavez, a defence lawyer representing political prisoners in Santiago central goal, recently reported:

> "Prisoners have been subjected not only to electricity, simulated shootings and being semi-drowned in excrement, but in at least one case a prisoner was hung up for days and beaten until his nose and ears burst."

[Mr. Pat Wall]

There have been cases of rats being put inside prisoners' clothing and in one case inside a prisoner's mouth.

It is no wonder that reports in the serious Western press estimate that 85 per cent. of the population oppose the idea of General Pinochet standing as sole candidate for president in 1989. Admiral Merino and General Matthei, both of whom visited Britain this year, have called for Pinochet to stand down to be replaced by a right of centre civilian candidate, and that view has been echoed by police chief Rodolfo Stange, who has also visited Europe recently. Was the issue of Pinochet's replacement raised in discussions at the Foreign Office with Admiral Merino and/or General Matthei? The constant visits of senior members of the junta to Western capitals seems to imply that they are seeking a way to elbow Pinochet aside as the most openly hated representative of the junta and thus to head off the growing prospect of the regime being overthrown — a partial liberalisation of the regime to ensure business as usual for the multinational companies.

The Chilean people can have no illusions that reformed generals or Christian Democratic politicians who supported the junta in 1973 have any real desire to reintroduce genuine elections and democratic rights in Chile. A liberalised regime might temporarily suspend the worst of the repression, but it can never solve the problems of hunger, unemployment and exploitation for the mass of the people of Chile. I believe that the lessons of the past 14 years have been learnt and that the re-emerging workers' movement will pull behind it the majority of those in the middle layers of society, including about half a million home owners who face the prospect of imminent bankruptcy as a result of debts to the banks totalling US$1·5 billion. In my view, it was not that the Allende Government went too far too quickly but that it did not go far enough quickly enough. For our part, we must say that there will be no negotiations with members of the Chilean junta and no arms sales to that regime.

For the past 14 years, I have had the honour to be president of the Bradford trades council. I describe it as an honour because my many well-known predecessors played such a prominent role in the development of the labour and trade union movements in my city. Following the military coup in Chile 14 years ago, the city of Bradford was host to more than 100 refugees from Chile. We found food, clothing and shelter for them. We provided English lessons and tried to provide further education for those who wanted it and could benefit from it. They were sheltered in people's houses until permanent accommodation could be found and, despite the unemployment situation in Bradford, which is not new, we managed to find jobs for most of them.

For a temporary period, my family took in a young Chilean who had had bitter experiences crossing the mountains into Argentina and not over-pleasant experiences in Cuba before coming to Britain. He was severely shocked and in poor health. In my household, he had to share a small bedroom with my two young sons. I still recall vividly a postcard from Santiago arriving one morning. On one side was a picture of the football stadium with its dreadful memories. On the other side was a single word in Spanish — "Remember". I still recall the chill that that card brought to my household.

We shall indeed remember. We shall remember all the refugees who came to Britain, the 30,000 people who were slaughtered in Chile, as well as those who have been imprisoned and tortured and those who have been attacked and assaulted by the police and security forces in Chile. For 14 years, Chile has been a stain on the name of humanity. I believe that I speak for all Opposition Members when I say that I believe that in the near future there will be a new Chile — a democratic, Socialist Chile which will not use torture and repression as the junta has but which will be a gentle, co-operative and humane society.

11.16 am

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): First, I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, North (Mr. Wall) on obtaining this debate and on the way in which he has spoken of the awfulness of life in Chile for so many people.

I wish to put some fairly direct questions to the Government about their attitude to the Government of General Pinochet. It must be stated time and again that that Government, with whom the British Government are apparently happy to do business, is headed by a murderer. He murdered Salvador Allende in cold blood and he has murdered thousands more since then. The teeming prisons and refugee camps and the appalling poverty of the slum areas of Santiago, Valparaiso and other cities are testimony to the type of Government that he operates. It is a Government of the multinational companies, a Government of repression and of murder. *[Interruption.]* The Minister seems to find that amusing. I find it more than ever disgusting that the British Government should have been the major arms supplier for General Pinochet and his junta ever since arms sales were resumed in 1980, having rightly been banned by the Labour Government from the moment of their election in 1974.

It should be remembered, too, that it was British arms sold to Chile in the past which were used to bomb and strife the Moneda palace and to murder the elected president in 1973. The Labour Government instituted a refugee settlement programme and a ban on arms sales and recalled the British ambassador from Santiago. Since the Tories came to power in 1979, arms sales have been resumed and close military contacts have been established. The ambassador is back in Santiago and everything is supposed to be normal between the British Government and the Pinochet Government.

Nevertheless, there are tensions in the Foreign Office about this. I refer to a document which, happily, was leaked from the Foreign Office in November 1984 and in which Foreign Office officials expressed their horror at the renewal of the state of siege in Chile, the indiscriminate arrests and the activities of the police in gunning down students protesting against the denial of civil liberties and the loss of democracy. Foreign Office officials asked the Government to consider a policy of discouraging commercial loans to Chile by British banks and reducing Export Credits Guarantee Department loans. It is ironic that the Government are not prepared to give such loans to Nicaragua but are apparently happy to provide them for the Pinochet Government whose indebtedness to the world is legion.

The document goes on to suggest that perhaps the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank could be leaned on so as not to give any further loans to the Government of Chile. It suggests that the Fairey Engineering contract for a nuclear research project in

Chile be stopped. It goes on to question whether other trade sanctions could be introduced. There is then a mind-chilling list of arms that we know that the Chilean junta is after and in many cases has already received from the British Government. Blowpipe anti-aircraft missiles have been made available. Sea Cat missiles have apparently been offered. There is a whole series of weaponry that can only be described as suitable for internal repression. I use those words carefully and advisedly because in meetings I have had with Foreign Office Ministers over the years they have always assured me that the policy of the sale of arms to other countries is strictly dictated by the needs of the national defence of that country and not of internal repression.

I raise two matters. First, where is the external threat to the Government of Chile? Is Argentina about to climb the Andes and invade? Is Peru about to invade? Is Bolivia about to form a navy and sail down the coast and invade? Is there any serious external threat to Chile? Everyone in the Foreign Office knows perfectly well that the answer to that is an emphatic no. They also know that any arms that are sold to the Government of Chile can be used for two purposes. Infra-red weaponry that can be used for night fighting is used for internal repression. Tanks and armoured cars are used for internal repression and for the transport of troops around Chile. People in the Foreign Office know that that equipment is on sale to Chile for its benefit and that those items are used.

Secondly, the British Government's south Atlantic policy is closely linked with the wishes of General Pinochet. There is clear evidence that, during the Falklands war, bases in Chile were used as a back-up and refuelling resource for British troops on their way back and forth to the Falklands and also for the Sea King helicopters to refuel near Punta Arenas. There is also, apparently, a training facility available to British troops in the south Atlantic on Chile. Additionally, there is the constant calling of British vessels at Chilean harbours. Either those are fraternal visits or they are a political gesture to bolster the Government of General Pinochet.

In a recent visit to Chile by the Chile Committee for Human Rights, Andy Atkins, its secretary, reported that he was on a hill above Valparaiso and that when he looked down at that beautiful harbour he saw a British warship. An old man came out of his hut and said, "Which side are your Government on?" That is the question. Which side are the British Government on? It is clear to me, and certainly to Opposition Members, that the British Government are on the side of General Pinochet. They are on the side of repression. They are on the side of the murderers of people in Chile and of the murderers of the Chilean democratically elected Government.

Recently we have seen examples of just how evil is the repression in Chile. There was the example of the 12 people murdered in raids carried out by the Chilean secret police in an operation known as "operation Albania". Instead of reading those 12 names to the House, I will put them down in an early-day motion so that they will at least be commemorated in the House, as people who were killed by the secret police of the Government of General Pinochet because they were deemed to be opposed to that Government. They were not shot down in a gun battle, as the press reported at the time; they were searched out and assassinated by the secret police. That happened on the nights of 15 and 16 June in the districts of San Miguel, Nunoa and Conchali in Santiago. Many other people have been murdered in Chile. Two years ago a person was burnt to death. Many people are in political prisons, which my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, North referred to. There is, quite simply, the denial of political rights.

In previous debates on Chile — and I have taken part in all of them we have had since 1983 — the British Government have continually pleaded with hon. Members that "constructive dialogue" is the thing, that if only the Government were allowed to talk to General Pinochet and keep the ambassador there they could ensure that democracy returns in some shape or form. I do not call an election where there is just one candidate, General Pinochet, a democratic election, especially when voters go to the ballot boxes looking down the barrel of a gun. I call that a plebiscite of 1938 Austrian dimensions. It is an election to give a legitimacy to the Fascism that already exists in Chile. That is all the election will achieve.

Other forces in Chile are working hard to bring back the achievements of the Popular Unity Government and to bring back Socialism. There is the new Left front, the Unidad Izquierda. I would like to know whether the existing or the new British ambassador will meet that body. It is a very important organisation that represents all the social forces in Chile. It is extremely important that the British ambassador does meet its representatives. It is also important, when the new British ambassador arrives shortly, that he takes up the case of Clodomiro Almeyda, the former Foreign Minister in the Popular Unity Government, who voluntarily returned to Chile. There has since been a court case against him. He said, "Well, if democracy is free and alive in Chile and if there is a democratic legal system, I present myself to it". He has now been slapped in irons in internal exile. He must be freed and the British Government must demand his freedom from internal exile. When the Minister replies, I hope he will tell us that that is being done.

The Minister is obviously having some difficulty listening to what I am saying. I put a couple of other questions to him. I mentioned the policy of arms sales to Chile. That is a key to so much of what has been said and so much of what is at the heart of British policy on Chile. Arms sales were resumed in 1980. With the exception of the non-sale of the rest of the Centaur half-track anti-personnel vehicles, so far as we know all other requests for military equipment by the Government of General Pinochet have been met. We understand that training facilities have been offered. We understand that a number of high level delegations, in addition to the one that my hon. Friend mentioned about Admiral Merino, have taken place. Advice has been given and equipment is being sent to Chile.

Recently, Pye Telecommunications was authorised to send equipment to Chile that was used for crowd control during the Pope's visit. Crowd control in this country might seem a fairly innocent activity, but in the case of Chile it certainly is not. Crowd control takes on a wholly different meaning there.

I would like to know what future arms sales are envisaged and what the British Government's foreign policy is towards Chile. I would like categorically on the record that the British Government intend to end all relations with the Government of General Pinochet, all military contact and particularly all facilities that are used as part of the Falklands operation of the British Government. However, I very much doubt that we shall hear that this morning. I have it on very good authority

[Mr. Jeremy Corbyn]

from people in Chile that a British diesel-powered submarine, the Onyx, recently completed a tour of duty in the Falkland Islands. After it completed its tour of duty it apparently stopped off somewhere and was tarted up — painted, cleaned up and the brass polished. More food was taken on board to entertain people. Lo and behold, it called at Valparaiso on a sales visit. Is it the policy of this Government to sell every warship and submarine that they possibly can, in addition to the county class destroyers that have already been sold, to the Government of General Pinochet? The people of this country are entitled to know. It is not good enough for the British Government to claim that they support democracy and a return to democratic Government in Chile or that they are working with other United Nations countries in supporting resolutions calling for an end to internal repression in Chile while at the same time they are selling arms to Chile. There is a direct correlation between the British Government's receipt of support from General Pinochet during the Falklands war and the British Government's subsequent voting record at the United Nations in either abstaining or voting against resolutions condemning violations of human rights in Chile.

The Government claim that constructive dialogue is the order of the day and that that will bring change in Chile. Since 1973, thousands have died and been murdered for their beliefs because they stood up for their people and their communities, because they tried to organise fellow workers against starvation wages, because they tried to organise fellow shanty dwellers against the misery of shanty towns. They have been done down by the Chilean army and secret police force. Day and night, the secret police force goes on raids throughout the major towns, and goes in search of the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front, and tries to destroy all opposition.

Is it really the function of the British Government, supposedly representing a democracy, to sell arms that can be used to take part in these obscene murders? Should we not say, "No, we will not sell arms to Chile. We will give no trade, aid or loans to Chile, so long as the murderer Pinochet remains in office and the military dictatorship rules the country and this blot on civilisation exists?"

That should be the response that we get from the British Government. I would love to hear it today, although I suspect that I shall wait in vain. I suspect that it will be not the mealy-mouthed hypocrisy of Western European Governments that brings freedom to the people of Chile, but the people themselves in their struggle. Unfortunately, they are being killed by British arms as they struggle for freedom, Socialism and democracy.

11.31 am

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. David Mellor): I am delighted, Madam Deputy Speaker, to see you in the Chair. It has given great pleasure to your many friends in the House that you have taken on this role, a role which, I am sure you are aware, could only have been afforded to you because of the deep respect in which you are held on both sides of the Chamber. I wish you a long and happy tenure of office.

I am perfectly happy to explain once again the Government's policy and position on Chile. It is not just the representatives of a particular section of the Labour party who have spoken today who are concerned about continuing human rights violations in Chile and about the slow progress towards an orderly and peaceful transition to democracy. It is in that spirit that I respond to the debate. In Chile, the absence of political dialogue between the Government and the democratic opposition, the seeming inability of the judiciary in many cases to act independently, and the repression of political freedoms are all matters of common concern. I accept that serious charges can be made against the Chilean Government. It is no part of my task or function to explain away any of those points.

However, much if not all of what the hon. Members for Bradford, North (Mr. Wall) and for Islington, North (Mr Corbyn) have said about the Chilean regime applies also to a number of other regimes.

Mr. Corbyn: We are talking about Chile.

Mr. Mellor: I am quite aware that we are talking about Chile. The hon. Gentleman seems to think that he can determine the substance of the debate. I shall respect him and the hon. Member for Bradford, North a great deal more when they start pressing for Adjournment debates about incidents such as that which occurred last November when unarmed East Germans were shot down trying to cross the Berlin wall. I appreciate that the hon. Gentleman is not interested in anything other than his personal views, but let me enlighten him on one matter. He should realise how the exercise of a selective conscience is viewed on the Government Benches. He may say that this debate is about the sale of arms, but his speech called for the cessation of all trading relations, not just arms trading with Chile. If we were to conduct our foreign relations on that basis, an almost unending list of countries would not measure up to our concept of democracy and we could not deal with them. However, there is a yawning chasm of unreason between the particular sect of the Labour party that we see on the Opposition Benches today and the rest of us. I do not imagine that even his Front Bench would agree with most of the points that the hon. Gentleman made today.

I know that what I have said is warmly supported by my hon. Friends. As has been said, we have had normal diplomatic relations with Chile since 1980. This enables us to express concerns to the Chilean Government at the highest levels — concerns which are shared widely throughout the British public — about human rights, freedom, justice and democracy. During the past 12 months, for example, our ambassador in Santiago has made a series of representations on these important matters to members of the ruling junta, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, to the Minister of the Interior and others, while Ministers and senior officials here in London have made comparable representations whenever opportunity has offered.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs spoke last February in forthright terms about human rights to Chile's ambassador to the United Nations, Sr. Daza, on the occasion of Sr. Daza's visit to London. Earlier this month, my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs expressed our concerns very frankly to Admiral Merino, the Navy member of the ruling junta, during his private visit to the United Kingdom. The same opportunity was taken to discuss with Admiral Merino political, social and

economic developments in Chile. We also have frequent and extensive contact with the democratic opposition in Chile, and with the leading human rights organisations. Such contacts would simply not have been possible in the absence of normal diplomatic relations.

We have also been able to make our views and concerns known in other ways, such as through our votes on resolutions about Chile at the General Assembly of the United Nations. We supported a resolution critical of Chile's human rights accord at the last General Assembly. Then in March this year, at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, we joined a consensus resolution again criticising the Chilean Government's continuing poor record. Our concerns are shared by our EC partners and, as the Twelve, we have made a number of demarches and statements, both public and private, expressing concern about particular, and general, human rights abuses and about the need for an early, orderly and peaceful return to democracy in Chile.

A great deal has been made of defence links and arms sales. Our policy on defence sales and on continued contact between United Kingdom defence personnel and representatives of the Chilean armed forces has been criticised by some hon. Members today. Our defence relations with Chile are a normal part of our normal diplomatic relations with that country. There is nothing unusual in these contacts. They reflect the long connection between our two countries' armed forces, especially between our navies and our air forces. It is good that these links should be maintained, and that the Chileans should be exposed to our thinking and to the role of the British armed forces. As to defence sales, our policy worldwide is sensitive to concerns about human rights. We take great care not to approve the sale to Chile of items which, in our judgment, are likely to be used for internal repression. I must emphasise that we consider every single application for arms sales to Chile and we have refused many applications. Our policy is a responsible one and the way that we manage it in no way condones human rights abuses in Chile.

As to the sale of ships to the Chilean navy, these are manifestly for external defence and cannot reasonably be regarded as instruments of internal repression. There is no evidence whatsoever of the use of former Royal Navy ships in Chile as torture centres. I am not able to comment on, and in no way should be seen to be confirming, anything that the hon. Member for Islington, North said about one of our submarines. The idea that he should regard a submarine as an instrument of internal repression is a sign of how far from common sense he has strayed. It is a shame to spoil a good case about the human rights record in Chile, about which all of us can agree, by mounting on to it such lurid and unsustainable allegations of the kind raised by both the hon. Member for Bradford, North and the hon. Member for Islington, North. In relation to tanks and armoured cars, I can state that no such items supplied by Her Majesty's Government are in service in Chile. The hon. Member for Islington, North referred to a matter that occurred some time ago and a half-track vehicle which has been withdrawn.

The key to the future of Chile must surely be its transition back to democracy. We must remember that Chile has a long history of democracy and we are continuallly reminded in the many contacts that we have with democratic Chileans of the role played by Britain in their independence in the 1820s and the close family, cultural and commercial ties that we have had during that long democratic history. I make no bones about it, the current Chilean Government is anomalous. We in this House and the vast majority of the British and Chilean people want to see democracy peacefully restored in Chile. We continue to do all that we can to urge the Chilean Government to take adequate steps to bring that about.

We have all been disappointed at the lack of progress in the past. However, there have been some positive signs in recent months. The long-promised laws on political parties and on electoral registration were promulgated earlier this year. They provide some sign that the Government are serious in their commitment to the political development, albeit limited, envisaged by the 1980 constitution. We very much hope that those measures will lead to the restoration of normal democratic political activity in Chile. In the meantime, we continue to encourage the democratic opposition to try to develop their unity and to put forward credible long-term policies.

Very properly, Opposition Members raised the matter of contacts with Opposition politicians and they were not parts of the speeches with which I disgreed. We have supported, with our European Community partners, the moderate Opposition's national accord. We regularly fund United Kingdom visits of opposition leaders from across the democratic spectrum. Our embassy maintains regular contact with opposition leaders and that policy will continue.

We have also continued to sponsor visits to the United Kingdom by a broad section of politicians including Sr. Molina the co-ordinator of the 1985 national accord, Sr. Huepe of the Christian Democrats and several important journalists, including the editor-in-chief of the new independent newspaper. Those visitors receive vital encouragement from a wide range of democratic opinion in Britain.

It is also fair to say that not all is doom and gloom in Chile. The points made about poverty and the Chilean economy are also tragically common throughout the south American continent. I visited South America last September and toured countries under a variety of democratic rule including Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Colombia. Peru and Bolivia are democracies and can be subject to none of the criticisms advanced against Chile. However, there is real poverty, need and want in those countries and all of the vital indicators about welfare do not point where those Governments would like them to point. The Chilean Government are not alone in facing economic difficulties in recent years.

To give credit where it is due, the Chilean economy is now being responsibly managed for the ultimate benefit of all Chileans. All major financial institutions agree with that. Serious mistakes caused the explosive boom in the early 1980s. However, they have been corrected. Gross domestic product growth in 1986 was more than 5 per cent., unemployment has been reduced to less than 9 per cent. and there are positive trends in the economy. I do not say that as an apologist for Pinochet, but to ensure a balance and objectivity, although I appreciate that those are alien concepts to the hon. Members for Islington, North and for Bradford, North. *[Interruption.]* The dissent that greets my comment was not the kind of dissent that greeted the candidature of the hon. Member for Bradford, North in years past.

The next two years are likely to be crucial for the future of Chile. Under the 1980 constitution, a presidential

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plebiscite is to be held by March 1989 at the latest, followed by congressional elections a year later. We shall be watching the evolution of those events in Chile with much interest.

Sporting Events (Safety)

11.45 am

Mr. Neil Thorne (Ilford, South): Madam Deputy Speaker, my hon. Friends are already aware of my interest in the subject of safety at sporting events because of my contributions on Third Reading of the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987. We all know that the Government have generated a considerable effort in encouraging independence of mind. The population should be encouraged to stand on their own feet and think for themselves. The Government have spent much effort on encouraging those attributes in recent years, and the benefits of that encouragement are to be found through the considerable improvements in the economy.

At the same time, the Government have been conscious of the need to protect the weak, and in that regard to ensure that people who venture into areas that are not always familiar to them are adequately provided for. We have noticed that while removing the population from the nanny society — catering for the individual from the cradle to the grave—the Government have nevertheless ensured that the population are not preyed upon by people who would take advantage of them. In that regard I refer to those who, in the past, have taken advantage of people on the doorstep. For example, doorstep salesmen have been curbed and the Government have ensured that in future people will have plenty of opportunity to ensure that they are not subject to onerous conditions that have been hastily entered into.

In looking after vulnerable sections of the community it is clear that central Government and local government will be called upon to provide protection in areas which the population visit on rare occasions. For example, regulations have been laid down that set out what is required of a cinema exhibitor. Requirements of this sort have been set out in a number of Acts. Legislation has improved the design and construction of buildings, and fire and planning requirements are improved every year. The disabled are protected in a major way, and the provisions that attach to new building require consultation with fire departments to ensure that use is made of the latest knowledge and experience. If there have been any recent catastrophes, care is taken to incorporate in new buildings the lessons that have been learnt. This means that any commercial building must meet certain provisions and requirements.

Licences are required for the exhibition of films under the Cinemas Act 1985. Section 1 states:

"no premises shall be used for a film exhibition unless they are licensed for the purpose under this section."

Subsection (2) provides:

"A licensing authority may grant a licence under this section to such a person as they think fit to use any premises specified in the licence for the purpose of film exhibitions on such terms and conditions and subject to such restrictions as, subject to regulations under section 4 below, they may determine."

It is clear that that lays the onus upon the local authority, which is subject to the provisions that are set out in section 3. Subsection (1) states:

"An applicant for the grant, renewal or transfer of a licence shall give to—

(a) the licensing authority,

(b) the fire authority, and

(c) the chief officer of police,

not less than 28 days' notice of his intention to make the application."

Subsection (2) states:

"The licensing authority may in such cases as they think fit, after consulting with the fire authority and the chief officer of police, grant an application for the grant, renewal or transfer of a licence notwithstanding the fact that the applicant has failed to give notice in accordance with subsection (1) above."

Subsection (3) adds:

"In considering any application for the grant, renewal or transfer of a licence, the licensing authority shall have regard to any observations submitted to them by the fire authority or by the chief officer of police."

That is the important provision. The licensing authority is required to listen to what a fire officer and a police officer have to say. It cannot issue a licence without having taken into account the observations of those officers. Whether it listens to what it is told remains to be seen, but it is required to take their observations into account.

There are certain provisions that allow for exemptions. If a film is exhibited in a club that requires membership before members of the public are allowed to attend, the provisions to which I have referred do not apply unless the club forms part of a building that is licensed for use by the general public. If, for example, on the ground floor of the premises there is a public cinema that is in use and in the basement a private cinema club is opened, the club would be bound by the provisions of the 1985 Act. If the club were in separate premises and entirely private, the provisions would not apply.

The law is different for discos. If a disco on a ground floor, for example, is licensed and there is a basement operation, the advantages of the regulations do not apply.

There is a need for a greater measure of safety at sporting events. I think that that is accepted generally by all responsible bodies. For example, the Jockey Club has laid down rules carefully and it does not allow racing to commence unless there is adequate provision for the safety of the participants and the general public. However, that is not the case everywhere. It came as something of a surprise to me to learn that the responsibility of the Health and Safety Executive for first-aid applies only to employees and does not extend to facilities for the general public. The employer in a place of sport must comply with the regulations when making provision for his employees, but, where other persons are regularly on the premises, the employer may extend the facilities to them, provided that the employees are not adversely affected. The employer must therefore examine carefully the element of risk in the provision of both equipment and personnel.

We all appreciate that safety is of paramount importance, and the announcement today of the report on the Zeebrugge disaster highlights the issue. Many people lost their lives in a very short time in that disaster, which has concentrated our minds upon it. I am sure that the regulations will be tightened to make such catastrophes less likely in the future. However, I believe that we have many other opportunities to improve safety arrangements, and that we should introduce them without waiting for major disasters.

Several fires have taken place at football stadia, and that, too, has concentrated the minds of the authorities on using fully the facilities which have been made available under various Acts of Parliament, but which have not previously been used to the full. The Popplewell report is an important contribution: it makes absolutely clear the need to improve existing conditions in first-aid rooms, including equipment, number of personnel and the provision of in situ ambulances when they are required, to make adequate provision for those likely to be affected in both indoor and outdoor activities.

The Home Office in the past has not been as demanding as it might have been. As recently as March this year, it was saying:

"Thus, the local 'certificating' authority determines the terms and conditions of the safety certificate including whether or not it should include a condition relating to first-aid facilities. In our experience safety certificates do contain such conditions. Even so, in July 1985 we drew ... attention ... to Recommendation 8 of the Popplewell Inquiry Interim Report, specifically asking them to consider inclusion of a condition within safety certificates for adequate first-aid facilities."

In its "Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds", the Home Office reminded ground management of its responsibilities to provide such facilities for visitors and staff. However, it was not considered necessary to impose such a requirement on the licensing authority as a duty, and that is where the matter seems to go wrong. Although the Home Office has offered to suggest to the local authorities that they should consider that point in granting licences for indoor sporting entertainments in general, it does not appear to consider it a high enough priority to put further pressure on the authorities to take it into account. If it is not taken into account, the attitude of the officials is likely to be more low-key.

I am not saying that that is the case throughout local government. In many cases officials take such matters very seriously and try to require a very high standard. However, the public should not be exposed to hit-and-miss arrangements. They should be able to expect a uniform standard of safety. It is not for the man in the street to find out whether the fire and first-aid precautions are to his liking at sporting events or in clubs. I am thinking in particular of the Queensway ice rink, a private club that does not have to comply with any licensing regulations. Furthermore, it does not come under the Health and Safety Executive. Adequate provision is made for the members of the staff, but club members are not covered by those provisions. I seriously question whether they understand that fact.

The 1966 Act states that the various venues for exhibition purposes — for example, the Wembley conference centre and the Kensington design centre — are not necessarily covered by the licensing authorities. However, those venues should be carefully monitored. We must ensure that the necessary standards are applied.

Paragraph 3.99 of the Popplewell report says:

"The value of the presence of the St. John's Ambulance at a sports ground cannot be over-estimated. If it be the case that a first-aid room is either not provided or inadequately provided then that should be remedied, and I recommend that, where practicable, that should be done. I recommend that on grounds which are designated it should be a term of the safety certificate."

That is a significant contribution to the debate.

Adequate first-aid provision is needed. My hon. Friend the Minister will remember that there has been more than one accident in the House when first-aid has been of great importance. I remember being in the Chamber when one of my hon. Friend's Welsh ministerial colleagues collapsed at the place where my hon. Friend is now sitting. First-aid was of the greatest importance. We are lucky to have first-aiders as members of the staff, and we have revised our

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arrangements to ensure that the necessary equipment and facilities can easily be reached. We have learnt the lessons of that occasion.

Provision must be made for the public. St. John Ambulance is not the only organisation that provides such cover. The Red Cross also provides it. That cover is provided on a voluntary basis. The Government are anxious that the voluntary sector should play its full part. Therefore, we must ensure that adequate facilities are made available so that sufficient volunteers are encouraged to come forward. If such provision is not made, the voluntary system will collapse. That is why the existing law and regulations should be used to the utmost benefit to guarantee volunteers the facilities that they need to continue to participate. If there are no adequate rooms for equipment to be kept in, and if refreshment allowances are not forthcomong, one can hardly expect organisations such as St. John Ambulance to subsidise sporting events. If my hon. Friend's Department were to be more insistent in its demands that local authorities incorporate such provision in their licensing considerations — before anyone embarks upon an event he or she will wish to inquire what the likely cost will be — that would be taken into account in planning.

As far as I can make out at the moment, a sporting event is planned, and if there is no specific reference to the necessity to provide for safety, it is slipped in at the last moment. I understand that cricket authorities have no provision within their funds for first-aid payments. A football trust fund helps with expenses, but I understand that no fewer than five members of St. John Ambulance must be on duty at any one time to qualify for the provision. The amount that they are paid to defray expenses, which of course must cover their travelling expenses and refreshment allowances, is often completely and utterly inadequate. In the circumstances, often as little as £100 is allocated for a five-day cricket test match, which is as little as £20 a day to finance the travelling expenses and refreshment allowances of five people. That is totally and utterly inadequate. If the Home Office were to insist that adequate provision be made during the licensing, it would properly be provided for.

Section 42 of the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987 amended schedule 12 to the London Government Act 1963, paragraph 3A(1) of which reads:

"no premises in a London borough or the City of London shall be used for any entertainment . . . to which the public are invited as spectators . . . except under . . . the terms of a licence granted . . . by the Council.

A council should specify the terms and conditions under which a licence is issued. By section 31 the Secretary of State may make regulations for the issue of safety certificates for sports grounds and, has a duty to consult such persons or bodies of persons as appear to him to be requisite. The legislation should specify that such bodies should be qualified. It is the duty of the local authority to enforce and inspect. The local authority must act in accordance with such guidance as the Secretary of State may give. That is the foundation on which it should be done.

I remind my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State that, prior to the Bradford football club fire, the provision of suitable accommodation by professional football clubs was totally inadequate. The Bradford football club fire caused a complete rethinking of the subject. The initiative to improve facilities in London has been taken by St. John Ambulance. We must thank the people concerned, particularly Commander Derek Fenton, who has been an important influence in drawing our attention to the need for adequate provision.

We must accept and acknowledge that a little pre-planning could save a vast amount of trouble at a later date. We should give great care and consideration to what the St. John Ambulance and other interested bodies advise on this, and we should urge the Secretary of State to use the full powers at his command to implement the type of safety standards that the public has the right to expect.

12.10 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne) for giving me this opportunity to explain the method by which Parliament and the Government try to ensure the safety of those who attend spectator sports. I shall outline in general terms the statutory framework governing safety at sports grounds and shall respond to the points that my hon. Friend made so clearly.

Until this year the relevant legislation was contained in the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975. The catalyst for that legislation was the disaster at Ibrox park in 1971 in which 66 people died. Following that disaster a committee of inquiry was set up under Lord Wheatley. As a result of the recommendations contained in the committee's report, this House passed the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975. It might be helpful if I described the nature of the 1975 legislation. Its main feature was the creation of the concept of "designated stadia". They were a class of sports ground that was required to have a safety certificate. Perhaps that statement requires some amplification. The stadia that were liable to have a safety certificate were those that provided spectator accommodation for more than 10,000 persons in stadia form including covered accommodation.

The power of designation was given to the Secretary of State. The power to grant the safety certificate was conferred on the local authority, which had a duty to ensure the reasonable safety of spectators. It did that by the power to impose conditions through the safety certificate. Its obligation and power was to impose such requirements as were necessary or expedient to ensure the safety of spectators. Thus, the essential provision of the 1975 Act was the creation of the designated stadia to which the safety certificate must apply.

The 1975 Act contains another significant power — the power given to the local authorities to apply to a court for a prohibition order. A court could make such an order to prohibit or restrict the admission of spectators to grounds if there was a serious risk to the spectators. That power of prohibition was not confined to the designated stadia but applied to all grounds.

As a result of the 1985 tragedy at Bradford, Parliament looked again at the safety of sports grounds. The Bradford disaster focused public attention on the need to take further positive steps to ensure spectator safety. The first and most obvious consequence of the fire was a substantial extension of designation status. Designation status was extended to a greatly increased number of grounds. Prior to the disaster designation status had been extended to soccer clubs in divisions one and two of the Football League, to several international football stadia, including

Wembley, Twickenham, Cardiff and Murrayfield, and to the Premier League in Scotland. As a result of the Bradford fire the remaining clubs in the Football League were designated as and from August 1985, as were Rugby League clubs having spectator accommodation for more than 10,000 people. That meant that an additional 58 grounds were designated under the 1975 Act. That was the first consequence of the Bradford fire.

Of later consequence was perhaps the establishment of the committee of inquiry to which my hon. Friend has referred, the inquiry under Mr. Justice Popplewell, whose report was published in January 1986. It was followed by a consultative document published in the summer of 1986, which led directly to the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987, which we passed in May.

The 1987 Act made five major changes in the law which governs the safety of sports grounds. First, it required local authorities to carry out annual inspections of sports grounds that are designated under the Act. In the 1975 Act local authorities were not under a statutory duty to carry out periodic inspections, although the majority of them did so.

The second change was the introduction of the concept of the regulated stand. A regulated stand is a covered stand providing accommodation for 500 or more persons in grounds which are not designated grounds. A regulated stand requires a safety certificate. We believe that this requirement will affect 400 or so sports grounds. The issue and contents of the safety certificates will be similar to those required for designated grounds. The safety certificates will be wider in scope than mere fire safety and will extend to structural safety. The requirement will extend well beyond football clubs into race courses, dog tracks, motor racing tracks and, for example, Wimbledon. Therefore, the creation of the regulated stand with the safety certificate requirement will make a great improvement in safety.

The third change relates to the issue of the prohibition notice. Under the 1975 Act the power to issue a prohibition notice was granted to the courts on the application of the local authority. As a result of the 1987 Act the power to issue a prohibition notice has been granted to the local authorities, although there is a right of appeal to the courts. Perhaps it is right to emphasise that although there is a right of appeal to the courts the effect of the appeal is not to suspend the efficacy of the prohibition notice. One does not suspend it simply by applying for an appeal; it remains in force until the appeal is determined.

The fourth major change removes what was always an artificial distinction between grounds and stadia. Now, the concept that governs legislation in this area is not one of stadia, but one of grounds. The legislation applies to grounds, not to stadia, as was previously the case.

Finally—I shall return to this matter to answer my hon. Friend's comments—licences will now be required for a whole range of indoor sporting events. However, the legislation is drafted in such a way as to ensure that it does not catch premises where the sporting event is only ancillary to the use to which the premises are put. For example, a pub in which there is a darts match will not be required to have an indoor sporting licence of the sort contemplated under the 1987 Act.

The primary legislation was the 1975 Act, but that has now been modified in at least five major respects by the 1987 Act, which now governs legislation in this area. The 1987 Act received Royal Assent on 15 May. It is our intention that most, if not all, of the major provisions of that Act will be brought into effect in 1988.

I have spoken of the statutory changes, but there are at least two other changes that I should mention. There has been an extension in the number of designated grounds. I have already said that, as from August 1985, almost all soccer clubs in the Football League were designated, as were the main Rugby League clubs. The Popplewell inquiry recommended the extension of designated status to soccer, Rugby League, Rugby Union and cricket grounds. That proposal was accepted. As a result, in England and Wales, a further 52 sports grounds were designated with effect from 23 August 1986. From 1 October 1986, 14 clubs in the Scottish Football League were also designated. At the moment some 200 grounds are the subject of designation.

Another consequence and change brought about by the Popplewell inquiry was the publication of a green guide. Previously there was a guide in existence, but following the Popplewell recommendations and the report of a working party a further green guide has been published. It is a voluntary guide as to the safety standards and measures that can be adopted. It is guidance both for the management and operators of the relevant ground and for the local authorities.

In the course of his helpful speech my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South raised two issues with which I wish to deal. The first was the provision of medical care at sporting events and the second—an issue he also raised in May on Third Reading of the 1987 Act—related to the provision of safety at private functions as opposed to public functions. My hon. Friend paid great tribute to St. John Ambulance and the other voluntary services that provide emergency medical care. I echo and support my hon. Friend's remarks. In my constituency and in the county of Lincolnshire we have considerable cause to be grateful to the St. John Ambulance, the Red Cross and other such bodies. I entirely welcome what my hon. Friend said about those organisations. They provide essential medical care at sporting events and elsewhere.

The legal position is as follows: as regards sporting events, the local authorities are solely in charge of the imposition of terms and conditions that can be made the terms and conditions of the safety certificate. It is for the local authority to determine the extent to which it wishes to insist on the provision of emergency medical care as a term of the safety certificate.

Most safety certificates, hitherto granted, that dealt with sporting events made provision for first aid. I believe that that will continue. I shall consider whether it is desirable to write to local authorities drawing specific attention to the fact that it is within their jurisdiction and competence to impose such a condition. My present feeling is that because that practice is so widespread it is probably not necessary to contact the local authorities, but I will consider it.

A different position applies to indoor sporting events because there the changes are substantial. I shall consider whether, when we issue a circular to the local authorities, it would be desirable to draw their attention to the fact that when they license an indoor sporting function or the premises they have a power to require the provision of first aid or similar facilities.

Another point, which my hon. Friend raised more directly in the debate on the Third Reading of the 1987

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Act, although it also arose in today's debate, was the distinction between public events and private events. My hon. Friend is naturally anxious about that and, by implication, he would say that those who attend private events, which are in substance public events, should receive the same protection as those who attend events which are obviously and ostensibly public events. It might be helpful if I reminded him of the statutory framework. As a result of the 1987 legislation, Parliament has provided that licences are required

"for any entertainment which consists of any sporting event to which the public are invited as spectators."

Then there is the qualification that the licence is not required

"when the sporting event which constitutes the entertainment is not the principal purpose for which the premises are used on that occasion."

That proviso would benefit the pub where a darts march is held which the public might be invited to watch but which is not the principal purpose for which the premises are used.

That statutory requirement governs those entertainments to which the public are invited as spectators. For a truly private event, the legislation should not provide similar requirements, because the regulatory framework that we would have to set up would be oppressive and would overwhelm the regulatory authorities. But the question whether something is private or public is a question of law. When called upon to determine it, the courts will have regard not to the form but to the substance, and it is plain that where members of the public are invited to roll up on the day and pay their membership fees at the door, that will almost certainly be treated as a public event to which the regulations will apply, whereas they will not apply to a truly private event. It is a question of substance, not of form.

My hon. Friend referred specifically to Queensway ice rink. Hitherto, Queensway has not been licensed, but I understand that it has applied to Westminster city council for a public entertainment licence and that the council will consider that application. Although I do not wish to express a concluded view as to the law in such a case, at first blush it seems that Queensway ice rink is right to do so. I understand that members of the public turn up to watch what goes on there, they pay their fees at the door and they are admitted. If that is a correct analysis of what happens, the ice rink is certainly caught by the 1987 legislation and, consequently, it requires a licence. The question is always one of reality, not of form, and if in substance it is a public event, the operators require the relevant licence.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising the matter and for giving me the opportunity to spell out the general legislative framework that applies and my understanding of the law insofar as it applies to the specific points that he made. Since the Bradford fire, we have all become more conscious of the dangers that are inherent when large crowds gather at sporting events, and I believe that as a result of the practical changes that have been made since the Popplewell inquiry, and as a result of the legislation that the House passed earlier this year, the public can be certain that when they attend sporting events they are reasonably safe.

Law Centres

12.30 pm

Mr. Keith Vaz (Leicester, East): I am grateful for the opportunity to raise the important issue of the continued funding and extension of funding of law centres. The last time the House debated law centres was on 13 March 1986, at the unfriendly hour of 2.46 am. That debate was held on a motion moved by the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge (Mr. Clelland) and concerned two law centres in his constituency—in Gateshead and Newcastle. Since then, an early-day motion has been tabled in the name of the hon. Member for Brighton, Kemptown (Mr. Bowden) and signed by 70 other hon. Members from both sides of the House—a sign that the whole concept of law centres has support from all hon. Members.

This morning's debate will, I hope, elicit from the Minister a clear statement about the standing and future funding of law centres. The funding of law centres is in a state of chaos. A wide range of organisations have been funding them. Law centres began in Britain in 1970. The first law centre started in north Kensington with donations from local charitable organisations. It was because of the success of the north Kensington law centre that the Lord Chancellor's Department took on funding in 1974.

In the past 17 years a number of law centres have opened and closed, and there are now 57 such centres in Britain — for a population of more than 55 million people. It is a sad fact that only one person in 10 lives within the catchment area of a law centre. Geographically, the position is even worse. There is only one law centre in Scotland, one in Wales and one in Northern Ireland. In the east midlands, there are two in Leicester and one in Nottingham — no more. One law centre — Sandwell — closed this year, as its urban aid programme ran out.

The existence of law centres has the endorsement of every organisation that is active in the area of legal services. The Royal Commission on legal services in 1979 stated:

"The impact of law centres has been out of all proportion to their size, to the number of lawyers who work in them and to the amount of work it is possible for them to undertake. The volume of work they have attracted has shown how deep is the need they are attempting to meet. It has dispelled the possibility of complacency over the institution of the legal aid scheme, has emphasised the importance of a wider distribution of legal services and has shown the desirability of enabling and encouraging lawyers to take up work elsewhere than in their traditional areas of activity and types of practice".

The chairman of the Lord Chancellor's advisory committee, in the preface to the 35th annual report in 1984, said:

"Whether it be provided through the Green Form Scheme, through Duty Solicitors, Law Centres, CABX, Tribunal Assistance Units, or other independent advice agencies, good early advice is the foundation of the Legal Aid Scheme . . . Our concern is to ensure that access to justice which these agencies represent is preserved undiminished, even in times of financial restraint".

In the Archbishop of Canterbury's report, "Faith in the City", published in 1985, there was a paragraph that stated:

"The value of the role and the current need of the Centres and their present financial predicament could not be more clearly set out than in the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee's Report. We wish to give the fullest support to the proposals of the Lord Chancellor's Committee and recommend that they be implemented immediately".

In the debate in 1986 the Minister's predecessor said:

"The Government do not dispute the usefulness of law centres in some areas, as shown in those reports, and most recently in the report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's commission on urban priority areas." [*Official Report*, 13 March 1986; Vol. 93, c. 1251.]

It may be useful if I chronicle the activities of law centres. Without wishing to be patronising, I believe that very few Members of Parliament have worked in, visited or sought advice from a law centre. The centres are based on the concept that justice must be open to all members of the public, and they provide a vital resource for unmet legal needs in a community. Their arrival in 1970 transformed the legal landscape. For the first time, a solicitor entering practice did not have to concentrate on providing business for profit, but could concentrate on assisting people without the constraints of financial incentive. The law centres deal with a wide range of casework and issues. They provide information about rights. They give advice and information to other agencies, such as citizens' advice bureaux, they give information to individuals and groups and they take up cases. This country is not the only one that has law centres. Other countries, notably Holland and the United States, accept and promote the idea of public legal services.

Before coming to the House I worked in the North Leicester advice centre. There are two law centres in Leicester, the Leicester Rights law centre in the centre of the city, and the Highfields and Belgrave law centre, which became the North Leicester advice centre and the Highfields advice centre earlier this year. The Leicester Rights law centre received a grant from central Government which ended in March 1986. Both centres provide valuable assistance to local people. In housing matters, advice and assistance is given against unscrupulous landlords. Immigration matters such as visa extensions and appeals are also dealt with. In matters of crime, young people are assisted through the processes of the law. The centres also handle issues of welfare rights, employment and small claims in the county court. In the past six months, the North Leicester advice centre has assisted more than 3,000 people and last year the Leicester Rights centre dealt with thousands of inquiries from local people. Both organisations have immense community support. On 23 October 1985, the *Leicester Mercury* stated:

"The concept of the centre is an excellent one. It exists to give a handy, low-cost or free legal advice service to those who live in the areas, who have problems with the legal system."

Yet there are very few such centres in the east midlands. There is one in Nottingham, but none in Lincolnshire, Leicestershire county or Derbyshire, although there are moves to set up a centre in Derby.

It is totally unacceptable that law centres, which have proved to be essential legal services, should have to compete each year for the morsels thrown into the trough of expenditure on public legal services and that law centre workers and their clients should have to go through the annual funding crisis. It is unacceptable for the Government to pass the buck to local authorities. Central Government are responsible for the provision of legal services, for the administration of legal aid and for the administration of justice. They should therefore have responsibility for central funding of law centres. The burden cannot be placed on local authorities such as Leicester and Nottingham, which do not have the resources to cope because of central Government cuts in grant allocation. Without central Government funding there is a real fear that a number of law centres will have to close next year.

The pursuit of justice cannot be made cost-effective. Out of a total law centre bill of £7 million, only some £750,000 comes from the Lord Chancellor's Department and with grants from other Departments total funding does not exceed one seventh of the bill. Forty out of the 57 law centres are totally dependent on local authority finance. It is not good enough that people have access to legal services just because they happen to live within the boundaries of a Labour-controlled authority. I am sure the Minister will say that it is all a question of money. Indeed, it does turn on money. It is only the Government who wish to evade their responsibility.

In a letter from the general secretary of the Law Society, Mr. Bowron, dated 21 October 1986 to the Lord Chancellor's legal aid advisory committee, he said:

"The Law Society has supported secure central government funding for law centres for a number of years and remains of the view that this is the only way to avoid the waste of resources and the disruption caused by annual funding uncertainties."

Uncertain funding also results in difficulties in planning and developing law centre services.

The Law Centres Federation, which has campaigned for a number of years as the shop steward of law centres, said in February 1984:

"Funding should be provided by Central Government, either directly through an appropriate Government Department or Departments, or through an intermediary body."

The advisory committee, in its 34th report, said:

"We concluded that they should be treated as an essential part of the network of legal services, that your Lordship should take on responsibility for their core-funding and that the basis of that funding should be sufficiently assured to allow law centres to pursue viable recruitment and staffing policies and to promote long-term planning. Our views have only been strengthened by developments since our 34th Report was published."

The Society of Conservative Lawyers, in a pamphlet published a couple of years ago, called for the law centres to be expanded in number and put on a permanent and central financial footing. It said:

"The members of the public who have used law centres have received a generally excellent service at a modest cost to the public purse."

There must be no excuse for wriggling. Centrally funded national networks of law centres funded by central Government must be the way forward. One way to pay the cost is perhaps to abolish the role of private solicitors in the legal aid system and to ensure that all public money is dispensed on public legal services. I hope that the Government will look to a new approach.

There must be sufficient funds to provide services throughout the area, not just to inner-city areas, but to the outer estates and rural areas. There are parts of my constituency — Netherhall, Humberston, Rowletts Hill, Thurnby Lodge, Northfields and Goodwood in the outer estates of Leicester — that do not have any legal services because they are not in the inner-city areas. Local people there have exactly the same problems as people in the inner-city areas. They have problems with housing and welfare rights and they need assistance in exactly the same way. They do not necessarily have the transport facilities to go into the inner-city areas to get the legal advice that is available to others.

[Mr. Keith Vaz]

I am sure that the Minister has heard the story of Cinderella. Law centres are the Cinderella of the legal services movement. I hope that he will be the fairy godmother and that he will wave his wand and send Cinderella to the justice ball by announcing the statutory and central funding of a network of law centres. To refuse centrally to fund the only organisation that can ensure that justice is accessible to all our people might be interpreted by some as showing that only the well-off should have access to legal advice and, therefore, to justice. I am sure that the Minister would not want such a misinterpretation to occur. Justice is too sacred a commodity to be available only to certain segments of our society. It lies at the very heart of democracy and it must be equally available to all.

12.44 pm

The Solicitor-General (Sir Nicholas Lyell): I congratulate the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Vaz) on his good fortune in obtaining this debate at a reasonable and appropriate hour for such an important subject. I welcome the opportunity in this new Parliament to set out once again the Government's approach to the funding of law centres.

The background to the hon. Gentleman's case for greater central funding of law centres lies in his experience of his own local law centre in Leicester, in which he has been employed in recent years. He has spoken in general terms of the problems of funding law centres, and I know that there were some specific problems in regard to the funding and management of one particular law centre in Leicester. I now understand from the council that, after a number of management changes, the new board is working well and the city council now proposes, indeed has undertaken, to return the law centre to management by the local community. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman and I both welcome that.

I should add that, back in 1983, the council wrote to Ministers at the Department of the Environment and to my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor in the hope that funding for law centres might be placed upon central Government. However, I have to make it clear that this is not, and never has been, Government policy. In many respects, I believe that the Leicester problem and the Leicester solution to that problem lend support to the Government's view that funding for law centres is, and should be, primarily a matter for local responsibility.

Government policy has been made clear on a number of occasions, and I am glad of the opportunity to restate it today. The Government warmly acknowledge that law centres can have a valuable role to play, depending on local circumstances, in the provision of legal services. They can often usefully supplement the national legal aid and legal advice scheme. They can frequently not only complement and supplement those formal legal services provided by local solicitors and by the Bar, but tie in helpfully with the less formal but often valuable help and advice on legal and quasi-legal matters provided by welfare rights organisations and citizens advice bureaux. However, in all these respects the establishment of and provision of support for law centres are essentially matters for local decision and initiative.

It is instructive to examine the overall provision of law centres. Over the nation as a whole there are now some 60 law centres in operation all of which have come into being since the first law centre was established in north Kensington in 1970. Of these, 57 are members of the Law Centres Federation. The majority are based in inner city areas and 29 out of the 60 are situated in London. Of the 60, all but seven are funded by local government because of the need, as perceived by individual local authorities, for such services in their areas.

In relation to central funding, there has been no change in practice as between the previous Labour Government and the present Government. Between 1974 and 1979 the then Lord Chancellor, Lord Elwyn Jones, entered into commitments to fund seven law centres. Of these, four, accounting for nearly two thirds of the direct funding, some £410,000 out of £690,000 last year, are in London, and of the remainder there is one each in Birmingham, Cardiff and Leeds. The remainder of the funding from the Lord Chancellor's Department goes to the Law Centres Federation in London and towards a small contingency fund. Looking at overall national funding of law centres, total annual funding is between £6 million and £6·5 million per annum in last year's terms. Of this, central funding, including some support through the urban programme, amounts to a total of £1·02 million. The remainder, and therefore by far the greater proportion, is funded by local authorities, though it is right—and this is significant for what I shall say later — to remind the House that a proportion of that funding comes from funding to law centres for specific work carried out for individual clients through the legal aid green form scheme.

The House will, of course, be aware and the hon. Gentleman has rightly reminded us that the Royal Commission on legal services and the Lord Chancellor's legal aid advisory committee have recommended that central Government should assume responsibility for law centres and their funding. In its most recent report the legal aid advisory committee pointed again to the difficulties which can be caused by short-term funding commitments on the part of local authorities and other bodies and described the particular experience of Paddington north centre.

It has been argued, and the hon. Gentleman repeated the arguments eloquently today, that this policy can cause difficulty to law centres competing for limited local authority funds. I am also aware of the view that law centres should not have to rely for funds on bodies against whom they may be required to bring proceedings. However, it is a fact of life that the resources of both central Government and local government are inevitably limited and must therefore be subject to conflicting demands. Priorities have to be established. Local authorities are, we believe, considerably better placed than central Government to decide whether a particular local service is required or whether a service currently provided is appropriate to local needs. It is in some respects somewhat ironic to hear a representative of the Opposition arguing for central rather than local funding and control.

The next point is said to be the problem for law centres in litigating against the providers of their funds. I believe that the great majority of local authorities rightly and implicitly accept that the law centre must act in its clients' best interests. From time to time this will mean that a law centre has to act on behalf of its client against its own local authority which puts it in funds. However, the problem is no different in principle in relation to central Government, for the same arguments apply in relation to cases where it is necessary for the law centre to bring proceedings on

behalf of clients against central Government or their agencies in circumstances where central Government are the provider of funds.

I should, however, like to put the whole question of law centre funding into the context of overall Government funding for those who need financial assistance to obtain legal aid and advice and say a word or two about the future of such funding as outlined in the Government's White Paper presented to Parliament on 26 March 1987. Total expenditure on legal aid in 1986-87 amounted to no less than £391·5 million, a formidable increase on the 1979-80 figure of around £100 million.

The current figure is provided through five main channels. First, civil legal aid amounted last year to £104 million. Secondly, criminal legal aid, providing for the assistance of a solicitor, and, where appropriate, counsel in defending a case before the criminal courts, reached £177 million last year. Thirdly, legal advice and assistance, also widely known as "the green form scheme", enables a solicitor to give advice on any matter relating to English law and there is an initial cost limit on the amount of advice that can be given. That gave rise to total expenditure last year of just under £50 million. Fourthly, assistance by way of representation, known by the ugly acronym ABWOR, is an extension of the legal advice and assistance scheme which enables the solicitor to represent his client in certain circumstances, chiefly in domestic proceedings in the magistrates' courts, though it was extended in 1982 to cover mental health review tribunals and prison disciplinary hearings in 1984 and it gave rise last year to expenditure of £11·5 million. Finally, there are two statutory duty solicitor schemes. The first statutory scheme was introduced in 1983 and the other in 1986. The latter provides advice and assistance for people detained in police stations in connection with criminal charges. Last year expenditure on that amounted to £20 million.

With the exception of the duty solicitor schemes, all the schemes are means tested. By means of this funding during 1986, about 200,000 individuals received legal aid to bring or defend a civil case. About 500,000 received legal aid in connection with a criminal charge and about 1·2 million received advice and assistance from a solicitor.

The Government's commitment to an effective legal aid scheme was reaffirmed in the recent White Paper. The White Paper proposals, which will be taken forward in legislation in the coming Session as indicated in the Gracious Speech, are that in future responsibility for the administration of civil legal aid is to be transferred from the Law Society to a new, independent, legal aid board. In the context of the hon. Gentleman's remarks—I think that this will be of considerable interest—I draw the attention of the House to chapter IV of the White Paper dealing with future arrangements for the provision of legal advice. There are areas of the law in which the giving of advice is already more widely and effectively provided to many people by advice agencies such as the citizens advice bureaux and other agencies, rather than by local solicitors. Particular subjects, for example, are welfare benefits, housing, and employment. Such agencies, which are again largely funded locally, though with central Government support as well, frequently have either lawyers among their staff or direct access to legal advice on points of law. In a number of fields, building on these developments, the Government believe that the present green form scheme may be able to be improved by a better service at lower cost. The Government are attracted to the principle of using the skills of advice agencies, especially to deal with those areas of work in which their special experience is likely to be greater than that of many solicitors in private practice.

The Government therefore intend to take powers to enable the new board to make alternative arrangements for the provision of advice and assistance for particular categories of work where this would be a more efficient way of providing the service.

The Government will require the board—and in these remarks I am taking up the White Paper—as an early task, to consider the most cost-effective way of providing advice and assistance, including specifically whether better arrangements might be made by making use of advice agencies. Once the board has set up suitable arrangements for contracting with agencies and other organisations for the provision of advice in the specified areas of work—for instance, advice on welfare benefits—these will be excluded altogether from the green form scheme.

Mr. Vaz: Does the Solicitor-General believe that justice should be cost-effective?

The Solicitor-General: I believe that in almost all elements of life, including Government, we should be as cost-effective as possible, and that must apply to justice as well as to other areas of expenditure.

The detailed arrangements could well involve tenders being sought for the provision of advice in the geographical areas covered by the board's area offices, and the form of coverage might well be different in different geographical areas. This may therefore provide a new opportunity for law centres and those who provide legal services through them. Either in their present form or perhaps a modified form, law centres might be able to improve their funding and extend the service that they provide by tendering for and obtaining contracts to provide advice and assistance in particular areas.

I should emphasise that the way ahead will depend on detailed proposals put forward by the new board at the time. The Government will need to be satisfied that all areas of the country are fully provided for in all types of work. Such moves towards new ways of delivering advice and assistance will take place only after the detailed arrangements for the change have been thoroughly worked out. Nevertheless, they offer potentially interesting and valuable opportunities both for those who work in law centres and the public who require such services. It must always be remembered, as my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General stressed in the debate last week when discussing the future of the services provided by the Bar, that the guiding principle, when deciding how best to make available legal services of whatever kind, must always be the public interest.

Cancer Screening

12.59 pm

Mr. Timothy Raison: (Aylesbury): I am grateful for the opportunity to raise the question of breast scanner provision for my constituents in and around Princes Risborough. I am also grateful to my hon. Friend the Minister for being here to reply to my remarks. There is no need for me to stress to my hon. Friend the importance of breast screening in the prevention and treatment of cancer, as I know that she and the Government are strongly committed to it. However, I should like to draw attention to the unfortunate circumstances that have arisen in my constituency, causing considerable local concern. Indeed, there is a strong sense of resentment over what seems an unfairness.

Briefly, the history is this. About four years ago, an appeal was launched in and around Aylesbury for a mobile breast screening or mammography unit, with the backing of Aylesbury Vale health authority and under the leadership of a consultant surgeon at Stoke Mandeville hospital—which, contrary to popular belief, is not just a spinal injuries unit, but the district and general hospital for the Aylesbury area. Stoke Mandeville is on the edge of Aylesbury.

There was a generous response to the appeal, and rightly so. Generosity was certainly shown by those living in the Princes Risborough area. The consultant surgeon who led the appeal told the people of Princes Risborough that they would be entitled to use the service: that is an important part of the story.

My constituents supported the appeal enthusiastically. Although it is not possible to say exactly how much was raised by the people of Princes Risborough, I have seen an estimate of about £3,000. Anyway, the usual energetic functions were launched. A bus was donated by, I believe, Luton airport; the money was raised, the unit was duly set up, based at Stoke Mandeville hospital, and the women of Princes Risborough were able to use it. For the most part, they had to go to Stoke Mandeville, rather than the mobile unit coming to Princes Risborough. But the distance between Princes Risborough and Stoke Mandeville is only five or six miles, and did not present any insuperable difficulties.

However, what was not fully understood, and perhaps was not sufficiently stressed by those who ran the operation, was that it was set up not in perpetuity, but only for a two-year trail period. At the end of that period, Aylesbury Vale health authority would make up its mind whether is should become permanent. Accordingly, after two years, the authority reviewed the operation and, very properly, decided to make permanent provision for screening women between the ages of 45 and 64. I give the authority credit for deciding to get on with that important process. However, it made another decision which had an adverse effect on my constituents — that the service would be available only to those living within the district of Aylesbury Vale health authority.

Princes Risborough is in a rather awkward position. It is an extemely pleasant and agreeable town which is doing very well, but it is in a kind of no man's land, lying roughly between Wycombe and Aylesbury and managing to fall between the two in various administrative ways. The district council is Wycombe, but the parliamentary constituency is Aylesbury. Princes Risborough patients receive acute services from the Stoke Mandeville hospital in Aylesbury. Many people in Princes Risborough think of Stoke Mandeville as their hospital. However, for administrative purposes it lies within the territory of the Wycombe district hospital.

Stoke Mandeville provides both acute and other services, but preventive medicine is the responsibility of the Wycombe district council, the health authority for Princes Risborough. However, the mammography service was provided by the Aylesbury Vale health council. That is confusing, but what is much more important is that the Wycombe health authority does not yet provide a breast screening service. Therefore, the women of Princes Risborough no longer receive the breast screening service that they enjoyed during the two-year experiment by the Aylesbury Vale health authority, when they were able to go to Stoke Mandeville. They resent this, because they contributed generously towards the setting up of the service. It came as a considerable shock to them when they were told that they were no longer eligible for the service.

What are they to do about it? They could go private and pay £40 for breast screening; but £40 is quite a lot of money to pay for preventive screening of this kind, and not all my constituents would find it easy to fork out £40. If they are considered to be at risk, they can receive emergency treatment at Stoke Mandeville. It will not turn them away; doctors can refer patients to Stoke Mandeville for examination. Some individuals, of course, kick up such a fuss that they are taken on board, but that is not the right way to deal with the problem.

No screening service under the NHS is available to those women now. When the appeal was launched, they did not understand that it was to run for a two-year trial period. The consultant surgeon who led the appeal, unwittingly, I am sure, misled them. I do not make too much of that, because the consultant surgeon, who is well respected, was comparatively new to the district at the time and did not appreciate the administrative niceties. When he treated Princes Risborough patients he assumed that it was normal and that there was no demarcation.

Princes Risborough is now trapped in an administrative no man's land between Aylesbury and Wycombe. As the service has been withdrawn, a strong campaign has, not surprisingly, been mounted by a number of women in Princes Risborough. The Risborough and district community association, led by Mrs. Baker, has been particularly active in this cause.

Both the Aylesbury and the Wycombe health authorities have thought hard about what to do about it. Both I and other people have pressed them to take action, and the very conscientious Aylesbury general manager, Mr. Titley, has given close attention to the matter. Wycombe has also thought hard about it. Mr. Titley met the ladies of Princes Risborough to find out whether it would be possible to meet their request.

It was hoped that an interim solution could be found. It is clearly Wycombe's responsibility to offer preventive treatment. It was hoped that on Saturday mornings the mobile service could go to Princes Risborough and that Wycombe would pay for it but that Aylesbury would provide the service. I am afraid that that was not able to be brought about. There may have been problems about whether staff would want to work on Saturday mornings. I do not know exactly what happened. For one reason or another, it was not able to be put into effect.

As I understand it, Wycombe health authority is now working on plans to provide a district service. In a letter to me, it said that it is considering using Risborough for a pilot scheme. It is applying to the Oxford region for a share of the funds that are being made available from the DHSS to promote the service. I hope that something will come of that soon, but, for the moment, there is nothing in the immediate offing, and the feeling remains justifiably strong. What can my hon. Friend the Minister do about it? She is well known throughout the country for her positive approach to problems. She is not one to sit back and do nothing. I am quite confident that her positive approach will be manifested when she replies.

Certain things might be done. My hon. Friend could go back to Aylesbury and, once again, ask whether it might not, after all, be able to provide temporary cover for the people of Princes Risborough, presumably acting on an agency basis for Wycombe. There were serious discussions about it between the two authorities. They came to nothing. A debt of honour is owed to the people of Princes Risborough. It seems to be eminently reasonable for the Minister to go back and, once again, ask whether an interim solution can be found. If that is not possible, another possibility is worth thinking about; that is, to see whether for the time being one of the local private hospitals might be employed by one or other of the health authorities to provide an interim service. I have not gone into the matter in detail. I am not sure exactly whether facilities are available, but it is likely that they are. It will obviously be a matter of whether Wycombe should pay for them—presumably it would since it is the responsible authority—although it might be argued that, since, in a sense, Aylesbury has been involved in the history of the matter, it would be appropriate for Aylesbury to pay it. One way or another, it seems that there may be an interim answer by using a private hospital to provide what is not available in the National Health Service.

The other point is to urge the Wycombe authority and the Oxford region to proceed as fast as possible with the setting up of a proper breast screening unit. It is widely accepted that that is an important aspect of preventive medicine. The district general manager of the Wycombe health authority wrote to me on 28 April to say:

"We must now press on as quickly as possible with the establishment of a district service which will meet the needs of the Princes Risborough population."

I hope that my hon. Friend will endorse that view and do all that she can to try to make sure that it is brought about as soon as possible. The Oxford region is rather starved of money—that is not the topic of the debate—but there is a central Government commitment, and additional central Government funds are being made available. I hope that we may now see swift action to solve the serious problem that has caused much anxiety. I look forward to hearing my hon. Friend's response.

1.13 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) on his success in the ballot today. Once again, he represented his constituents with a determination and distinction that less experienced hon. Members watch so that we might learn how it is done. He may be aware that I was in Oxford last week and had the opportunity of meeting the chairmen of the district and regional health authorities. We discussed many issues, including co-operation between districts, to which the subject of the debate is pertinent.

In 1984, a public appeal was launched by a consultant surgeon, Mr. Alan Taylor, at the Stoke Mandeville hospital to raise funds for a two-year pilot project to evaluate the need for a breast cancer screening service in the Aylesbury Vale district. The appeal was supported by the district health authority, and money was donated, as my right hon. Friend rightly said, not only by the residents of Aylesbury Vale but by the residents of Princes Risborough, Tring, Thame and Chinnor. A coach was donated by the Luton airport authority. It was converted into a mobile examination and screening unit into which a mammography unit and an X-ray film processor were fitted. This is an opportune moment to put on record our considerable appreciation of the tremendous efforts that have been made to help the women of that neighbourhood.

The survey started on 21 May 1984. During the following two years of the pilot project, the mobile unit never visited Princes Risborough, but remained in the boundaries of the Aylesbury Vale district health authority. The women from Princes Risborough used the self-referral service when the coach was parked in the car park at the Stoke Mandeville hospital, which was the nearest of the coach's venues to Princes Risborough.

From an examination of the records of the women who were screened during that two-year period, it seems that between 50 and 60 women residents of Princes Risborough managed to use the service. In 1985 the unit spent more than three months on site at Stoke Mandeville, which is the longest period that it spent anywhere. Clearly, it was of some value and use to the women of Princes Risborough.

Although Princes Risborough lies within the boundaries of Wycombe health authority, the residents of Princes Risborough generally look to Aylesbury Vale DHA for acute services. They are usually provided at Stoke Mandeville, which is the major district general hospital. It is now accepted that in the early days of the appeal the organisers may have given Princes Risborough residents to understand that the unit would visit their town. Perhaps, as my right hon. Friend has hinted, some of those concerned were not fully aware of the geographical boundaries or the administrative niceties of the Health Service, or of the corresponding different areas of responsibility of the two district health authorities concerned.

At the end of the two-year pilot project, an evaluation report was completed. That report was considered by the Aylesbury Vale district health authority at its meeting on 9 April 1986. On the basis of the evidence contained in the report of the pilot project, it was decided to develop a formal breast screening service for all women residents between the ages of 45 and 64 years, living within the Aylesbury Vale health district. Those women were to be identified individually and invited to attend for screening, using a letter sent by their general practitioner in April 1986. Unfortunately, some months elapsed between the decision being taken and formal notification of the new operational policy being sent to general practitioners in Aylesbury Vale, and to those on the boundaries. In fact, the letter was eventually sent on 21 November 1986. I have no indication as to why there was such a long delay.

However, the health authority agreed to fund the service from its growth money, using equipment paid for

[Mrs. Edwina Currie]

out of the public appeal. The service could not be extended beyond the boundaries of the district, not only because of the increased financial resources that would be required, but because of an inability to cope with the greater work load. Before long, Aylesbury Vale health authority had received complaints and representations from many people including the Princes Risborough parish council, the Risborough community association and my right hon. Friend, stating that the service should be available for all women in the appropriate age group who were residents in Princes Risborough. Aylesbury Vale health authority has stuck to its opinion that the service cannot be extended to residents in other health authority areas.

Meanwhile, as my right hon. Friend knows, the Government had been taking steps of their own. During the approximate time period of these events, the Government had commissioned Professor Forrest from the university of Edinburgh to report to us on much the same basis as to whether a system of breast screening, based on mammography or on something else, would be appropriate for the population at large. During the late autumn of 1986 Professor Forrest and his team reported to us and the Forrest report, setting out in detail how such a programme could be organised and what it would cost, was sent to the Government. The report recommended that we should base the screening system on mammography—a system of low-energy X-rays.

My right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State announced on 25 February this year that the Government had accepted in full the proposals of the Forrest report that a breast cancer screening system should be set up throughout the United Kingdom. A draft circular setting out the proposed arrangements in England was issued on 31 March.

As I am sure my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury realises, we are the first country in the world to set up a screening programme that will be available for all women in the target age groups. That is a major first for this country and for this Government. I am pleased that the Government have recognised the needs of women and recognised also the importance of preventive health for the women of this country.

The services will provide a computerised call and recall system to screen women aged between 50 and 64 by mammography every three years. Older women will be screened if they wish; they are not being excluded. There is insufficient evidence so far to show that mass screening for younger women is effective in significantly reducing mortality. More research is required and is under way. The women who were coming in through the previous system in Aylesbury and Princes Risborough were coming from the age of 45. The recommendation of the Forrest report is that with the current state of the art the service is effective only from the age of 50. However, that is a matter we are keeping under review. Although women under 50 are not to be included in the screen population, any younger women at special risk — for example, if there appears to be an inherited tendency in the family — may be offered mammography if referred by the general practitioner.

A total of £6 million is being provided in 1987-88 to set up the centres in England. Each regional health authority is being funded by approximately one third of a million pounds to set up its first centre which would cover a population of about 500,000. Four of the centres, which are at Guildford, Nottingham, Manchester and King's college hospital in Camberwell, will be funded to provide training for staff for the whole programme in England. The remaining centres, which total about 100 in all, will be set up during 1988-89 and 1989-90. In other words, it is a three-year programme.

All parts should have a service by 31 March 1990 and every eligible woman in this country should have been offered screening by 31 March 1993. The programme must be developed relatively slowly because of the need to train staff and to provide back-up facilities for diagnosis, treatment, counselling and aftercare. A total of 1,000 additional staff, all of whom need to be recruited and trained, will be involved and we are well aware of the importance of the advice given to us by Professor Forrest that at all times we must aim for a high quality of service, so we must not rush the training of the staff involved.

An advisory committee is being set up to advise on the development of the service, to monitor its effectiveness and efficiency and to advise on research concerned with its provision. The appointment of Professor Martin Vessey as chairman was announced on 8 April and the other members have now been appointed. Sir Roy Griffiths, the deputy chairman of the National Health Service management board, is leading a small team to oversee the implementation of the service.

My right hon. Friend may be aware of a parliamentary question which I answered on 23 July concerning the locations of the other 10 centres to be opened this year. The four main training centres have already been announced. The other 10 centres, adding up to one for each of the 14 regional health authorities, have now been announced and are Barnet, Epping, Liverpool, Stoke, Gateshead, Southampton, Huddersfield, Aylesbury Vale, Suffolk and Cornwall. The services at Epping, Huddersfield, Aylesbury Vale, Suffolk and Cornwall will be run from a mobile system.

Some of the regional health authorities are also planning to start further centres before March 1988, but by March 1990 there will be sufficient centres to provide a nationwide service. We have contacted the Oxford regional health authority, which tells us that it is establishing its first breast cancer screening service in line with the recommendations in the Forrest report. As I have just mentioned, it will be in Aylesbury Vale. The population to be serviced by this centre has not been finally determined. It will mainly depend on the arrangements to be made with the family practitioner committees for the operation of the computerised call and recall system, but it will be normal to cover more than one district. Indeed, we are recommended to provide centres which will cover some half a million people in order to make the system cost-effective. That implies more than one district.

In any event, Oxford regional health authority expects the population of Princes Risborough to be provided with the full computerised call and recall breast cancer screening service before March 1989. In other words, Princes Risborough, although not part of the first tranche, will certainly be part of the second tranche of the service being provided.

The problem is that for the next 18 months the residents of Princes Risborough — many of whom contributed to the appeal that launched the voluntary service at Aylesbury Vale and some of whom used it when it was

located at Stoke Mandeville hospital — will not have access to a service. I have listened carefully to what my right hon. Friend has said and I will take up his suggestion and draw it to the attention of the appropriate health authority chairmen. I agree with my right hon. Friend that we are not talking about an enormous expenditure, an enormous number of women or something that will go on indefinitely. The Health Service is to provide a screening service within the fairly near future.

It is important to bear in mind that only some 50 to 60 women in Princes Risborough used the service. Given that a scan is recommended at three-year intervals only, most of them would not expect to be recalled until the new service is in use. However, I recognise that if some women used the voluntary service in 1984 or 1985 their need for another scan might come up during the gap in provision.

I offer my right hon. Friend two thoughts on this matter. First, there are other systems of detection, such as self-examination. We would always strongly recommend that women undertake breast self-examination under the guidance and assistance of their general practitioners or with other groups in their community. That practice normally reveals anything that is possibly giving rise to concern. Women should certainly examine their breasts. Secondly, if there is anything wrong, nobody should wait for a letter from their general practitioner or from a computer—that applies to all screening systems. Around a quarter of a million women a year find something wrong with one or possibly both of their breasts. We pick up about 25,000 cases of breast cancer a year, but sadly there are some 15,000 deaths. The scheme is designed to reduce the death toll from breast cancer. However, nine out of 10 breast lumps are cysts that are benign. They need treatment if only because of the psychological benefit to the patient concerned. I am sure that my right hon. Friend will join me in urging any woman who discovers anything that she is not happy with to go to see her general practitioner at once and insist on being properly examined and treated.

The problem that we face here stems from a misunderstanding about the scope of the original voluntary service. I share the sense of regret felt by those in the districts concerned. We must consider the following lessons. It is most important to be absolutely clear for whose benefit an appeal for funds is made. Secondly, there should be a clear, written and publicised agreement with the health authorities that will demonstrate who will run the service, who will start it, who will pay for it and, in the long term, who will replace the equipment. It is not good enough to provide a service once and then go through the hassle of raising more money when equipment requires replacing.

The enthusiasm of the appeal organisers in 1984 was tremendously commendable. However, it is clear that enthusiasm is not enough. Clear protocols are needed with regard to the service and links between the private sector, the appeal organisers and the health authorities. I say that with feeling having come across this sort of thing in my time as a district health authority chairman. I hope that these warnings will serve to avoid similar difficulties in the future when appeals are launched.

I have given the undertaking that I will write to the district health authority chairmen concerned and I am asking the regional chairman to look at the problem, take into account the issues that have been mentioned today and to report back to me. I will ensure that the points that my right hon. Friend has made are fully discussed. I will let my right hon. Friend know the outcome of those discussions.

I am sure that my right hon. Friend will join me in commending both the original organisers of the scheme and all those now concerned with it in their efforts to improve the health and the death rate of women from this appalling disease within that neighbourhood.

Mr. Raison: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for the tone of her response and for the information that she has given. I look forward to hearing the results. I am sure that she will get the message over strongly that we do not need an enormous operation to deal with the interim period.

Mrs. Currie: My right hon. Friend and I are together on that point. I hope that, overall, there will be a major improvement in the services to women in his constituency.

Smith Houses

1.29 pm

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): I applied for this Adjournment debate on the last day of term to bring to the attention of the House the plight of those in my constituency and in other constituencies in the west midlands, including yours, Madam Deputy Speaker, who have purchased their Smith-type homes under various schemes and the tenants of similar houses who are waiting for repairs to be carried out. The local authorities are expected to pay for those repairs out of their increasingly meagre housing investment allocations.

In the case of Sandwell—our local authority, Madam Deputy Speaker—those allocations have decreased from £12·3 million in 1986-87 to £10·5 million in 1987-88. Sandwell's application for the current year was about £55 million, and the miserly funding from central Government means that the council will have to operate its repairs programme under enormous pressure, Smith-type and other defective properties apart. Housing officials have estimated that, given the rate of housing allocation from the Government, it will take until the year 2013 for all pre-second world war properties in the borough of Sandwell to be modernised. Some of the council properties built between 1945 and 1964 will probably also require major repairs.

You and I, Madam Deputy Speaker, hold some of our surgeries at West Bromwich town hall. I know, because we discuss these matters, that you and I see a continuing and apparently non-stop stream of people who have housing problems. The same happens to my hon. Friend the Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) and my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer). Our constituents come to see us about the lack of repairs to their properties or the need for swifter action by the council to carry out those repairs. None of the four of us has any direct responsibility for such matters, but it would take a braver man than me to tell some of my constituents that. I know that you and our two colleagues refer our constituents' complaints by letter to the housing department, but the reply is always the same: "We do not have the money adequately to repair the properties that we own." I accept that that must be the case, given the cut in housing improvement programme allowances in recent years. Therefore, the solution for those who live in Smith-type houses recedes with every year that the HIP allocation is cut.

The problem cannot be accurately described as a national one, but it is of regional concern, with most affected houses concentrated in the west and east midlands and in south Wales. I understand that about 4,500 properties were built using the system. The Building Research Establishment report on the structural condition of Smith houses was published as long ago as December 1983, and it concluded that they all suffer from some defects. It said that the houses showed cracks at the junctions of the concrete blocks and between the external and partition walls. The BRE also found that some Smith houses in Birmingham were seriously defective because of the use of shale fill in the foundations.

Those details have been debated previously in the House, not least by you, Madam Deputy Speaker. In the previous Session, before you took up your present post, you initiated a similar debate and received an answer from the Minister at that time which was similar to the one that I fear I will receive from this new Minister. Although I congratulate the hon. Member for Broxbourne (Mrs. Roe) on her swift elevation to her present position, and without anticipating the brief that has been prepared for her or the fact that she will no doubt deliver it as elegantly as ever, I hope that the pleas of you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and of myself on behalf of our constituents will not fall on stony ground. I should not really say that because it sounds ungallant, but the House will know what I mean.

The stark fact is that, although the BRE report was published in 1983, in July 1987 there is still no approved and licensed repair to the Smith properties, and owners, tenants and councils alike are in a state of limbo, in which they have existed ever since the structural problems of the houses first became seriously apparent. I, and those owners, have become tired of the complacency exhibited by successive Conservative Ministers.

The right to buy has been a much trumpeted venture on the part of the Government. Indeed, in the recent election campaign it formed a central plank of their manifesto and appeal to the electorate, as it did in 1983. I make no complaint about that, but little or nothing is heard of the plight of those people who have exercised the right to buy their homes from local authorities and who now find themselves facing personal economic disaster. Their plight might not cut much ice with those who can afford to be in the two or perhaps three home-owning league, but it does with me. In the surgeries to which I referred earlier, in addition to the pleas for repairs from tenants of council-owned property in the borough of Sandwell, I have heard heart-rending cases of hardship from those owners who have been unforunate enough in the past to purchase Smith-type houses. They see no real prospect of re-purchase in the immediate future; they have waited in vain for years for an approved system of repair. They have set up a national scheme to enable the owners of Smith houses to have some communication with each other. The national secretary of that scheme, Mrs. Sylvia Holden, resides in your constituency, Madam Deputy Speaker, rather than in mine, but I do not think that I breach any parliamentary protocol when I tell you that she has been to see me on behalf of those constituents of mine who are in a similar position to hers.

What is perhaps far worse for her and the people whom she represents is that they have probably made the largest single purchase of their lives. They are acutely aware of the suspicions of prospective buyers if they try to sell their homes on the open market. It is futile to point out—it has been pointed out in the House by Ministers—that some of the homes have less serious defects than others. I assure the Minister that, to people who are planning to purchase a house in those areas of the country in which Smith properties are most densely located, it matters not whether they are founded on shale, quicksand or the rock of Gibraltar. They are still Smith houses, and it quickly becomes apparent that they are; and, as such, they have about as much allure to the prospective buyer as Dracula's castle.

I have with me a letter from a firm of local estate agents, valuers and surveyors that was written to one of my constituents—Mrs. Dulleston, of 57 William Green road, Wednesbury—as long ago as July 1985. In the letter, the company, Shipley Cameron, states:

"The vast majority of all Building Societies are not now entertaining applications for Smith-type houses and this obviously seriously affects their sale price."

That, perhaps, ranks as the understatement of that year, but it is true now as it was then. As a result of meetings that were held about that time—I know that you, Madam Deputy Speaker, were responsible for convening them, and both of us spoke at them—it was suggested by some owners of these properties that some discreet pressure might be applied by the Government to building societies to make them look sympathetically at the plight of those who were considering applying for mortgages for houses of that type. As long ago as 1985, the estate agents Shipley Cameron referred to that suggestion:

"It has been suggested that Government pressure may be brought to bear discreetly on Building Societies to take a lenient view of the Smith-type construction when considering mortgage finance. I feel that this attitude is rather naive because, as I have mentioned before, Building Societies have a duty of responsibility to their investing members to act wisely. Furthermore, I must underline that Building Society Valuers, upon whose advice the Building Society advance mortgage monies, will be concerned about any possible future negligence claims having recommended a house for mortgage finance with potential structural defects."

Not much prospect is held out there, but there was one optimistic note in the letter:

"If, however, the properties are included in the list of defective houses under the Housing Defects Act of 1984, the problem should resolve itself insomuch that Purchasers, Building Societies, and their valuers will have some protection, against potential defects in Law.

Until such time as this happens I have to tell you that your property is virtually unsaleable and I, together with my colleagues in my Profession, await to see how the situation resolves itself."

Thanks in no small part to the campaign that you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I and other colleagues in the borough of Sandwell waged, and the efforts of Members from other parts of the country, Smith houses have been included in the list under the 1984 Act. However, that has brought little comfort to your constituents or mine, Madam Deputy Speaker, because the shoddy tale of prevarication on the part of the Government has continued, although one must admit that it has been consistent with their political philosophy. Ministers continue to vaunt the private enterprise philosophy and to adopt the principle that the weakest go to the wall when unfortunate individuals such as my constituents try private enterprise and fail. At a recent meeting in Sandwell to discuss the cost of repair of dwellings of this type, an estimate of £20,000 per dwelling was given. On that basis, repairs to Smith properties in Sandwell alone will cost nearly £6 million. The Minister will no doubt remind us that the Government recently allocated a further £388,000 in addition to the figure mentioned earlier for the current year, but that is intended to cover all similar defective properties.

It should be recalled that potential purchasers of such properties are usually first-time buyers with little deposit money and requiring maximum mortgage facilities. It may be argued that if the original purchaser had had a proper structural survey carried out at the time of purchase, the defects might have been revealed. However, there was no legal requirement to spend several hundred pounds on such a survey and it is understandable that people purchasing from a local authority a property in which they had lived trouble-free for some years did not think it necessary to embark on the extra expense of a full structural survey.

The additional £388,000 is scarcely generous. In the borough of Sandwell there are 3,354 properties of non-traditional construction, of which 859 are Smith houses. In that situation, the Government's additional funding is a mere drop in the bucket and will go no way at all to meeting the understandable fears of owners of Smith houses or of the remaining tenants who live in these rapidly crumbling and less than palatial dwellings.

My point to the Minister is blunt, short and specific. When will the Government make adequate funds available so that councils such as mine can repair or repurchase those sort of dwellings? Councils have listened to enough funny words. They thought that they had won a major victory when they were included under the Housing Defects Act 1984. I am afraid that such inclusion is of no value unless some extra cash from the Government is forthcoming.

1.45 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mrs. Marion Roe): I am grateful to the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) for giving us the opportunity to discuss these issues. My Department's officials met representatives of the Sandwell and Districts National Smiths PRC Owners Association earlier this year and I know that they found the meeting very useful. It gave them a clear picture of the problems of Smith owners nationally. The hon. Member has understandably focused on the problems of Smith houses in Sandwell today. However, I would like to take the opportunity to set out the background to the problem generally and to say something about how the housing defects legislation — now consolidated in the Housing Act 1985 — was introduced to deal with it.

When the Building Research Establishment first discovered serious problems with the Airey-type house in 1981, and subsequently found that these problems also affected other prefabricated reinforced concrete houses designed before 1960, former tenants who had exercised their right to buy were faced with immediate problems of mortgageability and blight. We could have relied on the principle of caveat emptor and turned our backs on the problem.

However, we recognised that the Government had a responsibility to those owners who had bought in good faith from the public sector, in ignorance of the inherent defects and that they could not have foreseen these problems when they bought. They now find themselves in an impossible position.

We therefore introduced first the voluntary Airey scheme of assistance in response to the initial Airey problem. Then we brought in the more comprehensive scheme of assistance under the housing defects legislation. The Housing Defects Act 1984 — as it was known before it was consolidated in the Housing Act — had all-party support in its passage through Parliament and it was welcomed as a generous scheme to owners. Smith houses were only recently brought within this legislation.

The Building Research Establishment was originally commissioned to study Smith houses at the time that the Act was going through Parliament. Its findings did not indicate that designation was warranted at that stage. The Smith house is built of large concrete blocks. Although it is another type of concrete house, it does not have the load-bearing reinforcement found in the PRC-type house. Some steel was placed in the blocks for handling purposes.

[Mrs. Marion Roe]

but it is structurally redundant. However, following further representations, particularly from Birmingham Members, as well as the hon. Member for West Bromwich, West (Miss Boothroyd), we asked the BRE to look further at Smith houses in Sandwell. It found vertical splitting and cracking, caused by deterioration of the steel handling reinforcement bars in the concrete blocks. This could ultimately threaten structural stability.

We considered these findings, and other information on loss in values and so on. We concluded that we should designate nationally. My hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Patten) announced this on 19 December 1985. Smith houses were formally designated on 1 May 1986. We also made sure that, when the national designation was made, this would not rule out additional problems found in the foundations at Smith houses in Sandwell. We did this by holding back national designation of the handling bar defect, to give authorities, like Sandwell, time to make local designations to cover the foundation problem.

We always made it clear that we were prepared to look at this matter if new evidence came to light and, when it did, we recognised the very real problems facing Smith owners. We should not overlook this when we discuss some of the particular problems raised by the hon. Member today, and which I know are worrying Smith owners.

Eligible owners are entitled to a 90 per cent. local authority grant to reinstate the property, or 100 per cent. grant in financial hardship cases. Where repair is not possible or is not economic, assistance will still be available by repurchase at 95 per cent. of the defect-free value in relation to both the Smith handling bar defect and the foundation defect.

As to reinstatement under the Act, we are now making good progress on approved repair methods. The National House Building Council's subsidiary, PRC Homes Ltd., has approved 38 repair systems covering 10 designated house types and 24 more schemes are in the pipeline. These approved methods cover over two thirds of designated houses in private ownership. Last autumn, we increased the grant expenditure limits for most of the designated house types, including Smith. The new limit for Smith is £20,000 to deal with the handling bar defect. Where houses in Sandwell also suffer from the use of shale in foundations, owners are entitled to a further grant of up to £14,000 to deal with that problem.

Repairs are now getting under way in many areas of the country. Over 2,000 properties have either been repaired or are currently in the process of repair under the PRC Homes Ltd. warranty scheme. This is what most of us hoped would happen when we brought in this legislation —we know that local authorities and owners want it too. That is not to say that we do not recognise some of the very real pressures facing some owners and their authorities.

As the hon. Member is aware, many Smith owners are anxious to know when they will receive the assistance to which they are entitled and what form that will take. All designations under the Act lay down a 10-year period of assistance, and owners will get their assistance during this period. We should all remember that the Act does not lay down a timetable and the timing of any decisions on individual owners' applications is in the hands of the authority concerned.

That said, the Act does provide help for owners who need to move quickly, under the hardship provisions. These allow owners to claim assistance by repurchase if it would be unreasonable for them to await repair. Decisions on such cases are made at the local authority's discretion. We have given broad guidance in circulars to authorities on the kind of circumstances in which they might offer repurchase on hardship grounds. We look to local authorities to operate the Act in a reasonable way but, ultimately owners who are not satisfied with their council's decision can take the matter to the county court. We would hope that it would not come to this.

The hon. Member has raised the question of repair methods for Smith houses and has referred to delay in obtaining a licensed system. Although it has taken some time satisfactorily to resolve all the technical details, there are signs of some real progress here. A firm of repairers, W. G. Curtin, has submitted a Smith repair system to PRC Homes Ltd. for approval. We understand that this system has now been professionally appraised. We would hope that a licensed repair system for Smith houses will be available before very long. Obviously, Smith houses are somewhat different from PRC type houses and it is important that any repair method proposed meets the requirements of the Act. The repaired property must have an expected life of at least 30 years, and it must be generally accepted as mortageable for the purpose of the Act. That is why any repair system for Smith houses should be appraised carefully, so that the problem can be dealt with properly once and for all.

The grant expenditure limit for Smith houses was increased to £20,000 only last autumn. It is too early to say whether this will represent the average cost of repair, but the situation should become clear once a repair system has emerged.

I know that resources are of particular concern to the hon. Gentleman. The initial 1987-88 housing investment programme allocations were notified to local authorities in December last year. Sandwell received the second highest allocation among the local authorities in the west midlands region, and its estimate of expenditure this year is higher in real terms than that for each of the last two years. We generally expect authorities to be able to meet their obligations on housing defects grants or repurchase from within their normal housing programme resources —in other words, from their basic HIP allocation plus the prescribed proportion of capital receipts. In Sandwell's overall review of management, 1985-86, in the section on resources it says:

"Almost any new initiative will cost money, but the Council is by no means short of it".

The same report quoted substantial reserves in the region of £24 million. Interest alone on that sum would amount to at least £2 million per annum.

However, £14 million extra HIP resources for 1987-88 were set aside nationally for authorities facing particularly high housing defects obligations in relation to the rest of their capital programmes. Sandwell was one of the many authorities to apply for an additional allocation, and in recognition of its particular problems it received an additional £388,000 — the third highest total figure among the claims from other authorities in the region.

Mr. Snape: I want to put two quick points as I understand the time factor. If Sandwell is such a rich authority, why are the Government, who are not renowned for chucking money at local authorities, granting a parsimonious but nevertheless extra amount of £388,000? Secondly, is the Minister aware that there are about 90 of these properties in my constituency alone, there are four times as many in the adjacent constituency of West Bromwich, West and there are plenty of others in the two Warley constituencies? Is it not a question of cash? Sandwell does not have that cash.

Mrs. Roe: I have noted the hon. Gentleman's points. However, the Government have acted fairly towards Sandwell as well as towards many other authorities in this connection.

In conclusion, we are continuing to monitor the position. This year's round of HIP meetings should give my Department's regional office a valuable update. The precise pattern of expenditure under the Housing Defects Act 1984 is not easy to predict. Much depends on when owners apply, what form assistance is likely to take, taking account of the availability and like cost of repair methods, as well as any urgent hardship cases.

Even if large numbers of owners do apply, the cases, for many reasons, do not necessarily crystallise for some time. That is why my Department encourages local authorities and owners to co-operate and reach an agreement on a likely timetable for assistance. That should take full account of owners' needs as well as overall resource availability. We know of many areas where authorities and owners have agreed such programmes, for example, in Bristol, Epping Forest and Birmingham. We believe that, with good will all round, sensible programmes are achievable which are acceptable to all the parties involved.

Bromley (Government Planning Policy)

2 pm

Mr. Roger Sims (Chislehurst): I am grateful for the opportunity to raise the effect of Government planning policies in the London borough of Bromley. I am grateful also to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for attending this, her third debate today. I hope that she will find a special interest in this debate, she being a past member of the council of the London borough of Bromley. I believe that she still has a home within the borough.

I wish to discuss planning procedures in built-up areas, covering extensions and in-fillings, and applications for development within the green belt. I do so in the context of Bromley, but the issues that I shall raise have a wider interest, as was demonstrated in the earlier debate that was raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay).

Planning is a sensitive issue. We all know that an Englishman's home is his castle, and we expect, if we want to, to be able to extend our own home and do whatever we wish to it. It is an entirely different matter, however, if the chap next door wants to extend his home. If we buy a site on which to build our own home, we expect to be able to build the sort of house that we want. If someone else purchases an open space in our neighbourhood and wants to build, we react strongly to the spoiling of our surroundings.

There has to be a correct balance in these matters between the rights of the individual and the rights and needs of the community. The body that exists to strike it is the local council, which is the planning authority. In doing so it is guided by town planning laws, Department of the Environment guidelines, the town plan and members of the local authority who have an intimate knowledge of the area. Local councillors are especially important because every planning case is individual and a development that may be entirely appropriate on one site may be entirely unsuitable on another site nearby.

It can be argued that the local authority should be the final arbiter in these matters, but even councillors are human beings with weaknesses and foibles. They may make mistakes, and in any event natural justice suggests that there should be some system of appeal. Appeal is, theoretically, to the Secretary of State, but we know that in practice these matters are handled by inspectors whom he appoints. The inspectors receive written statements and they might make a site visit. In some instances there will be an inquiry.

The appeal system is somewhat one-sided. If an applicant applies for a development and he is refused by the local authority, he has the right of appeal. There may have been a number of local objections to the proposal, however, and if, despite the objections, the council decides to grant the application, the objectors have no right of appeal. It seems there should be a system whereby in some circumstances at least objectors have a right of appeal, or that in circumstances where there are objections the Secretary of State should call in the plan and examine it himself.

The presumption behind planning laws is, or at least has been, that the local authority knows best, and I am concerned that between 1983 and 1986 the national figures show that the proportion of appeals allowed increased from 32·4 per cent. to 40·5 per cent. That is a large enough

[Mr. Roger Sims]

increase in itself, but over the same period in Bromley the number of appeals allowed increased from 29 per cent. to 44 per cent.

It is worth examining some of the decisions. For example, in Beckenham an entire house that was used as office accommodation without planning permission clearly contravened the local plan in respect of loss of residential accommodation. The enforcement notice that was issued by the council was quashed and permission was granted on appeal. In Orpington, permission was refused on four separate occasions and two appeals were dismissed for the erection of a dwelling house. Towards the end of last year permission was granted on appeal, despite the fact that the house would have virtually no garden. In Chislehurst high street, permission was granted on appeal for car repairs on a prominent site within the Chislehurst conservation area. I see my hon. Friend the Member for Romford (Mr. Neubert) in the Chamber. Alas, he is mute; but, if he were not, he could say that he was until very recently a constituent of mine. Application was made a couple of years ago for development of a site near to where he lived. That application was refused. The applicant took it to appeal, and was refused again. This year, he tried yet again. His application was refused by the local council, but it has now been allowed.

That seems a fairly typical pattern. Applicants who have been refused in the past are now resurrecting their proposals and trying again, because they believe that they will win on appeal. Alas, the figures suggest that they may well be right.

There is particular concern in the borough about applications for intensive flats and sheltered accommodation development in areas of predominantly low-density suburban housing. I have details of six such sites in the borough. In each case, the application for development was refused by the council; in each case, the decision has been overturned on appeal. The borough has a local plan adopted two years ago after a public inquiry. It incorporates the suggestions of the Department of the Environment inspector who conducted the inquiry, and the Department of the Environment was consulted throughout its compilation. The plan includes proposals relating to the pattern and number of dwellings to be built over a decade. However, because of what has been happening under the appeal system, we are already well ahead of those figures, and the character and amenities of parts of the area are being altered. The wishes of local people, residents' associations, councillors and, ultimately, the authority itself are being overturned.

The council wrote to the Department expressing concern at the trend. The reply from an official suggested that the increased number of successful appeals nationally corresponds to the increased rate of refusals by the authorities. That may be so nationally, but it is not so in Bromley. Between 1984 and 1986 there was no material increase in the number of refusals in Bromley, but the proportion of appeals allowed increased from 29 per cent. to 44 per cent.

I am bound to ask who is in charge of planning in Bromley. The council draws up a local plan, it seeks to control development according to it, and according to DOE guidelines and good planning practice, and it is continually undermined. It is not surprising that officers and councillors are becoming demoralised, and are sometimes tempted simply to rubber-stamp applications even if they are inappropriate, because they feel that if they do not agree to them, they will in any case be allowed on appeal.

I have referred to the Chislehurst conservation area. There are a number of conservation areas in the borough, the most recently designated being in Bickley, which is also in my constituency. In an admirable document describing how it intends to control development, the council sent to each resident its policy for conservation areas. Representations have been made to me by my constituents asking me to support the council, and to defend the conservation area policy which it fears is likely to be endangered by the decisions of Department of the Environment inspectors.

It seems sad that my constituents, who are anxious to maintain the quality of their surroundings, are not looking to the Department for the protection of their environment, but are asking me to protect them from the Department. I plead with my hon. Friend the Minister to examine carefully how the appeal procedure is operated. Has there been a change of policy which the inspectors are implementing? Are the inspectors perhaps less diligent, or less sensitive? Are they misinterpreting departmental guidelines? I do not know the answers to those questions, but 44 per cent. of appeals being upheld must mean that something is wrong, and I urge my hon. Friend to put matters right.

There is a substantial area of green belt land in the borough, particularly in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook). My hon. Friend the Minister for Housing and Planning has set out the Government's policy on the green belt on several occasions, most notably in a speech to a Confederation of British Industry's conference in October 1986. That policy was summarised succinctly in reply to a question that I tabled on 19 November 1986. The Minister said:

"There is a general presumption against inappropriate development throughout the green belts."

I do not doubt that there is such a presumption, but that does not prevent applications from being made.

The whole of the London borough of Bromley is particularly concerned about a proposal that involves Hewitts farm, which is now a pick-it-yourself strawberry farm. The owner and Prudential Insurance are planning a massive regional shopping and leisure centre, comprising shopping malls, restaurants, bars, cinemas, sports facilities and a garden centre. That is utterly contrary to the borough's green belt policy, and the council quite rightly has refused the application. We await the almost inevitable appeal and all that that involves. It will be to no purpose, because the appeal will not be allowed. My hon. Friend the Minister surely cannot allow it. I do not expect my hon. Friend to comment on this application, for obvious reasons. However, it will be allowed only over the dead bodies of the four hon. Members who represent Bromley constituencies. Furthermore, it would open the door to similar developments all round the M25. The Government's green belt policy would be in ruins.

Even if the matter goes to appeal and is refused, there is nothing to stop another application being made. That is ridiculous. There is nothing to prevent you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or me, from making an application for anywhere in the green belt and sparking off the whole process of council consideration, refusal, appeal, and again refusal.

with all the costs that are involved and the generation of great local concern, resulting in public meetings and petitions—all to no purpose.

In the question to which I referred I asked my hon. Friend the Minister to

"seek powers to enable him to designate certain green belt land as inviolable areas in respect of which he would not be prepared to entertain planning applications or appeals in relation thereto." [*Official Report*, 19 November 1986; Vol. 105, c. 241-42.]

The reply was that it was not considered to be necessary to take such a power. I am asking my hon. Friend to think again. Surely it would be practicable to take such a power.

I am delighted that my hon. Friend the Member for Esher (Mr. Taylor) is an ally. In an Adjournment debate on 13 July he made the very good point that if property developers

"were told that there would never be an opportunity for them to have land banks in the green belt—because they would never be given the right to develop them—they might turn their ingenuity, enthusiasm and financial acumen to some of our inner-city areas of derelict land."—[*Official Report*, 13 July 1987; Vol. 199, c. 745.]

Surely it should be possible to designate certain parts of the green belt as inviolable for, say, 10 years, with a review thereafter. Potential developers would then be in no doubt about their position. They would not waste their time and energy and cause concern to others by submitting planning applications. The fears of my constituents and of all those who care about the green belt would then be put at rest.

On behalf of the people of Bromley, my message to my hon. Friend and to her erstwhile colleagues on Bromley council is that she should ensure as a general principle that appeal inspectors support and do not undermine a council's planning policy and that our green belt should be made safe from those who wish to despoil it.

Sir Philip Goodhart (Beckenham) *rose*—

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. Does the hon. Member for Beckenham (Sir P. Goodhart) have the consent of the hon. Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims) and the Minister to speak in the debate? I see that he does.

2.14 pm

Sir Philip Goodhart (Beckenham): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims) on securing the debate. I wholly endorse his powerful and sensible speech. During the recent general election campaign, I walked around most of my constituency. I can well understand the anxiety that is felt by many of my constituents about some recent decisions that have been taken by Department of the Environment inspectors. Many such decisions, such as the one that allowed the Sunday market at Beckenham junction, have caused great annoyance and aggravation. My constituents fear that piecemeal decisions by inspectors are undermining sensible local planning policies. As my hon. Friend powerfully reminded us, in the three-year period 1984-86 there was no material increase in the number of applications that were rejected by Bromley council, yet the number of successful appeals has gone up from 29 per cent. to 44 per cent. Not surprisingly, during that period, the number of appeals doubled from 171 to 336.

What can be done? As the Minister knows, I have made two suggestions to her. The first suggestion is that she should hold regular meetings with hon. Members who represent similar constituencies to discuss the implementation by inspectors of Department of the Environment guidelines. The second suggestion is that hon. Members should be allowed to play a more important role in the appeal procedure and that inspectors should be reminded that substantial weight should be given to their views when constituents' amenities are affected.

We have great confidence in the abilities and sensibilities of the new Minister, who once was a Bromley councillor. I am sure that she will effectively stop the destruction of pleasant neighbourhoods.

2.16 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mrs. Marion Roe): I am particularly grateful to my hon. Friends the Members for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims) and for Beckenham (Sir P. Goodhart) for putting the issues before the House. I have listened most carefully to all the points that they have made about their concerns over certain aspects of the Government's planning policies as they affect the London borough of Bromley. I am pleased to be able to reply to the debate. As my hon. Friends have said, I retain a close interest in the affairs of the borough, having been a councillor in Bromley for three years. I do, of course, have a personal knowledge of some of the issues that have been raised, especially the developments adjacent to the ward that I represented on Bromley council.

My hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst has drawn attention to the pleasant environment that is enjoyed by the borough and the importance of the green belt to it. Bromley is most fortunate in having within its boundaries what is, I believe, the largest area of green belt of any of the London boroughs. From my own experience, I am well aware of the great value that Bromley people place on the lovely countryside in and around the borough. I also know how well managed the borough is. Within the context of the debate, Bromley is, for example, third in the London league in the speed of processing planning applications.

Over the past five years, Bromley has spent at or below the Government's expenditure guidelines. That prudence has allowed the council to benefit the ratepayers of Bromley with a local rate that has consistently been among the lowest in outer London. It is, of course, the quality of the countryside, coupled with the character of residential areas, which Bromley residents wish to protect. Inevitably, such a thriving area is under considerable pressure for development. Not surprisingly, others wish to share that prosperity, and the pressures for development are therefore intense. It is those pressures, and the apparent results of them, to which my hon. Friend has drawn my attention. Not only does the council aim to protect the countryside, but it has imaginative schemes for the enhancement of its built-up areas. My predecessor, Lord Skelmersdale, visited the borough last month to see the progress on the "Green and Clean" campaign. He was, I know, impressed by what he saw.

I am sure that my hon. Friend will understand that I cannot comment on the various planning decisions that have been issued or are in train. That would be quite improper. However, I should like to respond in general terms to the points that have been raised. If I fail to deal with any, I shall, of course, write to my hon. Friend about them.

I am aware of the considerable concern in Bromley about the increase in the number of appeals that are being

[Mrs. Marion Roe]

allowed. This is understandably seen by some as undermining the authority of the local planning authority. My hon. Friend asked a question on this subject only last December. I have also received correspondence on the same point from my hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham. Furthermore, the chief planner of the borough has written to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

It is a fact that since 1983 there has been a significant increase in the proportion of appeals allowed, not only in Bromley, but nationally. However, there has also been, in the relevant period, a marked increase in the rate at which local planning authorities refuse applications for planning permission — from 12·8 per cent. in 1983 to 14·9 per cent. in 1986. In absolute numbers, this amounts nationally to 11,000 more refusals a year.

To place those figures in their context, the House should know that in the same period planning applications increased in total by 14,000. There was no change in national planning policies or in development plan policies that would have justified that increase in the rate of refusal. The Government have no wish to undermine local authorities carrying out their responsibilities, but our inspectors have been taking these national policies into account, and have taken different views from local planning authorities in a large number of cases.

As far as refusal of planning permission in Bromley is concerned, the rate of refusal during 1984 to 1986 has been about six percentage points higher than in London and England as a whole. As my hon. Friend has said, it is true that there was no material increase in refusals in Bromley between 1984 and 1986, but Bromley's refusal rate rose from 17 and 15 per cent. in 1982 and 1983 to 21 and 22 per cent. in the following three years. So it is not surprising that the percentage of appeals allowed rose. However, it is now back in line with the national average.

We should also keep the increase in the percentage of appeals allowed in perspective. The applications permitted as a result of appeal represent less than 2 per cent. of the 350,000 or so planning permissions given each year. Some commentators allege that my Department's circular 14/85 was responsible for the increase, but this circular was no more than a simple reminder of the general presumption in favour of allowing applications for development, having regard to all material considerations, unless that development would cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance. The principle is as old as the 1947 planning system and the key words were repeated from circulars issued in 1949 and 1953. The principle was again restated in 1985 in the White Paper "Lifting the Burden".

I note that Bromley council is concerned that the Department and inspectors are not taking proper account of the local plan in allowing appeals. That is not so. The White Papers "Lifting the Burden" and "Building Businesses . . . Nor Barriers" specifically referred to the need for development plans, and our consultation paper on the future of development plans equally emphasises the importance of such plans in our system of planning control. The latter said that they were a vital part of the framework for development control and that, while they are not prescriptive, they provide a firm basis for rational and consistent decisions on applications.

I do not want to understate the problems that face planning authorities. We face a considerable problem of reconciling throughout the south-east the pressures for housing on the one hand with the need to conserve the environment on the other. We all accept that there are difficult decisions to be taken on whether and where to allow development. The main vehicle for resolving these differences is the development plan, which is why we place such importance on streamlining.

In each appeal case, the inspector must carefully consider the development plan policies. I am well aware that Bromley is concerned that its plan is not accorded sufficient weight by inspectors, but I must underline that it is only one of the factors which must be weighed in the balance. An inspector will set aside the provisions of the plan only with good reason and he must give a clear explanation why he does so in his report. Similarly the views of local people are also given considerable weight in planning matters and, again, in giving his decision, the inspector must explain the account he has taken of them.

My hon. Friend asked about the objectors' right of appeal. It is certainly true that third parties do not have any right of appeal against a decision of the local planning authority to allow development. Applicants, on the other hand, do have a right of appeal against a refusal. This difference dates from the creation of the post-war planning system by the Town and Country Planning Act 1947. That Act substantially strengthened controls over the use and development of privately owned land. It took away many of the rights of the individual to develop his property as he wished. Yet within the modern planning system there has always been a presumption in favour of development. The local authority must be able to establish good reasons for preventing or interfering with a proposed development. For cases where the developer considered the authority's decision to be unreasonable, Parliament provided a right of appeal to the Secretary of State.

A third party, on the other hand, lost no rights as a result of the 1947 Act, so no right of appeal was needed. However, he was given, and still enjoys, a right which he did not previously have — the right to make his views known to the elected local authority and to have them taken into account in the decision-making process.

I should like to turn now more specifically to the issue of development in the green belt. In particular, I am aware of the application for a major retail-leisure complex at Hewitt's farm, permission for which was refused by Bromley council on 24 March. From what I have already said, my hon. Friend will understand that I am unable to comment on the merits of this particular application lest I prejudice the Secretary of State's quasi-judicial role in determining any appeal that may come before him. Nevertheless, in general policy terms, the Government remain firmly committed to maintaining the green belt. This long-established policy was restated in my Department's circular 14 of 1984. The Government are not opposed to new methods of retailing and the benefits that modern retailing schemes can bring to the customer. But the Government have also made it clear that large retail stores simply do not belong in green belts. We have also made it clear that developers who pursue proposals for large scale retail developments in green belts to appeal and are unsuccessful may expect to have the costs of any inquiry awarded against them.

My hon. Friend has asked whether certain parts of the green belts should be designated as inviolate and that

planning applications should not be entertained in respect of such areas. This proposal raises a fundamental issue. Our planning system is founded upon the principle that each case—each planning application or appeal—should be considered on its merits. In green belts, and only in these areas, there is a presumption against inappropriate development. Duncan Sandys' historic circular 42/55 states:

"Inside a Green Belt, approval should not be given, except in very special circumstances, for the construction of new buildings or for the change of use of existing buildings for purposes other than agriculture, sport, cemeteries, institutions standing in extensive grounds, or other uses appropriate to a rural area".

But my hon. Friend will realise that even in green belts certain forms of development have always been considered appropriate. There is, for example, no reason for preventing appropriate agricultural or sporting uses of green belt land. Moreover, there needs to be provision for allowing other development, in exceptional circumstances, as circular 14/84 and its predecessors have made clear.

I believe that there would also be considerable practical difficulties in pursuing the designation of absolute "no go" areas for development. Leaving aside the question of appropriate powers, there is the procedure for defining such special areas. It would be for the local planning authorities to identify the areas, through their structure and local plans, in the same way that they have brought forward proposals for green belts for the Secretary of State's approval. This would be a protracted process and I remind the House that, despite encouragement from Ministers, we still do not have detailed green belt boundaries adopted or approved for many areas. There would be the impact of such designations on other green belt areas — there would in effect be first and second-class green belt — and doubtless heated local debate about which should apply where. These are just a few of the issues which the creation of areas, without planning applications or new development, would raise.

The Government are not insensitive to the problems caused by the relentless pressures applied by some developers who seek to undermine our green belt policy, but we need to work within the framework of the existing planning system. I make no apology for not dealing with specific cases raised by my hon. Friend, but he will understand why. On the general matters, Bromley receives the same even-handed treatment from my Department as any other borough or district. I assure the House that each case is considered purely on its merits.

It being half-past Two o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Terms and Conditions of Employment

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.)

That the draft Job Release Act 1977 (Continuation) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 28th April, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved. — *[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

Question agreed to.

Herald of Free Enterprise

2.30 pm

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Paul Channon): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement about the report of the formal investigation into the loss of the vessel Herald of Free Enterprise which capsized outside Zeebrugge harbour on 6 March this year. Mr. Justice Sheen was appointed the Wreck Commissioner to conduct the investigation, assisted by four assessors. He has today delivered the court's report. I have placed a copy in the Library.

I thought that the House would wish to have an immediate statement before we rose for the summer recess. However, I apologise, in particular to the Opposition, for the fact that I was unable to give them the usual notice of this statement. The judge has only just finished delivering his findings, and the alternative would have been no statement. I hope that the House will understand, and I apologise to the Opposition if, in any way, I have inconvenienced them by this course.

The court found that the Herald of Free Enterprise put to sea with her outer and inner bow doors fully open, and thereafter, as speed built up, water entered on to the vehicle deck in large quantities and destroyed her stability. The ship then capsized rapidly. Fortunately, the vessel sank in shallow water. Thanks to great efforts by the Belgian authorities and others, 350 people were rescued, but at least 188 lost their lives.

The court found that the capsize was the joint fault of the master, the chief officer, the assistant bosun, and of Townsend Car Ferries Ltd. at all levels of management. The court has suspended the certificate of the master for one year and of the chief officer for two years.

The court found that the vessel's construction conformed with the relevant statutory requirements. She possessed a valid passenger ship safety certificate, and she carried life-saving equipment in excess of the minimum statutory requirements. However, the court made severe criticisms of the management of Townsend Car Ferries Ltd. and in particular the failure of the company to give clear orders about the duties of the officers on the Zeebrugge run: this contributed greatly to the cause of the disaster. The report draws attention to failures on the part of the management of the company to give attention to warnings from the masters of the vessels in their fleet, or to suggestions of ways of improving safety. In particular, the company did not give proper attention to complaints that ships had proceeded to sea carrying passengers in excess of the permitted numbers, to suggestions for the fitting of warning lights on the bridge to indicate whether the bow and stern doors were open, and to problems over reading the draughts of the vessels. However, the report notes that a new top management has since been appointed to the company, which has taken to heart the gravity of the catastrophe and has shown a determination to put its house in order.

The report contains a number of recommendations for measures to improve the safety of passenger ro-ro ferries. These are divided into those for immediate action, those for action in the near future and those for action in the longer term. Many are of major importance. The House will appreciate that in the short time available I have not been able to reach a firm view on all of them. I will be discussing the report and its recommendations with

[Mr. Paul Channon]

representatives of the ferry operators and port industry next week. However, there are certain measures that I can now announce.

I am straightaway undertaking the necessary statutory consultations to make mandatory the following three items: first, the fitting of the indicator lights to show the position of superstructure doors; secondly, the fitting of closed circuit television monitors for surveillance of the car deck and to enable the position of the car deck doors to be monitored from the bridge; and, thirdly, the provision of self-contained emergency lighting units of the type proposed in the report. I propose that these requirements will be applied to all ro-ro passenger vessels operating to or from ports in the United Kingdom, regardless of flag. Next, I am consulting the industry, as a matter of urgency, on three further measures recommended in the report: first, the fitting of draught gauges; secondly, the fitting of load indicators; thirdly, the design of windows, including the use of toughened or laminated glass.

The number of passengers on board the Herald of Free Enterprise at the time of the disaster was within the permitted maximum, but, as I have mentioned, the report draws attention to a worrying number of reported incidents of ferries carrying passengers in excess of the permitted maximum. The court considers that it would be possible to introduce a system under which every passenger has a boarding card. The number of cards issued for each voyage would correspond to the permitted maximum number of passengers, which would automatically avoid the risk of carrying excess numbers. I shall be pursuing this proposal with the ferry operators.

The court found that on her departure from Zeebrugge the Herald was probably significantly overloaded as to weight, although the overload was not in any way a cause of the casualty. The report draws attention to problems in measuring the weight of vehicles on ferries, and in identifying the effect of the distribution of the load on the draught and trim of the vessel. In my discussions with port authorities and ferry operators, I shall be pursuing the suggestion in the report for making greater use of weighbridges for improving information supplied to masters about the weight of vehicles loading on to ferries. In addition, I shall examine with the industry the problems which can arise when the design of a berth makes it physically impossible for a vessel to close its loading doors before it has pulled away. As recommended by the report, my Department will also conduct an analysis of the weight of long-distance coaches.

In his statement on 9 March immediately following the disaster, my right hon. Friend and predecessor announced that the Department's surveyors were embarking on a programme of checks on roll-on/roll-off ferries in United Kingdom ports to ensure that all loading door mechanisms were in working order and that officers and crew were aware of the correct operating procedures. I can announce today that the arrangements will be extended to include random checks on ferries to ensure that statutory requirements about loading, stability and passenger numbers are being observed.

In its recommendations for the longer term, the court recommended detailed investigations and model tests with a view to increasing the stability of ro-ro passenger ferries, and to examine the implications of the provision of bulkheads on vehicle decks. My Department is therefore making available an additional £1 million to support an enhanced programme of research into this difficult area.

As part of the continuing process of improving safety standards, the stability regulations for passenger ferries were revised in 1980. Although the Herald was built in accordance with the 1980 standards, the report draws attention to ferries built to those previous standards, which date from 1965, and suggests that those which cannot meet the 1980 standards should be phased out. Although there is no reason for undue concern about the safety of these older vessels, my Department will reassess their stability standards against the standards adopted in 1980, and in the light of this assessment decide what further action is necessary.

During the hearings different views were expressed about whether the act of taking a vessel to sea with its bow doors open constituted an offence under the Merchant Shipping Acts. The court was clearly of the opinion that no statutory offence had been committed. This disaster has demonstrated the appalling consequences that can follow when a ferry proceeds to sea with its bow doors open, and in my view this should be a criminal offence. I shall therefore include in the Merchant Shipping Bill, which I intend to introduce in Parliament after the recess, a provision to strengthen the law in this respect.

Mr. Justice Sheen, his assessors, and others who participated in the investigation are to be congratulated on producing such a comprehensive report so rapidly. I will ensure that my Department takes forward with equal urgency further action following consideration of the recommendations. I am sure that the whole House will join me in once again expressing sympathy for the injured and bereaved and will share my determination that no effort should be spared in making sure that a disaster of this kind shall not happen again.

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): Will the right hon. Gentleman accept that Mr. Justice Sheen's report amplifies a horrifying state of affairs? When the Herald of Free Enterprise left the quayside at Zeebrugge that fateful night, the captain had been told that there were fewer than 1,300 passengers aboard, whereas a later count showed 1,550. The ferry started to sea with the bow doors open, and not for the first time. Ship's rules show that the captain was to assume that the doors were closed until otherwise informed. The captain had only three officers, instead of the usual four, with the result that Chief Officer Sable had two jobs to do in different places—one at the bow doors and one on the bridge. Some lorries on the vehicle deck were overloaded, and others were carrying illegal chemicals, including cyanide. Vehicle drivers were habitually allowed to remain in their cabs. The vessel was bow down because of an unknown quantity of water in the bow ballast tank No. 14.

The Herald of Free Enterprise was a latterday Titanic, wrecked on an iceberg of Department of Transport indifference, managerial incompetence and working methods that were apparently designed only to shorten turn around times, regardless of risks to passengers and crew.

We believe that the recommendation to suspend two crew members is deplorable. The two men worked to arrangements that had been condoned or approved by management. Those same arrangements were probably adhered to by most other principal officers in the

Townsend Thoresen fleet. Neither the captain, nor the chief officer, nor any other member of the crew was under the influence of alcohol. At no time did they disobey company instructions. The pleas of Captain Lewry and other senior officers for better arrangements, such as warning lights on the bridge, were consistently ignored by the company. These men are the victims of an incompetent safety management system. The company's management is responsible under law for the safety of the ship and for the people who are on board. The company, and not those officers, should therefore be brought to account. It has become clear during the inquiry that the company lacked competent safety management and directions. Under law, the company has a legal duty to provide safe systems of work, a safe place of work, the necessary training, and the necessary instructions, information and supervision to its staff. On all those counts the company was negligent.

I turn, if I may, to the part played by the right hon. Gentleman's Department. The Department of Transport has a duty to ensure the safety of ships and persons on board. That duty, over many years and under many Governments, has been neglected. So far as I am aware — the report does not disagree — at no time were unannounced inspections made for the purpose of ensuring that the ship was loaded within the required limits for passengers and cargo, that safe working arrangements applied, that prohibited, dangerous goods were not carried and that records of the ship's draught were not being falsified.

The Department of Transport is consistently reducing the number of inspectors who are charged with responsibility for ensuring that such breaches do not take place. Over many years, the Department has taken a leisurely view of its responsibilities. It has failed to create a climate in which proper safety standards are observed on the cross-Channel fleet. The Herald of Free Enterprise demonstrated that, left to their own devices, shipowners are less stringent with themselves on safety matters than they should be, and the right hon. Gentleman's Department was content to let that state of affairs continue.

The report has something to say about the issue of the design of ro-ro ferries. The report shows, and previous inquiries held by the Secretary of State's Department show, that ro-ro ships that take on water to the main vehicle deck or its equivalent sink within 10 minutes. The Herald of Free Enterprise sank in less than two minutes. The report acknowledges that there are no specific design regulations for ro-ro ships. The governing regulations are derived from those that apply to conventional cargo ships, which are subdivided above and below the water line.

The report points to the fact that the Department of Transport has had previous warnings. The court of inquiry into the loss of the European Gateway recommended that "consideration should be given to catering for the possibility that a vessel may have to be abandoned when listing to more than 15 degrees."
Preliminary research was completed in 1985. Neither the Government nor the shipowners would put up the money for that research to continue.

The present position is that research is undertaken in conjunction with the General Council of British Shipping. So far, the research has been conducted by two consultancy companies — Three Quays, a subsidiary of P and O, and Hart Fenton, a subsidiary of Sealink. In evidence to the court of inquiry the Sealink consultants said that there was nothing inherently wrong with passenger ro-ro design. It is clear to us, however, that design research is needed. That research must be independent of the shipping companies and entirely Government financed. It should also be conducted over a sufficient period for its conclusions to be properly validated.

I wish to put a number of questions to the Secretary of State. Will the Government ensure an early debate in the House on ferry safety? What action do the Government intend to take towards the rapid negotiation of EEC agreements on ferry loading and safety? In the meantime, will they act unilaterally in relation to ferries using British ports? Will the Government institute proper vehicle weight checks for all lorries at ferry ports? Would not the computerised weighbridges readily available throughout the world not only assist ferry captains and operators properly to assess ships' loads but have the spin-off benefit of eradicating the dangerous menace of overloaded lorries on Britain's roads?

What action do the Government intend to take to ensure that ferry companies hold accurate and complete passenger logs? Will the Government now ensure proper segregation of passengers and vehicles on ro-ro ferries? What improvements do the Government intend to institute in ferry design to reduce the rate of accidents? Will they insist on changes in ships' working practices, and how will those rules be enforced?

Will the Government take action to ensure that the latest jumbo ferries are fitted with a proper system to predict and check their stability, so as to reassure intending passengers that ships such as the newly launched and quaintly named Pride of Dover do not take 2,300 people to a premature and watery grave? Will the Minister confirm that the Taskmaster system has been in service since 1982, but has not yet been installed in any ro-ro vessel of the Townsend Thoresen fleet?

The inquiry has been held into a tragedy as avoidable as it was horrific. It is the Secretary of State's duty to ensure that the cosy world in which the Department has colluded with indifferent ship owners to ensure that turn-around speed and company receipts took precedence over passenger and crew safety is no longer allowed to continue. The time is long overdue for the Department to carry out its legal duties in terms of maritime safety.

The Department's call for action against crew members but not against the company is deplorable. The Secretary of State must assure the House today that the questions and recommendations that I have put will be acted upon forthwith.

Mr. Channon: I shall do my utmost to answer the questions put to me by the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape), who has raised matters which I take extremely seriously, as does the whole House. He will forgive me if I do not accept many of his criticisms of the Department, but we can perhaps debate those matters fully on another occasion. The arrangement of a debate is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House, but I shall certainly draw his attention to today's exchanges and I am sure that he will give sympathetic consideration to the case so cogently made by the hon. Gentleman.

[Mr. Channon]

The treatment of the crew members is a matter for the court, not for me. Mr. Justice Sheen and the court reached that conclusion. It is not a matter for me or for the Department.

Mr. Snape: Yes, it is.

Mr. Channon: The hon. Gentleman is under a misapprehension. I set up the inquiry, but the judge makes the decisions. It is the judge who decides whether a master's certificate should be suspended or withdrawn. That is nothing to do with me and I have no locus whatsoever in the matter. I assure the hon. Gentleman that that is the situation — I have checked it extremely carefully.

I have already explained the situation in relation to the company. The view expressed by the court, not by me, is that no statutory offence has been committed. That is the view of the court, not mine.

I tried in my opening remarks to cover some of the points that the hon. Gentleman has raised. The judge has divided his recommendations into three groups. Clearly, those of most immediate concern are those that he recommends for immediate action. I am undertaking the necessary statutory consultations to make mandatory the following three items which cover some of the points that the hon. Gentleman made: the fitting of indicator lights, closed-circuit television monitors, and self-contained emergency lighting units.

I am consulting the industry about weight checks, and the question of separating passengers from vehicles is being examined carefully. I am doubling the funds available for research into the important matter of ferry design. That will cover the whole question of stability and all the other technical points that are contained in the report and about which, with respect, I do not think it is wise for the House to form a final view until we have had more time to study and know exactly what the technical situation is.

As the report shows, it is extremely important that companies that are operating ferries, or indeed any other type of ship, should have proper operating practices, so that the masters of those ships know where they stand, and so that they are responsible for their ships. Company managements should lay down proper operating practices. The hon. Gentleman made severe criticisms of the management of Townsend. Indeed, so did the judge. What the House must, in fairness, also take into account, because it is extremely important that the public should understand this, is that the judge specifically went out of his way of say that the new management that has taken over—*[Interruption.]* The House must understand that there are new managers. That is not my view; that is the view of the court. That is what the court said.

If I have not covered all the other matters that the hon. Gentleman raised, I shall certainly examine them in great detail and speed, and be in touch with him.

Mr. John Prescott (Kingston upon Hull, East): The report is an indictment of the sloppy practices that have gone on for many years between shipping companies and the Department in defining safety regulations for vessels. It has been encouraged by the deplorable practice of promising owners that they would not be prosecuted if they co-operated with inquiries. The Government have acted against the crew members and officers of vessels, as in this case, while companies have got off scot-free.

Is the Secretary of State aware that, while he has repeated the court's claim that it is not a statutory offence to proceed to sea with the doors open—the Merchant Shipping Act 1984 does not say that that is an offence —it is clearly an offence to send a ship to sea in an unseaworthy condition? To have open bow doors is clearly an unseaworthy condition, and the death of 188 people bears testimony to that.

The Secretary of State is not prepared to face his responsibilities and prosecute the company and seeks to hide behind the court in respect of the Merchant Shipping Act 1984, but his own regulations, placed before the House in 1984, place an obligation on companies to provide safe places of work and safe working practices. Any breach of those 1984 regulations is a criminal offence. On the basis of the report, it is possible to prosecute the company. Therefore, will the Secretary of State now face up to his obligations and prosecute the company, instead of hiding behind the fact that it has a new management? Will he prosecute the company for committing this offence?

Mr. Channon: With respect, it is not my view, but the view of the court. I quote the words used in the judge's findings:

"The court is able to deal with this question on this occasion because it is clearly of the opinion that no statutory offence has been committed."

The court has taken the view that no offence has been committed. That is why I propose to introduce in the autumn specific measures under the Merchant Shipping Act to change the position. I should have thought that the House would welcome the fact that we are taking an early opportunity to make the law completely clear on this point. The officers are not being prosecuted. The hon. Gentleman misunderstands. The court decides whether, in its view, there has been negligence by the master or the officers. On this occasion the court decided that there was negligence by the master and the chief officer, and it has taken steps that it thinks right. I am prepared to face up to my responsibilities, and what I have announced this afternoon is probably the most comprehensive list of changes and improvements in safety that has ever been announced from this Dispatch Box.

Mr. Terence Higgins (Worthing): Can we be clear about this? Is my right hon. Friend saying that it is not a statutory offence to take to sea a ship that is unseaworthy, but he proposes to legislate to make it so?

Mr. Channon: My right hon. Friend will be aware that the vessel itself was not unseaworthy. The court found that it sailed with its doors open, and that was the serious situation that caused this appalling disaster. The court takes the view that no statutory offence has been committed. I shall change the law to make sure that in future it will be a statutory offence.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): The Secretary of State may be trying to escape liability on the issue of criminal offence, but he repeated the judgment of the court that the fault lay with named officers and with the company. The country will not understand his attitude unless he admits to the House that Townsend Thoresen was grossly negligent. The country will want to hear what action is being taken against the company for that negligence.

Is it, as it was suggested, because the Department fears that some of its officials will be seen to have been negligent that it is not willing to request and initiate action? I fear that unless action is taken, and unless the Secretary of State concedes that gross negligence occurred as a result of the behaviour of the company and possibly that of the Department, the legacy of this terrible tragedy will be that those who died paid the price of free enterprise. That will be the motto of this incident.

Mr. Channon: It must be clear from my statement and from the judge's findings that he considered Townsend Thoresen to have been negligent. I have already said so in my statement. If I had found that there had been criticism of my Department which showed that the Department or senior officials had been negligent, I would not have hesitated to take the appropriate action. There is no such suggestion in the report. I have already explained fully to the House the judge's view of the company's management at the time that this took place. I am glad to say that he does not take that view of the present management.

Mr. John Ward (Poole): Do not the remarks already made reflect the importance of studying the whole report and considering it carefully before making comments? I shall concentrate on one small but important aspect of what I have already heard. My constituency has a roll-on/roll-off ferry. We have sophisticated weighing machines, but they are used only on a voluntary basis. There is evidence to suggest that drivers of overloaded vehicles use other ports without such sophisticated weighing devices, or where they are inoperative. Would not one small but important aspect of this inquiry be that there should be compulsory weighing of vehicles whenever entering or leaving ports, and preferably, by agreement with the EEC, that such weighing should take place at the departure point on the continent as well?

Mr. Channon: My hon. Friend makes a fair point with which most hon. Members will agree, that the report is long and needs detailed study. The House will wish to come back to the subject. We should study it with care before coming to final conclusions about many of its points.

I shall be pursuing the greater use of weighbridges for improving the information supplied to masters about the weight of vehicles loading on to ferries. I shall be examining that as a matter of urgency in the discussions with port authorities and ferry operations that I shall carry out next week. I make it clear that that is an important point, but it was not the cause of this disaster.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): With respect to the ship's rules and regulations, if there was no system of positive reporting required by the company, why is the company not wholly responsible for what happened? Does the report go into that? Secondly, does the report deal with the terms and conditions of service of the officers and men? How secure was their employment? Were there any terms whereby renewal of employment was required at short notice or in the short term? If that matter was not dealt with by the report, will the Minister make inquiries?

Mr. Channon: The report did not go into the latter point raised by the hon. Gentleman, or if it did, it was not dealt with in any great detail. I shall, of course, make inquiries into that matter.

With regard to the responsibility for the disaster, in the final section of his report, the judge answers questions submitted to him. He was asked:

"What caused the Herald to capsize? How many lives were lost?"

The questions raised other important points. They included:

"Was the capsize caused or contributed to by the fault of any person or persons, and if so whom and in what respect?"

The answers were as follows:

"Yes, by the faults of the following: Mr. Mark Victor Stanley, Mr. Leslie Sable, Captain David Lewry, Townsend Car Ferries Limited at all levels from the board of directors through the managers of marine departments down to the junior superintendents."

As to the respects in which each of those people was guilty of cause or at fault, the whole report must be studied to get all the details.

Mr. John Wheeler (Westminster, North): My right hon. Friend is right to tell the House that the report must be considered very carefully. However, the interests of the nation require that justice should be seen to be done. Will he assure the House that all the facts and evidence relating to this appalling affair are examined by the Attorney-General and the Director of Public Prosecutions as an additional safeguard?

Mr. Channon: I certainly cannot object to my hon. Friend's suggestion. However, I would mislead the House if I did not remind it that the court has clearly come to the view, and states in black and white, that it believes that no statutory offence has been committed.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Does the Secretary of State concede that our thanks are due to Mr. Justice Sheen for the work that he and his colleagues have undertaken in bringing to light the unhappy events surrounding the disaster? Those of us who have taken time — there may be many, although I am not sure — to attend the public inquiry will feel, as I felt, that it was one of the most horrific experiences of our lives. It was particularly horrific for me as a former seagoing engineer.

I draw the Secretary of State's attention to page 22, paragraph 10.3, of the report, which examines the background. It states:

"In October 1983 the assistant bosun of the Pride had fallen asleep and had not heard 'Harbour Stations' being called, with the result that he neglected to close both the bow and stern doors on the sailing of the vessel from No. 5 berth, Dover.

A general instruction issued in July 1984 which prescribed that it was the duty of the officer loading the main vehicle deck, G deck, to ensure that the bow doors were 'secure when leaving port'."

Was that incident reported to the Secretary of State's Department? If so, what action was taken? Some of us may be guilty of trying to be wise after the event, but it appears as though someone was not wise prior to the event.

I am not sure whether I follow some of my colleagues with regard to the responsibilities of the master and the officers of the ship. However, they have been punished in the working and public domains. They will bear the scars for the rest of their lives. Because of the withdrawal of certificates for one year or two years, I doubt whether these gentlemen will ever go to sea again.

However, what of the company? If anything is written into the history of the merchant service, it should be paragraph 14.1 of the report, which states:

"At first sight the faults which led to the disaster were those of the aforesaid errors of omission on the part of the

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Master, Chief Officer and assistant bosun, and also the failure by Captain Kirkby to issue and enforce clear orders. But a full investigation into the circumstances of the disaster leads inexorably to the conclusion that the underlying or cardinal faults lay higher up in the Company. The Board of Directors did not appreciate their responsibility for the safe management of their ships. They did not apply their minds to the question: What orders should be given for the safety of our ships? The directors did not have any proper "

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is unfair not to ask a question. I appreciate that there has not been an opportunity to read the report.

Mr. Douglas: I appreciate your stricture, Mr. Speaker. The paragraph continues:

"From top to bottom the body corporate was infected with the disease of sloppiness."

What does the Minister propose to do and what avenues are available to ensure that the company and the people who were truly responsible are called to account?

Mr. Channon: First, the July 1984 incident was not reported to my Department. If it had been, appropriate action would have been taken. Secondly, the hon. Gentleman has read the telling quotations which appear in paragraph 14. I have already made clear to the House that the judge has been extremely scathing about the management of Townsend. I am sure that the House will wish to study the report in full, it being difficult to scrutinise it adequately in a short time. We have had the report for only a short time and with respect I think that it is unwise of the House to press too hard on issues which few of us have had the chance properly to examine. The management is severely criticised in the report but there is no question of a criminal offence. It is extremely important to understand that the management concerned is no longer in charge of the company. That must be a safeguard for the travelling public.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): Will my right hon. Friend do two things quickly? First, will he take further legal advice on whether it is an offence to take a ship with a hole in it to sea? Secondly, will he immediately request all ferry companies to institute a boarding card system as from 1 August, bearing in mind that that is the height of the holiday season?

Mr. Channon: I am seeing the ferry companies next week, and I shall discuss that issue with them. The boarding card suggestion is an important one, but it would not have prevented the disaster. The House and the country must understand that the disaster was caused because a ship sailed with its doors open and that steps are being taken to ensure that that can never happen again. That is the crucial issue in the short term. I have already explained the measures that I am already setting in hand, which I believe are far-reaching, and I think that it will be realised that the most energetic steps are being taken to protect people's safety on board ferries. I am sure that my hon. Friend will understand that I have already taken the best legal advice that is available.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): Does the Secretary of State agree that over the past few years the number of inspectors has been reduced in his Department? Does he agree further that the frequency of inspections has decreased, with the result that there has been an increase in sloppiness? Does he accept that his Department has some part or blame to share in this appalling disaster?

Mr. Channon: I am advised that the frequency of inspections has not decreased. However, I shall check what the hon. Gentleman has said and write to him about the matter. It is an extremely important issue. Having been Secretary of State for the Department of Trade and Industry for only six weeks, I intend in future to make sure that we have an adequate system to ensure that the House is fully satisfied about future arrangements in this area.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): I welcome the Government's response to the report, especially the proposal for extra funding for the research into and design of roll-on/roll-off ferries, but I find it somewhat odd that my right hon. Friend has not seen fit to condemn the company for its part in the responsibility for this tragedy. Whatever we think about the merits of the Channel tunnel, it is in British interests that there should be as many efficient, cheap and safe ferry crossings to the continent as possible. While we must ensure that there is never a repetition of this tragedy, will my right hon. Friend bear in mind Britain's long-term interests?

Mr. Channon: Of course I shall, and I entirely share my hon. Friend's views. He says that I have not condemned the company, but I do not think that any Minister could have made more scathing comments about the company's management. That echoes what the judge said in his report. I am sure that there is common ground in the House about the necessity for the greatest possible number of routes, and the safest possible routes, across the Channel — whether they are by ferry, by the Channel tunnel or by any other means — and I shall do my utmost to achieve that.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): Leaving aside all the legalistic bobbing and weaving, will the Secretary of State agree that this is exactly the sort of subject for the methods and discipline of the diagnostic engineer? Does he accept that diagnostic engineers have been saying for years that such an accident was waiting to happen—that a car deck without bulkheads and weirplates, and with water swilling around, was guaranteed to produce such an accident, regardless of how many or how few people were on board? Will the right hon. Gentleman give the House an assurance that the one legacy that he will leave us of his tenure of office is the introduction of regulations to ensure that any ferry using a British port will have provision similar to the provision in the car parks under the House to protect the property of hon. Members, which is sometimes stuck there for two or three years on end? No threat to mankind is involved there. Will the Secretary of State ensure that regulations are introduced which make certain that no swilling of water on ferries can possibly happen again?

Mr. Channon: The hon. Gentleman has raised an important point. He will recall from my statement that the court recommends in the longer term that detailed research should be carried out into increasing the stability of ro-ro passenger ferries, and that the implications of the provision of bulkheads on vehicle decks should be examined. That is my policy. I have already announced that I am doubling the amount of research available on the matter, and I shall keep the hon. Gentleman in touch with progress.

Mr. Terry Dicks (Hayes and Harlington): How can negligence at officer level be an offence, while negligence at company level is not? Most people in this country cannot understand why the company is still being allowed to sail ferries across the Channel. May I ask my right hon. Friend to do something different from what he suggested, and to take to himself and his Department powers to license ferry operators, rather than just looking at the seaworthiness of ships? If he had had that power at the time of the accident, Townsend Thoresen ferries could have been taken off the sea, and he would have been empowered to ensure that they never sailed again. The people have the right to know the truth, whether public or private enterprise is involved. They want to see the management of Townsend Thoresen punished, and I think that the sooner the company is closed down in one way or another, the better it will be.

Mr. Channon: Let me deal first with the question of licensing. The arrangements for ships are very different from those for aeroplanes and other forms of transport. The House will wish to consider whether we should go down that road; it has far-reaching implications, and I am not prepared at one hour's notice to give a definite answer. Licensing ferry operators would be a complete change in our marine shipping law, which has existed through many Governments and many centuries. But I shall consider my hon. Friend's point.

I well understand my hon. Friend's views about the treatment of the master and, as he sees it, the treatment of the company. According to the court, neither has committed a criminal offence. The court has found—I am not talking about my findings—that the master was guilty of negligence in exercising his master's certificate, and it is for that that he has been suspended for a year.

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): What is the Secretary of State's personal message today to the buccaneers of free enterprise at Townsend Thoresen who will for ever be remembered as merchants of death?

Mr. Channon: I do not wish to use the hon. Gentleman's language. This was a terrible disaster, and there is, I hope, reasonably common ground in the House on why it happened. Certainly, the report is very clear about the cause: the accident was due to a combination of factors, which the report outlines in detail. The company and, I am afraid, some of the crew were partially responsible. It is a terrible disaster in the history of the sea, and the management of that company is no longer in charge.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): Is my right hon. Friend aware that I shall never forget the agony of some of my constituents whose children died in this tragedy? I was glad to hear him say that he sympathises with the bereaved. Is my right hon. Friend further aware that many of those who appeared in the inquiry continue to be extremely ill, particularly psychologically ill, and that that is perhaps irreversible? What will be done for them?

Mr. Channon: The House knows that the Government have already made a very large contribution to the disaster fund. Other compensation measures are available. I shall write to my hon. Friend on that very important point. I share his distress at the appalling situation in which many people still find themselves, either because of the loss of friends or relatives or because they are still very ill after the appalling disaster. I shall, of course, sympathetically consider anything that can be done to help them further.

Mr. David Young (Bolton, South-East): Will the Secretary of State take on board the fact that many fair-minded people will believe that the crew members have been used as a scapegoat to cover the omissions of the company? Will he reiterate that, although crew members may have been punished for sins of commission, the sins of omission by the company were far more serious? While we are waiting for his legislation, what message will he give to the other companies that indulge in bad practices? What warning will he give to them, and will he make the action against them retrospective?

Mr. Channon: I very much hope that the hon. Member does not believe that other companies continue to indulge in bad practices. If he does, I hope that he will give me evidence about it straight away so that I may investigate it at once. My inspectors have already carried out the requisite checks, and I am satisfied that no ship will ever again sail under similar circumstances. The House was told some months ago that the inspectors had been carrying out additional checks. It is important that people should understand that action has already been taken. I have announced a programme for future action and I shall be meeting the companies next week.

Mr. Henry Bellingham (Norfolk, North-West): I hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will press hard for a full debate on this issue when the House reassembles in the autumn. I have not yet had an opportunity to read the report in full, but it reveals neglect by Townsend Thoresen that verges on the criminal. Townsend Thoresen has brought shame on the British merchant marine, not just as a result of this horrific incident but as a result of many years of slovenly, incompetent management. Many of my constituents sail regularly on cross-Channel ferries. They will be dismayed that this company is still allowed to operate ferries. They will be even more dismayed if my right hon. Friend cannot promise that action will be taken against the company. It is not good enough to say that the company has a few new managers. The management is obviously rotten to the core, and the people of this country expect really tough action to be taken by the Minister and the Department.

Mr. Channon: As to my hon. Friend's point about the need for a debate on the subject, I sense that in all quarters of the House there is a desire for a debate. I have already said that I shall consult my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House about the matter, and he has assured me that he will consider it sympathetically. Therefore, I hope that before long I shall be able to meet my hon. Friend's point.

A debate would provide a better opportunity to discuss the matter. Hon. Members will then have had an opportunity to study the report. It is no one's fault that there has been no opportunity to study it. The choice I had to make was either to make a statement now, when no hon. Member has had a chance to read the report, or to allow the House to go into a three-month recess without my having made a statement. I took the view that the House would prefer me to make a statement today.

As hon. Members have not had a chance to study the report, I hope that they will consider carefully what they are saying. I have already explained to the House that if

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criminal offences were involved, people would be prosecuted, but the court has taken the view that no criminal offences are involved. I explained to the House many months ago that the formal investigation mechanism makes it extremely difficult for prosecutions to take place. It is unprecedented for there to be a prosecution after a formal investigation.

Mr. Prescott: No, it is not.

Mr. Channon: If the hon. Gentleman has a precedent, I shall be very glad to have a look at it, but I am advised that there are no precedents. *[Interruption.]* I have checked carefully, but if the hon. Gentleman has any evidence to the contrary I should like to look at it. It is a very important point. It makes me wonder whether our regulatory machinery and the conduct of the investigations that I inherited is the best way to proceed.

Several Hon. Members *rose* —

Mr. Speaker: Order. I take up the point just made by the Secretary of State. If there is to be a debate, hon. Members will have had an opportunity to study the report. Today, will hon. Members please ask questions and not repeat the points that have already been made by other hon. Members?

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Is the epitaph of the tragedy that profit prevailed over safety? Why did it take the deaths of so many people to persuade the Department to take the action that it was pressed to take for a long time? Will the Secretary of State understand that many people believe that the captain and crew have been made scapegoats and that the company has been protected, as a major contributor to the Conservative party?

Mr. Channon: I hope that, on reflection, the hon. Gentleman will regret that remark. I should have thought that it is the sort of issue in regard to which, on normal occasions, both sides of the House would be united in trying to find ways of going forward to make sure that something like this never occurs again. I have been extremely scathing in my remarks about the company, and in doing so I have echoed what the judge said. I have announced measures that I shall take with the greatest urgency to make sure that something like this cannot occur again. I hope to have the united support of the House in that. That is the way in which I shall proceed.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): Looking to the future, when my right hon. Friend considers what recommendations should be put into practice, will he look at three matters? First, he talked about the tightening up of company operating practices. Is there a clear case for a statutory code which will apply to all companies and which will have criminal penalties if they are not carried out? For instance, I refer to the criminal penalties in regard to health and safety at work. We should look at that matter. Secondly, I refer to random inspections without warning. We must make sure that they take place and that the companies do not know that they are happening. Thirdly, I refer to the lessons that we learnt about rescue co-ordination during the rescue. As I understand it, the rescue services of both countries acted quickly and saved many lives as a result of their co-ordination.

In my own part of the world, different ferries operate on the Irish sea – a much wider area. Can we be assured that proper co-ordination is taking place in all ports and on all sea routes, that contingency plans exist, and that practices take place on a regular basis?

Mr. Channon: My hon. Friend raised three extremely important points. I shall examine the possibility of a statutory code of company operating practices, but I do not wish to give an answer about it this afternoon. It will be extremely relevant to proceedings on the Merchant Shipping Bill when it comes before the House later this year. I shall bear in mind what my hon. Friend said. Perhaps he would like to be in touch with me about it.

We shall have more random inspections. It is important not only to have more random inspections but to have inspections of all parts of ships, not simply areas to which only passengers can go. There is some conflict between making random and covert inspections and allowing inspectors to get into all areas of ships where, normally, only crew members are allowed to go.

The rescue co-ordination worked extremely well during the tragedy. The only point that arose concerned helicopter noise. My hon. Friend may wish to read the section relating to helicopters when he has a chance to study the report. Some small improvements may be effected in that regard. I shall certainly consider the points that he made about rescue co-ordination throughout the United Kingdom. Of course, we are reviewing that matter at present.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Is the Secretary of State aware that concern has been expressed over many years about the lack of bulkheads on large deck areas on roll-on roll-off ferries? Is he also aware that, on ocean-going container vessels, it is common for waterproof bulkheads to cross decks to prevent just the kind of accident that happened at Zeebrugge? Will the Secretary of State assure the House – as my hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) asked – that the investigations into ferry design will be independent of ferry operators and shipping companies, will be financed only by Government, and that a report will quickly be furnished? Will the Secretary of State ensure that the necessary design changes are introduced immediately to prevent a similar accident happening on cross-Channel ferries? Obviously, shipping operators on trans-Atlantic lines recognised that danger a long time ago.

Mr. Channon: I shall certainly examine the hon. Gentleman's point. Conditions for crossing the Atlantic are different from those for cross-Channel operations and requirements may prove to be different in practice. As the hon. Gentleman knows, I have announced a programme of research into ferry design and doubled the funds that are available for that. I am not sure how quick — *[Interruption.]* No, I have had this job for only six weeks. This afternoon I have announced measures that will take us further along that road than anyone else. I shall make sure that the hon. Gentleman's considered points are carefully examined.

Mr. Ernie Ross (Dundee, West): The Secretary of State has said that 180 people lost their lives on that night. Can he advise the House of the number of people who have since died as a result of Zeebrugge? Those of us who have

been in the Merchant Navy and who have been involved in shipbuilding and ship design have known for many years that the initial design of those ships was likely to lead to disaster. The Secretary of State said that it was the fact that the bow doors were open that caused the disaster. However, even if the bow doors were open the ship might not have overturned if there had been internal bulkheads. That is the key to this issue and the Secretary of State should make that his immediate priority and should not concentrate on other matters, which could be dealt with simply.

Mr. Channon: I shall examine what the hon. Gentleman has said, but I do not think that that is what the judge found.

Mr. Ross: What would the judge know about the design of the ship?

Mr. Channon: He is the Admiralty judge. He is the one expert—*[Interruption.]* If anyone can express a view on this, it is the Admiralty judge, supported by four expert assessors. With respect, I should have thought that that judge is as likely to know as anyone else in the United Kingdom. The hon. Gentleman's comments were not the view of the judge, but that does not mean that I shall not consider what the hon. Gentleman has said.

I am afraid that I do not have the figure for those who have died since the tragic disaster, but if I can find out, I shall get in touch with the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): Will the Secretary of State introduce retrospective legislation when he introduces the other measures that he put before the House so that action can be taken against Townsend Thoresen, and in future against firms that commit similar practices?

Mr. Channon: I shall consider the hon. Gentleman's comments. However, he must face up to the fact that, as I said a few moments ago, that there has never been any prosecution after a formal investigation of this type in history.

Mr. Peter Pike (Burnley): With respect, will the Secretary of State accept his own advice, and will he and his Department study the report in greater depth? I accept that we have not yet had sufficient time to consider it, but it contains a serious condemnation of the management of Townsend Thoresen, and it will seem to the public an absolute outrage if action cannot be taken against that company.

Will the Secretary of State assure us that, if he reconsiders the report and finds some way of taking legal action against the company, that action will be taken? Will he ensure that the new procedures that are used for embarkation and boarding in this country, where regulations are already tighter than in other countries, are enforced in continental ports, which at present are much more relaxed when compared with the new regulations that are in operation at Dover and at other ports here?

Mr. Channon: The hon. Gentleman is right to say that we should study the report in much greater depth than we have so far had the opportunity to do – that includes my Department and myself. We have done our best to make an initial judgment of the issues that we should take forward with the greatest urgency, and I announced those to the House this afternoon. Yes, we shall consider the new procedures, and if we think that the procedures in continental ports need changing – that would require negotiations – I shall consider how that can be achieved.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Does the Secretary of State accept that many people outside the House will see his statement as conniving at making two officers the scapegoats for this horrific tragedy, while the directors walk away from the offence absolutely scot free because they happened to get out of the company conveniently in time to escape any of the consequences? Was it a lack of inspectors in his Department – the Government have made repeated claims that they are sacking as many civil servants as they can—which prevented it from following up Merchant Shipping Notice No. M. 1188, entitled "Good Ship Management", listed on page 37 of the report, and which emphasised the safe operation of ships at sea? Was there complacency on the part of his Department which for nine months made no attempt to ensure that that notice was followed up and put into practice? No prosecutions were entered into under the 1984 regulations. What is the cause? Is it the sloppiness of the Conservative Government, the shortage of civil servants or the sloppiness of the Department of Transport?

Mr. Channon: With respect, the hon. Gentleman is wrong about this. It is most unreasonable and unfair of him to make those comments. This afternoon I am merely reporting to the House what the judge has found. The suggestion that I have been conniving with the judge is astonishing and from an experienced Member of Parliament like the hon. Gentleman I find it surprising indeed. I have not made the decisions about the master and the chief officer: the judge has. [HON. MEMBERS: "The Secretary of State has powers of his own."] I do not have powers. In a formal investigation of this sort it is for the judge to make powers to remove the certificate. It is not me who decides that; it is he who decides that.

The hon. Gentleman's criticisms of the Department of Transport are not echoed in the judge's report. The hon. Gentleman will have a chance to study that in full and then he will be able to make up his mind. We can return to the subject when we have all had a chance to study it.

There have been some reductions in the number of inspectors in my Department. The decline in the fleet has been far faster than the decline in the number of inspectors. *[Interruption.]* The percentage of inspectors compared with the numbers of the fleet is still virtually unchanged. *[Interruption.]* If anything, it may have increased. Hon. Gentlemen are trying to create an issue out of nothing. *[Interruption.]* No. If the judge had made those criticisms of my Department, I would not have shirked telling the House.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Is it not true that, despite the fact that the judicial inquiry has found that a prosecution should not be brought against the company, the Director of Public Prosecutions is a free-standing authority in these matters and can examine all the documents if the Secretary of State submits them to him? Is it not true that if the director decides that there is a basis for prosecution, he can bring it, irrespective of the report that the Secretary of State has announced to Parliament today?

Mr. Channon: The hon. Gentleman neglects the important point about the formal investigation and the

[Mr. Channon]

position that arises after a formal investigation of this type. I have a great deal of sympathy with some of the points made this afternoon, but that is inevitable and has always been the practice. It may well be that the system needs to be changed.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Surely the Secretary of State is aware of the extreme disquiet on both sides of the House that Townsend Thoresen is getting away almost scot free? It is as though there has been a whitewash job. Three named officers will have to live with this on their conscience for the rest of their lives. In all justice the Secretary of State should be seen to penalise the company for the various mistakes that the management clearly made. Will the Secretary of State now say that he will tell Townsend Thoresen that it will have no more ferry movements until it has carried out all the proposed modifications and his Department has investigated the new management structure to ensure that the same mistakes will not be repeated? Will the boarding card system also mean that there is a named passenger list so that in the event of this happening again constituents, relatives and friends will not have to spend days in anguish waiting to know whether they have had someone on that ferry?

Mr. Channon: I am not sure that a named passenger list is the solution that the House wants. We should certainly consider it, but it is not necessarily a good idea or, indeed, one that would be welcome to the overwhelming majority of passengers for a variety of reasons, including the speed of getting on and off ships. Nor would it necessarily be accurate. I am not immediately attracted to the idea, but we shall consider the whole boarding card circumstances, as I have announced to the House.

The new management structure is already in place. In his report, the judge referred to that and to the fact that Townsend Thoresen has taken the necessary steps to make its ships safe. I am not responsible for what the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) calls a whitewash job. I report to the House the facts as the judge found them. The idea that I have not criticised the company or that the company has not been criticised in the report is not true. The company has been criticised extremely severely in the report and the House will be able to study it.

Mr. Neil Thorne (Ilford, South): My right hon. Friend has made some sensible and practical suggestions on what might be done to ensure that this type of accident never happens again. He has also told us that next week he expects to meet the various parties concerned in the shipping industry. After he has discussed the matter with those parties, will he consider announcing a timetable of when the practical steps can be implemented, because I am sure that that would go a long way to confirm the reassurance that is required by the public as to the future of ro-ro ferries?

Mr. Channon: I think that that is an extremely good idea.

Prisons (Overcrowding)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn. *[Mr. Lightbown.]*

3.35 pm

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): When I applied for this Adjournment debate on the crisis in the prison system the situation was somewhat difficult. I note that, in the days that have gone by since that application, the situation has not improved to any great extent.

The Minister, who has been kind enough to come here today to reply, no doubt anticipates that what was said in *The Times* today is the basis upon which I wish to address the House. That is not entirely so. I would not dream of boring the House by repeating what has already been printed. Perhaps the Minister will deal, en passant, with the points raised in *The Times* as he answers the points that I wish to raise.

The truth of the matter is that, in the United Kingdom, we send to prison far more persons per head of the population than most of western Europe and, indeed, most of the civilised world. Indeed, the conditions into which we dispatch those persons would, I believe, disgrace even a developing country. If we are to solve the problem of imprisonment and the crisis in our prisons, the time has come to ask a series of fundamental questions.

The other day, Lord Chief Justice Lane, speaking at a judges' dinner, decried the practice of the press of seizing upon items of sentence and creating a great hoo-ha about them. I entirely agree with him; he has made an extremely valid point. In this country, in any one year, thousands, if not millions, of people are sentenced in various courts for various matters. The vast bulk of those sentences are absolutely correct and are never commented upon. However, in any massive sentencing organisation there must, from time to time, be some sentences that are either too severe or too lenient. It does not behove the system for publicity hungry politicians to seize upon those sentences and create the sort of hoo-ha that is then taken up by the press. All that does is, on occasion, to create stiffer sentences in other courts when such sentences need not be imposed.

The crisis in the prisons has been caused simply because the prison system is incapable of dealing with the number of prisoners it has now or will have in the weeks, months and years to come. It has meant that, time after time, those who work in the prison service find that their particular function nowadays is simply to incarcerate and hold prisoners. Very often that means incarcerating persons for 23 hours a day—consider what that means—for weeks, months or years.

I pay credit to the Minister for the beautiful way in which he dodged questions that I tabled to him at the beginning of this Parliament by saying that the prison-building programme was being kept under continuous review. Given that answer, it was obvious to me that the Department, for which the Minister answers, was carefully thinking about what to do. In those questions, I offered a series of alternatives; and when the Home Office failed to answer them, it was obvious that an announcement was about to be made.

We eventually saw the palliatives, as I described them, which included increasing remission time on sentences of fewer than 12 months. It will let out a number of prisoners and it may reduce the prison population a little, but the

Minister may recall that I raised the subject some years ago when the total number of persons in prison was in the low 40,000s. Shortly thereafter the Home Office introduced new parole rules. Instead of having to wait until almost half of his sentence before he was reviewed for parole, the period for which a prisoner had to wait was reduced to one third of sentences for some categories of offence; and in the following year 7,000 or 8,000 people were released. It was equally interesting to note that, of those released early, the amount of re-offending or breach of parole was minute. That little exercise proved that we do not need the long sentences that have been imposed. We also discovered that, notwithstanding that exercise, which let about 7,000 to 8,000 people out, the prison population increased.

The time has come when, if we are to solve the crisis in our prisons, we must ask two fundamental questions. First, why do we send people to prison? Secondly, under what conditions do we want people to remain in prison? The time has come for a commission to be set up to answer those questions. Perhaps on this last day of term, the Minister will join hands across the Chamber in the simple pursuit of solving those fundamental questions which have bedevilled society.

The reality of life is that our prisons are overfull and conditions are deplorable, with three to a cell, lack of exercise, poor diets, poor facilities, lack of education and lack of any rehabilitative programme. We should not blame the prison officers for that. They have to deal with the number of bodies sent to them. They have to live in contact with people who have been locked up in squalid and sordid conditions. When asked about the current overcrowding, the Prison Officers Association gives the civil answer that prison officers are now merely the cagers of men rather than the protectors and guardians of society. In the old days, the object of the exercise was to rehabilitate the prisoner. Nowadays, we send in a raw recruit for his first sentence and we let out an experienced criminal at the other end. That serves none of us.

The position gets even worse. We do not have enough places for prisoners. We are extending the system into the police cells of our major cities. Why are London remand prisoners held in Bristol, Norwich, Windsor or a dozen other places? The simple answer is that there are no places in London. That must have an effect on the police. Police officers are necessary to look after and guard them 24 hours a day. Whether because of overtime or for other reasons, those officers are not performing the role of the police; they are performing the role of gaolers. They and their senior officers do not want that. One feels that there is a little hypocrisy on the part of a party that is dedicated to law and order, as every action taken by it has been to lessen the force of law and order that we need to keep our streets safe.

Police officers have had to work increasingly long hours. Prisoners are not being brought to the courts and justice is being delayed, which has meant that people are not being delivered from various places of detention to their second and subsequent trials after being convicted in their first. All in all, this means an increasing cost to our society, due to the delay in the judicial system, the misuse of police manpower and the increased costs of lawyers. I must declare an interest at this point as a practising barrister. I am well aware of the increased costs, because barristers now have to travel halfway around the country trying to find their clients in order to get instructions. That increases legal aid fund costs.

I ask the Minister to go with me down the path that leads towards an investigation into how we propose to use our prisons in the future. This is a serious matter and I shall no doubt return to it time and again in the months ahead. I ask the hon. Gentleman, in the short term, whether he will look back to the written questions that I submitted and to the alternatives I suggested—including temporary release. *In the interests of humanity, if nothing* else, might not conditions be improved for the 51,000 people now in custody? I think especially of those with psychiatric illnesses. In that way those who serve our society, prison officers and police alike, will return to their former roles, and our prisons will not be the disgrace of Europe that they now are. Our prison officers will have a worthwhile role again.

Does the Minister realise that conditions in our prisons today, particularly for those who are detained on remand, may well fly in the face of the European convention on human rights? In this country, we used to have a proud record on the way in which we treated our prisoners. Today, we do not enjoy that proud record. We have made our prisons the scandal and shame of Europe.

I propose not to take my full allotted time so as to leave time for my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden), who wishes to raise certain points.

3.48 pm

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham) on securing the Adjournment debate and thank him for allowing me to contribute briefly to it.

Society needs to ensure that proper arrangements are made to prevent crime, that the victims of crime are given proper support—sometimes long-tern support—and that those who are taken out of society and put in prison for society's protection are treated in a civilised way.

I want to report to the House the experience of my former constituent, Mr. Robert Swindells, who recently served five days in Armley prison for refusing to pay a £25 fine for obstructing the highway during a London peace demonstration. That experience was recently described in the Bradford *Telegraph and Argus* as follows:

"As a law breaker, he shared a cell of 96 sq ft with animal rights protestor Ronnie Lee and a jewel thief from Liverpool named Lopez. There were 60 prisoners on the landing, sharing one toilet and one water-pipe. They had two 20-minute periods a day to use the toilet."

Swindells was quoted as saying the following:

'If you didn't you had to ring a bell. The answer might be 'yes' or 'do it through the door', depending on the officer on duty.

In Victorian days that toilet was for 20 fellows and that cell was for one. Conditions in Armley are three times as harsh as they were in Victorian times. Other prisoners told me it was the worst prison in England.

It's not the fault of the people running it. I didn't find the screws too bad. I didn't encounter any sadists.

We were locked up for 23 hours a day, which is very boring. The cells stink of urine. The slop bucket is emptied twice a day. It's pretty vile, especially in warm weather, very hot and stuffy. My predominating memory will be of that bucket. And you have to bear in mind you have to eat your meals in that atmosphere as well.

After 8 pm, they don't answer the bell for people to go to the toilet. You have the choice of doing it in the slop bucket and stinking out the cell, or doing it in a piece of paper or rag and chucking it out of the window. Every morning a prison officer goes round with a gang of men collecting them up."

[Mr. Max Madden]

Since that experience, Mr. Swindells has written to me saying that he made two friends among the long-term prisoners in Armley and that the thought of their plight breaks his heart.

It is appropriate that our last debate before the recess should be on overcrowding in our prisons. Society can be judged by the way in which it treats those whom it wishes to deprive of their liberty. In Armley they are treated disgracefully. I have sent the article to the Home Secretary. I hope that the Minister, in replying to this debate, will have some message of hope for the people enduring those disgraceful conditions, which are of great concern to many of my present and former constituents, as well as to solicitors and many others.

3.51 pm

The Minister of State, Home Department (Mr. John Patten): I listened with care to the brief intervention of the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) and I shall bring his remarks to the notice of my noble Friend Lord Caithness, who has ministerial responsibility for prisons. I also listened with great care to the comments of the hon. Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham). We are all aware of the considerable interest that he takes in prisons and prison welfare. I hope that it will not damage him in the eyes of his general management committee if he is praised by a Tory Minister, but his interest is remarkable and we certainly listen to what he says.

I welcome the opportunity to set out again the record of a Government who continue to demonstrate their commitment to improving the quality and quantity of prison accommodation. We have been going hard at that very necessary task since 1979. We are, of course, concerned about conditions in prisons and the conditions in which prison officers work. We are equally concerned with the proper course of justice and for the victim. I was glad that the hon. Member for Bradford, West also mentioned his concern for the victims. We should always remember to balance our concern about what goes on in prisons with concern for the victim.

Mr. Bermingham *indicated assent.*

Mr. Patten: I am glad to see that the hon. Member for St. Helens, South agrees.

The prison population has risen extremely rapidly, and to record levels. Last Friday, 17 July, there were more than 51,200 sentenced and unsentenced prisoners in our prisons — 4,000 more than there were a year ago — and 735 mostly unsentenced prisoners were held in police cells awaiting transfer to prison department establishments. Those 51,000 people are held in accommodation designed for fewer than 42,000, which clearly causes us great concern and induces a considerable strain on prison service staff, who perform daily miracles of management and control to keep the system working. There is also a strain on the police, who are needed to fight crime on the streets and to detect and clear up serious crime in particular as well as to turn their attention to the important issue of crime prevention.

Overcrowding is not a new phenomenon that has suddenly occurred since 1979. The average prison population in this country has grown steadily and sometimes dramatically since the second world war. As the hon. Members for St. Helens, South and for Bradford, West, like me, came to the House after 1979, I cannot blame them. [*Interruption.*] I am sorry—I forgot that the hon. Member for Bradford, West was a retread, but his second coming was after 1979. Perhaps I can partly blame him for the considerable cut in the prison building programme between 1974 and 1979—a cut of some 35 per cent. in real terms. Those hon. Gentlemen on the Labour Benches who were in the House before 1979 who protest about conditions inside our prisons and about overcrowding should remember their share of responsibility for the present-day circumstances in our prisons. It has taken a long time to make up that savage cut in prison building between 1974 and 1979.

Since 1979 the Government have introduced the biggest building and refurbishment programme this century. It is designed to produce 17,500 places at least by 1995—20 new prisons, with three already opened. There has been an increase of 3,600 prison places since June 1983 and there will be nearly another 2,000 by the end of this calender year. The programme will produce 3,000 new places in the 12 months from September and five new establishments will come on stream to give much needed relief to the prison officers and to those who are locked up, sometimes two or three to a cell. The building programme is matched by a refurbishment programme in other parts of the already built prison establishment that will help to improve both the quality and quantity of accommodation.

In his statement last week my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary announced his intention to accelerate and expand the prison building programme beyond the extra 17,500 places that will be achieved by 1995. This will mean more prisons and more places in prisons to relieve overcrowding and to make it possible for those who receive sentences to be received in prisons and for them to have better conditions which hopefully will enable more of them to be released and not reoffend.

Capital investment is an important issue. Spending on prison building has risen by over 100 per cent. in real terms, taking into account inflation, since 1979. We will set up a prisons building board to ensure that we set about the business of building new prisons efficiently and quickly to a high standard. That is something that we need very much. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will make a statement in due course about the composition of that board, but I can tell the House that it will be small and compact, that it will have a chief executive, who will drive forward the prison building programme, and that it will have representatives from those in the private sector who have been the customers of major building projects who are able to help and advise on how to make sure that we get prisons put up much more quickly than hitherto.

There is no reason why prison buildings should not change in the way that hospital buildings have changed inside the National Health Service under the basic nucleus concept of design that is being used. As the hon. Gentleman well knows, there has been a huge rebuilding programme in the NHS.

We will need to turn to the expertise of the building and construction industry, with its fast track and design and build techniques, which will enable us to get those prisons built much more quickly than hitherto. The prisons building board will have a fundamental part to play in the next two or three years in making sure that the increased number of prisons that my right hon. Friend will announce in due course will be built as speedily as possible.

The other side of the coin is what we are doing to try to keep people out of prison, and that is very important. We may have a chance to debate this on another occasion, but I think it is fair to say that we have the widest choice of non-custodial sentences available to the courts anywhere in Western Europe. Yesterday, I spent some time at the Inner London probation service visiting just such a facility, where it is clear that the criticism that one sometimes hears, which may sometimes be true, that non-custodial sentences are a soft option is simply not the case. They can be a punitive option.

We also encouraged, and issued guidance on, cautioning by the police. We are trying to help magistrates' courts to improve their performance by issuing guidance on efficiency, reducing delays and bail practices, all of which are most important. Since 1979 we have built 48 more court buildings. The number of circuit judges has gone up from 315 to 390, and we are looking, in three police areas, at statutory time limits to the period that the accused may be remanded in custody before coming to trial. When we get the results of those inquiries, we shall consider whether we should introduce the statutory schemes across England and Wales.

We have increased the resources for Crown courts. We have introduced various provisions to speed up the delivery of justice. All these measures have helped. They are no substitute for the pressing need of new accommodation, but that takes time. The Government have consistently shown themselves to be willing to get to grips with the problem of the growing prison population. We are not concerned with the short-term treatment of difficulties in response to problems in our prison system, but are taking a much longer view.

The hon. Member for St. Helens, South wants us to take a big bang long-term view. He wants us to have a Royal Commission. It is said that patriotism is the last resort of the scoundrel. I think that suggestions for Royal Commissions are the last resort of politicians who have run out of intellectual steam. I do not believe that of the hon. Gentleman and I do not intend him any discourtesy. However, to think that one can whisk a Royal Commission out of the air and that that will make things better is mistaken.

The hon. Gentleman knows full well what needs to be done. He has his own views, and he is a man of some influence in the Labour party nationally. He could do an enormous amount to help if only he would speak to some Labour-controlled local authorities with police watch committees—for example, nine inner London boroughs and Manchester. Rather than harrying the police and making their already difficult task worse, such authorities should be doing all that they can to work with the police on crime prevention. I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman does not seem to think that crime prevention is important.

In places such as Manchester and inner London, the police and the general public should work together to make sure that crime is prevented, so that people are not tempted to commit crime and then, if charged and found guilty, end up in prison. That would be a more constructive attitude, and we do not need Royal Commissions to tell us that it was a disaster when, between 1974 and 1979, the Labour Government cut the prison building programme. We do not need a Royal Commission to tell us that we are struggling with the after effects of that.

I suspect that this will not be the last time that I answer a debate on this subject, although it is unusual to find oneself doing so towards teatime on Friday. Anybody in my constituency listening to this afternoon's proceedings on the wireless will know that I am telling the truth when I am late for my constituency advice centre this afternoon and explain that I was kept later than expected in the House of Commons. It is unusual in our procedures for a statement to be made at 2.30 on a Friday afternoon.

In the dying moments of the term, before we leave for our summer holidays, I conclude by saying that I hope that Opposition Members and you, Mr. Speaker, will have a very enjoyable and happy summer holiday, and I wish our retiring Clerk of the House of Commons, Sir Kenneth Bradshaw, who has made his last appearance at the Table this afternoon, a very happy retirement.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the Minister, who has pre-empted me. Before I adjourn the House, may I also take the opportunity to wish the Minister, all hon. Members and all members of the staff a happy and restful recess. As this is the last occasion when the Clerk will be at the Table, I want to say how much we appreciate his long service to the House. We all wish him well on his retirement.

The motion having been made after half-past Two o'clock, and the debate having continued for half an hour, MR. SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order, till Wednesday 21 October, pursuant to the resolution of the House of 13 July.*

Adjourned at five minutes past Four o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 21 October 1987

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Imprisonment of a Member

The Speaker: I have to inform the House that I have received a letter dated 23 September 1987 from the resident magistrate in the petty sessions district of Belfast in which he informed me that the hon. Member for Belfast, East (Mr. Robinson) appeared before him on 22 September 1987 and was convicted of an offence under the Vehicles (Excise) Act (Northern Ireland) 1972, and was fined the sum of £25 and ordered to pay arrears of vehicle duty amounting to £25 and costs of £3.

The letter concludes as follows:

"On being asked if he wished to have time for payment he did not ask for time.

He was ordered to be committed to prison forthwith, for a period of fourteen days unless the said sum be sooner paid, and not having paid that sum was lodged in prison the same day."

I shall cause the text of the letter to be printed at the appropriate place in the Votes and Proceedings.

PRIVATE BUSINESS

BRITISH RAILWAYS (LONDON) BILL *[Lords]*

To be read a Second time tomorrow.

Oral Answers to Questions

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Council of Ministers

1. **Mr Hardy** asked the Sectetary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last attended the European Economic Community Council of Ministers; and what subjects were considered.

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Geoffrey Howe): The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, my right hon. Friend the Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker), and I attended the Foreign Affairs Council in Luxembourg on 19 and 20 October. The main points on the agenda were the future financing of the Community; a proposed regulation laying down maximum permitted levels of radoactivity in foodstuffs after a nuclear accident; a draft Commission paper for the GATT negotiations on agriculture; and a proposal for a trade and economic co-operation agreement with the Gulf Co-operation Council. The protocol to the association agreement between the European Communities and Cyprus, providing for transition to customs union, was signed on 19 October.

A full statement covering the September and October Foreign Affairs Councils will be circulated in the *Official Report*.

Mr. Hardy: May I ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman whether any aspects of European-South African relationships were considered at the meeting, and whether the other member states hold the continuing policies and practices of South Africa in the same regard as seems to be revealed by the recent extreme and rather provocative utterances of the Prime Minister?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: There was no discussion of South Africa in the Council meeting, but everyone, as far as I know, in this House and throughout the Commonwealth and the Community is of exactly the same view: that apartheid is an intolerable system and that it must go as soon as possible.

Sir Anthony Meyer: Is it not clear from every successive crisis, whether in the Persian Gulf or the world's stock markets, that the need for improved action and co-ordination within the European Community is now very urgent indeed?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Yes, I think that the whole development of world events underlines the importance of increasingly effective European unity on political as well as economic matters.

Mr. John David Taylor: During the meeting in Luxembourg, did the Foreign Secretary have a separate meeting with the Irish Foreign Minister, and did the latter raise any doubts about the implementation of the promised extradition treaty by 1 December? If so, what excuses were given?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I had no separate meeting with the Irish Foreign Minister during the Luxembourg meeting, but it is, of course, well known that we attach importance to the implementation of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Mr. Neil Hamilton: Will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that there can be no question of giving more money to the European Community while its budget remains out of control, and that if the budget is brought under control the Community will have no need for more money?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend will recall that express provision was made at Fontainebleau for the possibility of an increase in own resources, and that is one of the matters under consideration in the context of the immensely important aim, to which my hon. Friend has rightly drawn attention, of achieving effective, binding budgetary discipline, which is associated with the need to achieve some extremely difficult conclusions on the control of agricultural policy.

Mr. Anderson: Will the Foreign Secretary seek to defend before his colleagues in Europe the Prime Minister's protection in Vancouver of the apartheid regime, to the point where it became clear that, by her reckless insensitivity, she had destroyed at a stroke much of the patient bridge-building in South African relations that the Foreign Secretary and his colleagues at the Foreign Office have been attempting?

Will the right hon. and learned Member confirm that, contrary to what the Prime Minister said in Vancouver, when he and his colleague met President Tambo they did so in both their EEC and their national capacities?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Government's position in relation to South Africa and the need for the removal of apartheid as quickly as possible is not in doubt and I have no need to defend that in the European Community or anywhere else.

Equally, I have made it plain that the meeting that I had with Mr. Tambo and the meeting that he had with my right hon. Friend are part of a pattern of contacts with the ANC which must be judged from time to time. The important thing is that the ANC should understand that if we are to be able to secure the implementation of the European Community demand for the unbanning of the ANC and the liberation of Nelson Mandela and others it is important that that should take place within the context of a suspension of violence, as set out in the EC demand.

Following is the statement:

"I attended the Foreign Affairs Councils which took place in Brussels on 14-15 September and in Luxembourg on 19-20 October, accompanied by the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker).

On both occasions the Council continued its negotiations on the reform of Community spending. There is now widespread agreement on the need to strengthen control of agricultural expenditure through the introduction of budget stabilisers. I made it clear that the principle of stabilisers would have to be translated into specific quantified decisions in order to ensure binding control. That is a condition for success in the overall negotiation. The Council will hold a further discussion at its next meeting on 23-24 November.

The Council also discussed the proposal for a Council regulation laying down maximum permitted levels of radioactivity in foodstuffs after a nuclear accident, and decided that further work should be carried out by officials with a view to reaching agreement before 31 October. It agreed the text of a Council decision on a Community system for rapid notification in the case of a nuclear accident: agreement was also reached in principle that the Community should accede to the Vienna convention on early notification in the case of a nuclear accident.

The Council discussed trade relations between the Community and a number of third countries. In September it gave strong support to the Commission's determination to insist, in discussions with the Government of South Korea, on the removal of discrimination against EC companies in South Korean intellectual property practices. It also reaffirmed its continuing concern on possible protectionist legislation in the United States.

In October the Council agreed that the Commission should continue its efforts to find a solution to the dispute with the US over the EC's ban on hormone-treated meat. It also discussed GATT article XXIV. 6 negotiations with Japan, Canada and Argentina; it agreed that the Commission should continue negotiations with Japan; endorsed the Commission's intention to seek binding GATT arbitration in the dispute with Canadians; and approved the agreement reached in the negotiations with Argentina.

The Council continued its discussion of the Community's contribution to the multilateral trade negotiations in the Uruguay round. In September it discussed a draft mandate for the negotiations on tropical products, which has since been approved and tabled in the GATT. In October the Council agreed to the Commission presenting in the GATT on 26 October a paper for its negotiations on agriculture.

The Council reached agreement on three sectors in the 1988 generalised scheme of preferences, and instructed officials to continue their discussions on the fourth, textiles. It also discussed the Commission's proposal for a trade and economic co-operation agreement between the Community and the Gulf Co-operation Council.

The Council discussed the Community's position on export credits for ships in preparation for an OECD meeting on shipbuilding later this month.

The Council agreed, by a qualified majority, to a Commission proposal for a reduction in the crisis levy which reduces Community staff pay.

The protocol to the association agreement between the European Communities and Cyprus providing for transition to customs union between the Community and Cyprus was signed on 19 October. At the signature the presidency made it clear that the provisions of the protocol applied to the whole population of Cyprus. The technical protocol to the association agreement covering trade between Cyprus on the one hand and Spain and Portugal, following those countries' accession to the Community, was also signed.

In Political Co-operation, Ministers adopted a statement on 14 September about the Israeli policy of establishing settlements in the occupied territories. The text of this statement has been placed in the Library of the House."

European Community (Policies)

2. **Mr. Knox** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further proposals he intends to place before his European Community partners for the development of Community policies.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mrs. Lynda Chalker): My right hon. and learned Friend and I will continue to press our ideas for legally binding controls on Community expenditure, including stabilising mechanisms for agricultural commodities.

Mr. Knox: Will my right hon. Friend impress on all her colleagues in the Government that one of the main stumbling blocks to the development of the Community as an economic force is Britain's failure to join the exchange rate mechanism of the EMS?

Mrs. Chalker: I think my hon. Friend already knows that I shall use my best endeavours to convince my colleagues of what we believe to be right and in the best interests of the United Kingdom. A decision on whether to join the exchange rate mechanism is under regular review by the Government, and my hon. Friend will recall that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has said many times that he will take the decision to join that mechanism when the time is right.

Mr. Spearing: The Minister mentioned budgetary discipline. Will she confirm that the European Council meeting in Copenhagen will be a treaty meeting and, therefore, de jure, and that decisions taken by the Heads of Governments on that and other topics on documents presented by the Commission will commit this country? Irrespective of that, will she agree that the matters that will be brought up at Copenhagen should be thoroughly debated in the House well before 4 December?

Mrs. Chalker: The Copenhagen meeting of leaders of European Community countries will be no different from any other European Council meeting. We shall proceed exactly as we have previously under the Single European Act, which now binds us all together.

Mr. Dykes: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the United Kingdom is fully committed to the development of the Community, which certainly needs such a commitment by all members states after a number of lean years, not least because the Federal Republic of Germany will have the next presidency, when it will be presenting new ideas for the development of institutions and the further use of qualified majority voting?

Mrs. Chalker: My hon Friend knows well that Britain is fully committed to the development of the Community, but before we can develop the Community we must have secured full, legally-binding control of expenditure. That

is why we have always put and will certainly put at the head of the discussions in Copenhagen the need to establish stabilisers for all foods and the need to establish budgetary discipline on non-obligatory as well as on obligatory future spending. We are working for those things, and when they are in place we can go on to discuss the further development that we all surely want to see.

Mr. Benn: Is the Minister aware that the very wild fluctuations that occurred in world markets reveal a great lack of confidence in the Western economies? Is she also aware that the damage that could be done to the British economy as a by-product of, for example, American policy makes it absolutely essential that we should not join the EMS and dismantle one of our remaining defences which it may be necessary for us to use to protect our own economy from the gambling that is taking place in the world's stock markets?

Mrs. Chalker: I find it completely impossible to follow the right hon Gentleman's logic. He should remember that there is no doubt about the underlying strength of the United Kingdom economy. This year we have annual growth of 4 per cent. and we are in our seventh successive year of steady growth. Industrial production is at its highest ever level. Markets have greatly over-reacted and we must wait for them to settle. Thankfully, they have certainly seemed steadier over the last few hours. Even at its lowest point yesterday the stock market was above its January 1987 level. Scaremongering and rumour-mongering do a great deal more harm to Britain than does looking at the realities of the market.

Arms Control and Disarmament

3. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress in current arms control and disarmament conferences.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Prospects for a United States/Soviet agreement on intermediate nuclear force missiles are encouraging. A number of key issues, including verification, remain to be resolved. We are participating in talks in Vienna to agree the framework for negotiations on conventional stability covering the Atlantic to the Urals. Negotiations on chemical weapons have made progress, but considerable complexities remain.

Mr. Chapman: I thank my right hon. and learned Friend for that statement. Can he say what part the United Kingdom Government have played, in encouraging the talks and co-operating in the discussions that have led to the successful INF agreement? Does he agree that, for further successful negotiations in those various areas there must be confidence on both sides about the verification procedures?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: In reply to the first part of my hon. Friend's question, I can tell him that the Government have consistently sought to improve the prospects of success in our series of contacts with the Soviet Union and the United States, going back to the period of four years ago when no contact whatever was taking place. From that time we have pressed the Soviet Union very hard on the need to come to the bargaining table, and we have helped the negotiations overcome the series of obstacles erected by the Soviet Union against their success. My hon. Friend is right to remind the House that an essential part of an agreement must be effective verification. As we shall hear in the debate tomorrow, that will involve Soviet inspections of INF missile deployment sites in the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom is willing to play a full part in bringing about agreement on those essential features.

Mr. Duffy: Does the Secretary of State not agree that in the next and perhaps decisive phase of arms control negotiations both sides will need to demonstrate conclusively that sufficient political will exists to ensure that a serious disarmament process is here to stay? Will he tell the House what confidence-building measures he is considering? Will he put to our NATO allies the need for them to consider making available help for Soviet infrastructure and agricultural technology?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I do not see the need for those proposals in this context. Of course, it is important for both sides to be seeking to develop confidence in the other. If these negotiations are to succeed they must be approached with a sense of realism and vigilance and with an open mind. In that spirit I had a meeting this week with my American opposite number, Mr. Shultz, who will go to Moscow later this week. I am quite certain that both he and the other side recognise the need to establish a firm foundation of confidence if further success is to be achieved.

Sir Peter Blaker: If we are to have an agreement for the abolition of intermediate range nuclear forces, is it not now even more important than before that we should also have an agreement to ban chemical weapons, in which the Soviet Union has enormous superiority and in the offensive use of which its forces are trained?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My right hon. Friend is absolutely right. The greater the progress that is made in achieving arms control agreements in respect of nuclear weapons, the more urgent it becomes to achieve progress with regard to conventional as well as chemical weapons. My right hon. Friend is right to remind the House that the Soviet Union is capable of waging chemical warfare on a large scale. It has substantial stockpiles of chemical weapons and its troops are comprehensively equipped and trained to operate in a chemically contaminated environment.

Mr. George Robertson: Why, when the Americans and Soviet Governments are about to sign a historic agreement eliminating a whole generation of nuclear weapons, are this Government still desperately scratching around with the French to invent a new nuclear system? When President Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev are agreed on the urgent necessity to reduce nuclear stockpiles, does the Prime Minister not look increasingly belligerent, antiquated and pathetic as she tells the world that nuclear disarmament has gone far enough? Does the Foreign Secretary agree with her?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It is the hon. Gentleman who looks increasingly antiquated and pathetic as a result of the style of questions that he asks on this subject. The point made by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister is precisely the point that I have made this afternoon. If we are to make further progress on nuclear arms control, it is of the greatest importance to make headway on conventional and chemical weapons as well.

Sir Antony Buck: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that if the policies advocated by so many

Opposition Members were adopted, namely, a unilateralist approach, those policies would be of no help for progress in the various fora that my right hon. and learned Friend has just described to the House?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. and learned Friend is precisely correct. The Labour party would have opposed the entire strategy of the dual track approach and the deployment of weapons on the Western side in Europe — without which it would not have been possible to achieve the breakthrough to secure the removal of that category of weapons altogether.

Guatemala

4. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received on the current human rights situation in Guatemala.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Eggar): Her Majesty's ambassador regularly reports on the human rights situation in Guatemala. We believe it has improved since President Cerezo took office in January 1986. The United Nations Human Rights Commission shares our view.

Mr. Lloyd: If that is the Government's response, how does the Minister assess the reports that there are still about 100 murders every month in Guatemala, and that figure does not include abductions that are not reported? Many of those are widely believed to have occurred at the behest and with the connivance of the agencies of the state, if not of the President himself. On that basis, what representations is the Minister making to the new Guatemalan ambassador about the importance that Britain attaches to an improvement in human rights in Guatemala, and what pressures are Her Majesty's Government putting on the United States Government, who have a direct responsibility for the situation in Guatemala?

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State raised the question of human rights in New York when he met President Cerezo. I discussed the matter with Minister Sosa yesterday in the Foreign Office. The hon. Gentleman asked what evidence we have for forming our view. We rely on our own reporting and that of the United Nations. A United Nations human rights expert visited Guatemala in September this year and expressed satisfaction with the progress made by Guatemala with regard to human rights. We keep the matter closely under review, and the Guatemalan Government are aware of our concern.

Mr. Wilkinson: Does my hon. Friend agree that the main cause of the atrocities in Guatemala is the continued insurgency of Marxist terrorists within that country? Is it not important for the stability and security of the region that British forces remain in Belize alongside Guatemala?

Mr. Eggar: It is certainly true that the worst human rights abuses happened before the present Government took office. We have no plans to make any changes with regard to forces in Belize.

Mr. Mullin: While we are on the subject of Central America, will the Minister confirm——

Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We are on the subject of Guatemala.

Sino-British Relations

5. **Mr. Atkinson** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to meet his Chinese counterpart to discuss Sino-British relations; and if he will make a statement.

6. **Mr. Jacques Arnold** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about the United Kingdom's relations with the People's Republic of China.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I met the Chinese Foreign Minister again at the United Nations General Assembly in New York last month. I very much hope that he will be able to take up my invitation to visit the United Kingdom next year.

Our relations with the People's Republic of China remain excellent. Exchanges in many fields, including trade, are growing steadily.

Mr. Atkinson: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that 37 years of Chinese occupation of Tibet, culminating in the recent riots and deaths, far from being an internal matter, constitute a serious threat to the good relations between China and Britain and between China and the rest of the free world? Will my right hon. and learned Friend seek an early meeting with his Chinese counterpart to express the concern of the whole House about events in Tibet and to urge on him the Dalai Lama's five-point plan for peace, neutrality and autonomy?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Obviously the House will regret the loss of life that has taken place in recent disturbances in Tibet. I believe that the best way in which we can help the Tibetan people is by encouraging the Chinese Government to maintain their programme of economic and political reform. We shall certainly seek suitable opportunities of doing that and ensure that the Chinese Government are aware of the anxieties expressed by my hon. Friend on behalf of the British people.

I do not share my hon. Friend's view about the impact of these events on relations between Britain and China. The plan put forward by the Dalai Lama is a matter for the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Government. As I stated in my main answer, I have invited the Chinese Foreign Minister to visit this country next year. I hope that the visit will take place.

Mr. Arnold: Bearing in mind the considerable trading opportunities that are arising with the People's Republic of China, will my right hon. and learned Friend state what additional steps are being taken to further our trade with that country?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend is right to draw attention to the scale of growing trade with the People's Republic of China. My noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is in China now, and he is only the latest in a series of Ministers and hon. Members to visit the country. We shall continue to expand contacts of that sort in the confident expectation of a further improvement in relations and expansion of trade.

Sir Russell Johnston: Will the Secretary of State clarify his position on Tibet? Does he approve of the policy that is being pursued by the Chinese Government, and has he

a view on it? If he has a view, has he conveyed it to the Chinese Government? If he has conveyed it, have they responded?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: As I said in my earlier reply, the Chinese Government are aware of the concern of British people about events in Tibet. We shall continue to seek opportunities of bringing that concern to their attention. I repeat that the best way of trying to secure improvements there is by encouraging the Chinese Government to continue with their programme of economic and political reforms in the region.

Sir Peter Emery: Will my right hon. and learned Friend assure the House that the essential negotiations between the People's Republic of China and the Crown colony of Hong Kong are proceeding reasonably and as fast as he would expect?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend will appreciate that relations between the United Kingdom Government and the People's Republic of China in respect of Hong Kong rest upon the joint declaration that was concluded in 1984. Both sides have been and are working closely together to implement the declaration. We have agreed some important arrangements to give effect to it and I am sure that that positive co-operation will continue. Both sides are committed to full and faithful implementation of the agreement.

Contadora Peace Process

7. **Mr. Rogers** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his European Economic Community counterparts about Government action in support of the Contadora peace process.

Mr. Eggar: The Central American peace process was discussed at the informal meeting of European Community Foreign Ministers on 3-4 October, and at the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Twelve and regional Governments on 23 September. My right hon. and learned Friend attended both meetings.

Mr. Rogers: Will the Minister tell the House whether his Government have sent a message of congratulation to President Arias on his award of the Nobel peace prize?

Mr. Eggar: Yes, indeed. My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary sent a message congratulating President Arias on his award, and repeating our confidence and congratulations with regard to the Guatemala accord.

Mr. Ashby: Would my hon. Friend care to comment on the refusal of the Sandinistas to negotiate with the Contras, despite the Contras' expressed wish to negotiate with the Government of Nicaragua?

Mr. Eggar: I read that President Ortega was reported to have said that if Contra leaders returned to Managua for peace talks they would be arrested. That hardly seems to be in the spirit of the Guatemala accord.

Mr. Corbyn: Does the Minister not agree that now is the time for the British Government to make a clear and unequivocal declaration that they condemn American policy in the region, that they support the peace process now going on there, and that, as a measure of good faith, they will restore British aid to the people of Nicaragua to enable them to get out of the appalling poverty into which the war conducted by the United States has forced them?

Mr. Eggar: The hon. Gentleman has obviously been having a long holiday away from the newspapers. Together with our European Community partners, we issued a statement on 13 August supporting the accord.

Mr. Churchill: Does my hon. Friend not agree that the maintenance of stability in Central America and the Caribbean region is of importance to Her Majesty's Government? That being so, is it not strange that this year we should be giving considerably more civil aid to the Marxist Government of Mozambique, with which we have no colonial link?

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is very wide of this question.

Argentina

8. **Dr. Michael Clark** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about the United Kingdom's relations with Argentina.

Mr. Eggar: We shall continue to look for ways of restoring more normal relations with Argentina, while upholding our commitments to the Falkland islanders.

Dr. Clark: Can my hon. Friend assure the House that, despite the fact that Argentina invaded the Falklands and now will not officially recognise the end of the hostilities, Her Majesty's Government are doing all that they can to normalise relations with Argentina and to try to return to the diplomatic position pre-1982?

Mr. Eggar: I can, indeed, give my hon. Friend and the House those assurances. Since 1982 we have taken a series of initiatives to restore more normal relations. They include the lifting of all financial and trade restrictions, proposals for co-operation on fisheries conservation and a number of other measures.

Mr. Dalyell: Do Ministers believe that it would be wise, having regard to both the British national interest and the interests of democracy throughout Latin America, to be helpful to President Alfonsin, given his domestic and political difficulties?

Mr. Eggar: As my previous answer made clear, we seek more normal relations with the new Argentina.

Mr. Foulkes: Surely the Minister will acknowledge that the recent elections in Argentina show the increasing strength of democracy in that country. Will he confirm that the indirect talks with Argentina on fishing that have taken place under the auspices of the United States have been useful? Is it not time to take up the suggestion made by Councillor Blake of the Falkland Islands at the United Nations and start direct talks with the Government of Argentina about all aspects of fishing in the south Atlantic?

Mr. Eggar: As the hon. Gentleman is well aware, there have been some exchanges with the Argentines. Those exchanges have focused exclusively on the fisheries policy and, in particular, the conservation zone. Our aim, which is well known, is the co-ordination of fisheries management in the interests of conservation, and the avoidance of incidents. We naturally hope that something will come of those exchanges.

European Commission

9. **Sir Russell Johnston** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the President of the European Commission.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend and I met Monsieur Delors at the Foreign Affairs Council, which ended yesterday.

Sir Russell Johnston: Does the Minister agree that the achievement of the internal market has, for very good political and social reasons, to be balanced by an increase in the resources of the European regional fund? Did she convey that view to Jacques Delors, bearing in mind that large areas of Scotland, Wales and the north-east of England are likely to lose all European regional development fund assistance if there is no increase in resources for the regional fund?

Mrs. Chalker: I did not speak to President Delors yesterday about that particular issue, but, as I said in answer to a previous question, I think the hon. Gentleman knows very well that we have to put the finances of the European Community in order before we can start to talk about increasing the structural funds. However, I think he will be glad to know that we consider that it is early days yet to condemn what the Commission may put forward in terms of lists of regions. That has not yet occurred. We shall argue strongly that the most assisted areas in the United Kingdom should be eligible for support under the category that is concerned with industrially declining regions. The hon. Gentleman may or may not be glad to know that I have already discussed this matter, particularly the highlands and islands, with the member of the European Community who is responsible for that area.

Mr. Watts: Did my right hon. Friend make it clear to the President that the current Commission proposals for the harmonisation of VAT on food, construction and other zero-rated items remain completely unacceptable to the United Kingdom?

Mrs. Chalker: I do not think that there is any doubt in the European Community that the proposals to do away with zero rating will not be accepted by the United Kingdom. I remind my hon. Friend that decisions on all Community tax measures require unanimity, and, because they require unanimity, I am confident that we shall not accept any proposals that restrict our ability to use zero rating. As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has said, we shall continue the zero rating of food. We have no intention of putting VAT on electricity, gas, fuel and children's clothes and shoes. That would never be agreed by this House.

Mr. Tony Banks: When the Minister met the President the other day, did she make it clear to him that her views on the African National Council differ radically from the views of the Boers' friend at No. 10?

Mrs. Chalker: The hon. Gentleman and the whole House know that we are opposed to violence, wherever that may arise. There is no difference in attitude. We believe in trying to establish a dialogue between all the peoples of South Africa. What we do to that end must be in the sense of bringing about the speediest possible end to apartheid. There is certainly no difference of opinion, and we shall continue with our wide range of contacts.

Mr. John Marshall: Did my right hon. Friend point out to the President that over 50 per cent. of British exports now go to our partners in the Community, which fact underlines the irresponsibility of those in the Labour party who wish to take us out of this job-creating Community?

Mrs. Chalker: What my hon. Friend says is absolutely right. Many of our exports now go to the internal Community and much of our economy is tightly bound up with the European Community. It is little surprise, therefore, that eventually, after all these years, the Labour party is beginning to change its tune, however grudgingly. It is in the interests of the country at large, and it is also in the interests of Europe, that we should continue to export widely within the free internal market. That is what we are working for in 1992.

Mr. Kaufman: Since the right hon. Lady, on behalf of the Government, denounces violence from whatever quarter it comes, will she denounce the violence of the Contra terrorists in Nicaragua, and will she advise them to lay down their arms so that they can negotiate under the terms of the Guatemala accord?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Question must be in the context of the European Community.

Mrs. Chalker: I do not know what relationship that subject has to these questions. We shall continue to work for a peaceful solution in Central America.

Test Ban Treaty

10. **Mr. Strang** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the progress made towards reaching agreement on a comprehensive test ban treaty.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. David Mellor): We remain committed to seeking progress towards a comprehensive test ban treaty. We believe, however, that it would be premature for negotiations to begin until progress is made on outstanding problems, notably verification. We therefore welcome, as a first step, recent indications of United States and Soviet readiness to seek the improvements in verification necessary to enable the threshold test ban treaty and peaceful nuclear explosions treaty to be ratified.

Mr. Strang: Is the Minister aware that the negative stance of the Government in this matter is not only in contrast to that of the previous Conservative Government — which was a signatory to the 1963 partial test ban treaty — but in contrast to the changing attitude of the two super powers? Surely he must be aware that the statements that the Government keep making about verification are not supported by seismologists, other than those within the pay of the British Government. Furthermore, is it not time for a British initiative, bearing in mind what the Minister said about the talks between the United States and the Soviet Union, so that we can move, if not to a test ban treaty, to a lower threshold test ban treaty or to some limitation on the number of nuclear tests that are carried out each year?

Mr. Mellor: The Government's approach to these matters is essentially practical. The hon. Gentleman suggested that we are lagging behind the United States and the Soviet Union, but I must inform him that the two treaties that were signed but not ratified, which are now

to be the subject of fresh discussion between the United States and the Soviet Union, impose limits on nuclear testing, within which we keep.

Cuba

11. **Mr. Eastham** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will seek to pay an official visit to Cuba.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans for such a visit.

Mr. Eastham: I remind the Minister that in 1977 a United Kingdom-Cuban agreement was signed in the interests of technical and scientific co-operation. It was signed by the Cuban Minister, Mr. Hector Llompart, and the then British ambassador, Mr. Jackson. Since that time nothing whatever has happened, despite repeated representations from the Cuban Government. Do the Government intend to honour this agreement, or is it just a worthless pieces of paper?

Mr. Eggar: We obviously do not take lightly any agreements that we enter into. I have yet to meet the new Cuban ambassador to the United Kingdom, and this matter may be something that he would want to raise with me at that time.

Mr. Wilkinson: If my hon. Friend meets the new Cuban ambassador, will he tell him, clearly and unequivocally, that it is imperative that Cuba withdraws its forces from Angola if there is to be peace in that country and, furthermore, if a satisfactory settlement is to be achieved in south-west Africa, Namibia?

Mr. Eggar: My hon. Friend need have no fears. I shall certainly make those points to the Cuban ambassador.

Mr. Ernie Ross: If the Minister meets the Cuban ambassador, will he support the greater flexibility in the stance of the Angolan Government, which is supported by the Cuban Government, in their approach to Angola, in seeking to resolve this matter? Would that not be a more helpful attitude, than the one expressed by the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson)?

Mr. Eggar: The most helpful attitude that the Cubans could take would be to withdraw their troops.

Mr. Churchill: Given the repeated attempts by the Cuban Government to subvert many former British dependencies in the Caribbean in recent years, and its avowed intention to continue doing so, will my hon. Friend consult his colleagues to see whether we can reconsider the level of British aid that is given to the former British dependencies in that region? Is it not strange that the combined total of aid for all these former British dependencies is less that the amount that we are giving to the Marxist Government of Mozambique, with which we have no colonial links?

Mr. Eggar: We give a considerable amount of aid to the Caribbean dependent territories. For instance, as I am sure my hon. Friend is aware, we give over £5 million per year to the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Falkland Islands

12. **Mr. Wallace** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he intends to take any new initiatives with regard to the Falkland Islands.

Mr. Eggar: We continue to look for ways of restoring more normal relations with Argentina, while upholding our commitments to the Falkland islanders.

Mr. Wallace: Is the Minister aware of the Defence Select Committee report published shortly before the recess, which says that our Falklands commitment represents a diversion of assets from our primary task in NATO? Should that not be a spur to the Minister and his right hon. and learned Friend to seek further talks with the Argentines and an open-ended commitment to talks? Is this not another case like South Africa, where the Prime Minister's obstinacy stands in the way of the Secretary of State making a worthwhile initiative?

Mr. Eggar: I have already made it clear to the House that exchanges on the subject of fisheries are taking place. We have no intention of entering any discussions that involve the transfer of sovereignty.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: Does my hon. Friend accept that freedom, democracy and the right to self-determination are vital priorities for the British Government? Will they therefore always consult the Falkland islanders or their representatives before any decision is taken? Does my hon. Friend agree that, whether some Opposition Members like it or not, the majority view in the Falklands must be of paramount importance?

Mr. Eggar: We have always made it clear that we defend the Falkland islanders' right to self-determination.

Mr. Beggs: Is the Minister prepared to recommend that the Government of Argentina be given the right to interfere in the Falkland Islands through an Anglo-Argentine agreement similar to the Anglo-Irish Agreement, through which the Government and the Irish Republic interfere in Northern Ireland affairs?

Mr. Eggar: There is no such similarity, so the question cannot be answered.

European Community Budget

13. **Mr. Baldry** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the progress made in efforts to contain the European Community budget.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We have got agreement that CAP reform and budget discipline are the key issues in the current negotiations. Stabilisers, backed by an effective guideline for expenditure, have to be the main instrument of reform. Our task now is to translate that principle into hard practice into the detailed agreement that is an absolute condition of success in the overall negotiation.

Mr. Baldry: I thank my right hon. and learned Friend for that reply. Is it not a simple fact that the Community budget will not be controlled until the Community firmly controls farm costs, commodity by commodity, so as to limit spending? We all know what needs to be done. Is it not a question of whether the Community can now find the resolve to do it?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Control of farm policy costs is absolutely essential for the achievement of effective budgetary discipline in the Community. We have achieved recognition of that principle. We have also achieved recognition by the Commission — and more widely — that stabilisers in respect of each commodity—commodity by commodity — are an essential means of bringing agricultural spending under effective control. What is now needed is the mobilisation of a common, collective will to put those principles firmly into practice.

Mr. Cryer: Since Britain's membership fee for the Common Market this year is £1·3 billion, will the Foreign Secretary assure the House that the Government will not increase their contribution to bail out the Common Market? Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman repudiate completely Commissioner Cockfield's proposal to increase and widen VAT to cover food and children's clothing? Will he make it clear that it is not acceptable to the House and that we shall use the veto?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We have made it plain that any changes in Community own resources can be considered only in the context of a settlement that deals effectively and completely with the matters that we have already discussed this afternoon.

My right hon. Friend the Minister of State has already told the House that any change in taxation or tax measures within the Community requires unanimity. That is clearly established in the Single European Act. We shall continue to zero rate food and children's clothes and shoes—the items about which the hon. Gentleman asked.

Mr. Higgins: Did the House not agree to the last increases in Community resources on the clear assurances from the Government Front Bench that there would be effective budgetary discipline within the Community? Therefore, is not my right hon. and learned Friend's earlier statement this afternoon that we might have another increase to achieve that same objective very worrying?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My right hon. Friend's interest in this subject is well justified and he is an effective reminder of the importance of the matter. He should take notice of the fact that, as a result of the agreement arrived at in 1984, the agricultural savings now arrived at total some £10 billion. We have now got measures in place controlling milk and beef—milk production is down by 4 per cent. and butter production down by 13 per cent.—and there has been a substantial cut in beef support prices. What is necessary — my right hon. Friend is entirely right to remind us of it—is to build on the foundations laid at Fontainebleau to ensure that comparable discipline applies to the rest of the agricultural programme.

Mr. Skinner: Is not the truth of the matter that if this Government, along with the others in the Common Market, decided to privatise the EEC there would be no buyers and they would not get a price?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I believe that as the European Community is an enterprise on such a large scale, the question does not arise.

Soviet Jews

14. **Mr. Lawrence** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures are being taken by Her Majesty's Government to persuade the Soviet Government to permit further emigration by Soviet Jews.

Mr. Mellor: We take every opportunity to put pressure on the Soviet Union about this matter. I last raised this in clear and forthright terms at the resumption of the CSCE meeting in Vienna on 22 September. I am glad to say that one of the four specific cases I raised, that of Ida Nudel, has since been successfully resolved. Mrs. Nudel, a prominent long-term Jewish refusenik, was granted permission to emigrate at the beginning of this month and has now arrived in Israel.

Mr. Lawrence: Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that the considerable efforts of this Government for the release of Soviet Jews are greatly appreciated by them and by hon. Members on both sides of the House? Does he also agree that the recent increase in Soviet Jewish emigration is indeed a most welcome departure? Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that, if the Soviet Union totally honours its commitment to human rights in the Helsinki accord, that will only strengthen our confidence that it will totally honour any commitments it may enter into regarding arms reduction and the maintenance of world peace?

Mr. Mellor: I am glad that these long-standing cases are beginning to be resolved. There was the case of Sasha Blonsky, with which my right hon. Friend the Minister of State and my hon. Friend the Member for Cornwall, North (Mr. Neale) were prominently involved, together with other Members of the House. Up to September the figures show that some 5,397 Jewish citizens of the Soviet Union have been allowed to emigrate, and that is a larger figure than for the previous four years taken together. However, that figure still falls short of the 50,000 who were allowed out in 1979. In recent months the numbers have flattened off to a degree that should allow for no complacency.

It is important in our dealings with the Soviet Union that we make it absolutely clear that, while we are prepared to do business with Mr. Gorbachev, it cannot be only on those parts of the agenda that suit him. Trust is one and indivisible and respect shown for human rights carries over into the trust and confidence that we can repose in Soviet willingness to adhere to arrangements that they make with regard to arms control.

Austria

15. **Mr. Janner** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make a statement on the current state of relations between Austria and the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Chalker: Relations between the United Kingdom and Austria are friendly and reflect the common interests of our Governments and peoples.

Mr. Janner: Will Her Majesty's Government assure the House of their full co-operation in the inquiries that the Austrian Government have set up into the wartime activities of President Waldheim? In particular, will the Government now release the documents in the Public Record Office which they saw fit to refuse to release before and which specifically relate to the alleged involvement of President Waldheim's unit in the interrogation of British

prisoners of war, some of whom were later sent for so-called Sonderbehandlung — which meant extermination in concentration camps — and whose whereabouts and deaths have never been confirmed?

Mrs. Chalker: I can answer the hon. and learned Gentleman's second question briefly — no, the documents will not be released. Let me say, firmly, that where there is evidence — I mean evidence and not allegations, as I am sure the hon. and learned Gentleman will accept — we shall co-operate, whether that be with the Austrians or with the United Nations War Crimes Commission. That we have always done, and that we shall continue to do.

Mr. Forth: As a democrat, does my right hon. Friend not welcome and support the result of free elections in any country and respect those thus elected?

Mrs. Chalker: Yes. That is what democracy is all about.

UNESCO

18. **Mr. Sedgemore** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will now review the decision to withdraw the United Kingdom from membership of UNESCO; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: We made it clear when we withdrew from UNESCO that we would require evidence of fundamental and far-reaching reforms before reconsidering our position. We welcome the prospect of the election of a new director-general, but our fundamental concern remains UNESCO's programmes and administration. We shall continue to keep an open mind and monitor developments carefully.

Mr. Sedgemore: Would it not be a good idea if the Foreign Secretary were to invite Senor Mayor, the director-general of UNESCO, to come to this country for discussions with a view to Britain rejoining that organisation? Should not the Foreign Secretary stop pretending that he agrees with the politics of the new Right and the dreadful lead given by the United States State Department on that matter?

Mr. Eggar: I am afraid that I have to say to the hon. Gentleman that he appears to be woefully ignorant of the way in which UNESCO operates. The fact is that the programme of work for UNESCO over the next two years will be decided at its general conference, which is currently meeting. The proposals that have gone to the general conference were put forward by the previous director-general. We shall watch with considerable interest to see whether changes are made in the programme recommendations and how any programme recommendations by the general conference are implemented over the coming months.

Mr. Key: Will Her Majesty's Government consider strengthening our observer status at UNESCO in view of the appointment of Senor Mayor?

Mr. Eggar: As I am sure my hon. Friend is aware, we have a considerable presence in the observer section, which is based in our Paris embassy. However, had UNESCO been prepared to co-operate more freely with that observer section we might have been able to get further in our efforts to observe what was going on.

Mr. Foulkes: Does the Minister not accept that there is an excellent new director-general designate and that he has said he is committed to improving the efficiency of the organisation and carrying out the sort of reforms that the British Government have outlined? He has said that a priority is to get Britain and the United States back into UNESCO. Surely the Government should give him a message of encouragement and an idea of the situation in which our membership would be reconsidered. Surely it is better to support and encourage him from inside, rather than shouting from the touchline.

Mr. Eggar: As we have made clear on several occasions, UNESCO is not about personalities; it is about the programmes that it carries out. Of course we welcome the announcement of the appointment of Dr. Mayor, which still has to be confirmed, as the hon. Gentleman knows, on 7 November. However, Dr. Mayor faces a difficult task of administrative reform and the implementation of programmes. We shall watch carefully how he proceeds in his job.

Soviet Union

19. **Mr. Adley** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to visit the Soviet Union; and what subjects he will be discussing.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I shall be taking up Mr. Shevardnadze's invitation as soon as mutually convenient dates can be agreed. I expect to discuss a wide range of subjects, including arms control, human rights, regional and bilateral issues.

Mr. Adley: I thank my right hon. and learned Friend for that reply. I also thank him for raising with Mr. Shevardnadze the matter of the P36. Is he aware that the discussions that he started on the repatriation of that locomotive have tended to run into the ground since he stopped talking about it? When he makes his visit, can he find a couple of minutes to re-open the subject, as it is of interest to many people in this country?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend is energetic in his determination to safeguard locomotive rights. I shall bear that in mind. However, it will not be the most important item on my agenda with Mr. Shevardnadze.

Mr. Winnick: Is the Foreign Secretary aware that it will be right to raise the issue of human rights when he visits the Soviet Union, because it is a subject of concern to us all? What would his response be if the Soviet leader turned round and said, "What about the attitudes adopted by your Prime Minister, and the wrecking and destructive attitude that she adopted at the Commonwealth conference?" Are not the rights of the black majority in South Africa of equal importance to human rights in the Soviet Union?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I will tell Mr. Shevardnadze, as I so often have to tell the House about the hon. Gentleman, that he is talking absolute nonsense. In fact, I will tell him equally plainly that we are totally at one in our determination to bring about an end to apartheid as soon as possible. That is part of the consistency with which we press the case for reform within the Soviet Union.

Sri Lanka

20. **Sir Geoffrey Finsberg** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about the United Kingdom's relations with Sri Lanka.

Mr. Eggar: Our relations with Sri Lanka continue to be close and friendly.

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: Will my hon. Friend assure the House that he will respond to any legitimate request from the Government of Sri Lanka for advice and assistance in its battle against terrorism?

Mr. Eggar: I think that the whole House will admire the personal and political courage that has been shown by the President of Sri Lanka over the past few months. We were able to help by responding to a request that he made when we supplied two detectives to look into the dastardly terrorist attack on the Sri Lankan Government, and we would look at other requests were they made.

The Gulf

3.30 pm

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton) *(by private notice)* asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards developments in the Gulf.

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Geoffrey Howe): Our policy is unchanged. We remain strictly impartial in the conflict between Iran and Iraq—the underlying cause of tension in the Gulf—and are working for immediate implementation of Security Council resolution 598, which provides for a ceasefire and negotiated settlement.

We deplore all attacks on shipping in the Gulf, and are determined to uphold the principle of freedom of navigation. Along with other countries we maintain a naval presence in the Gulf for that purpose.

Mr. Kaufman: Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman agree that tit-for-tat warlike exchanges in the Gulf, inevitably escalating in scale and dimension with every new response from whatever quarter could, as I warned the House exactly three months ago, lead to uncontrollable escalation and grave consequences not only for peace in the immediate area but for world peace?

Following their belated decision, after prolonged pressure from the Opposition, to close the Iranian arms procurement office in Victoria street, will the Government now take the initiative in moving for a United Nations mandatory arms embargo on both sides in the Iran-Iraq war? To demonstrate to Iran and Iraq that the international community will not tolerate unprovoked and unlawful attacks on lawful shipping in international waters, will the Government now agree with the increasingly held view that the eight national naval contingents in and around the Gulf should be co-ordinated under the auspices of the United Nations?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am glad that towards the end of his question the right hon. Gentleman emphasised the need to make it clear that the Government will not tolerate unprovoked attacks on the shipping of innocent nations in Gulf waters. That is the point on which I ended my answer. It is in defence of that principle that every nation with naval assets in the region is entitled, in the face of unprovoked attacks such as those of which the right hon. Gentleman complained, to take action in self-defence. The continuation of attacks such as that is all the more reason for us to be taking action, as we are, in the most energetic way possible to bring the conflict to an end. It is for that reason that I took part, along with my colleagues representing the other five permanent members of the Security Council, in the discussions in New York at the end of last month making plain our commitment to a double track policy to bring the war to an end, strengthening the authority and power of the Secretary-General to try to promote a ceasefire, which we all want, and being ready to equip him with the support of an arms embargo to strengthen his authority and that of the United Nations. That is what we are trying to do and it is in that sense that we were glad to close the military procurement office in this country a few weeks ago. Our purpose is exactly the same. We want to secure an end to the conflict with the maximum authority of the United Nations. However, even in that context, it must be said that the prospect or possibility of achieving a United Nations naval force is not something that we regard as realistic or attainable.

Mr. Peter Temple-Morris (Leominster): I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on trying to inject balance into his various public statements in this difficult area. Does he agree that to make effective progress towards a ceasefire, any international policy has to be seen to be even-handed? Does he further agree that to make progress towards an effective arms embargo inevitably means greater involvement by the Soviet Union and the United Nations?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: There is no doubt that a policy designed to bring to an end a conflict between two combatants must be seen to be even-handed both in the objective that it sets itself and in its enforcement. That is why so much care was devoted, in the formulation of resolution 598, to achieve a statement of objectives that would be acceptable to both sides. In the same sense, we have made it plain that an arms embargo should be put in place against whichever combatant fails to comply with the resolution. It is also for that reason that we regard the organisation of the United Nations as the most effective way to achieve co-operation between the two superpowers and the remainder of the world to realise the objective that my hon. Friend identified.

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman agree that the change of attitude revealed in the answer of the Soviet Union on 15 October towards international peacekeeping is surely something of which we should take advantage, as it would enable concerted rather than unilateralist action in the Gulf? Will he please now agree that those hon. Members from both sides of the House who, for a long period, pressed him to prevent the provision of war supplies to Iran, and to take action against trade—including oil, which provides the money to obtain arms—were right? After all, an admission of error from the Treasury Bench, in the presence of the Prime Minister, would be a tremendously refreshing start to the Session.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We have made it plain that we regard the most effective measure, indeed the only effective measure currently in sight, to be an arms embargo. To go beyond that with further embargos is not likely to prove fruitful. Indeed, it is proving far from easy to secure the necessary commitment to the arms embargo. For that reason, the hon. Gentleman is right to emphasise the importance of participation by the Soviet Union as well as the United States in the search for effective measures.

We believe that it is important to maintain the unity of the five permanent members in the search for that policy. If that unity is to be meaningful and effective, it must be committed to something. That is why we stress the utmost importance of the Soviet Union, together with the other permanent members, being ready to put its full weight behind the arms embargo that the hon. Gentleman rightly regards as important.

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): Will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that the serious commitment that we have now made to the Gulf is so long term in its nature that we may be thinking in terms of years

[Mr. Jonathan Aitken]

rather than months for keeping our naval force on station there? While I agree with my right hon. and learned Friend that the United Nations is wholly unsuited to performing a co-ordination role, may I ask both him and the Government to begin giving some serious thought to the establishment of a new organisation, such as a Gulf defence organisation, to carry out that vital function?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It is difficult to believe that the most important action at the present time is to set about the creation of a new organisation. However, my hon. Friend was right to emphasis the importance of the Government's commitment, and that of other western countries, to security in the Gulf. He was also right to suggest that the length of that commitment to the presence of naval forces cannot be limited. He well knows that the Armilla patrol has sought to assist and accompany—and, in that sense, protect — British merchant vessels in those dangerous waters for some seven years. I am sure that the whole House will join me in paying tribute to that patrol for the skill and dexterity in the way that it carries out its duties.

Mr. Denis Healey (Leeds, East): Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman agree that war on international shipping in the Gulf was started by Iraq, not Iran, and that the great majority of attacks on international shipping have been carried out by Iraq? Will not the Government's ability to support United Nations' efforts to bring the war to an end be impaired if they continue to support an American position that is clearly partial, rather than impartial, in respect of Iraq?

If the right hon. and learned Gentleman is rightly convinced that the United Nations should seek an arms embargo, why does he oppose the creation of a United Nations force to protect shipping in the Gulf? Has that not been supported by the Soviet Union? Was not United Nations' action in Korea effective in protecting South Korea against attacks from the North and was it not a United Nations force that cleared the Suez canal after the unfortunate attack by Britain and France on Egypt?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: On the first part of the right hon. Gentleman's question, plainly the conclusion of the conflict along the lines foreshadowed in resolution 598 demands a response from Iran and Iraq, and we have not ceased to press that point on both belligerents. We have also impressed upon Iraq the need to refrain from attacks upon shipping in the Gulf, and it has done so for periods of several weeks at a time. Subsequently, it has also been clear that Iraq accepts and will implement resolution 598 if the Iranians do so, but Iran has neither accepted nor rejected the resolution, which is why all of us, considering the matter at the United Nations, recognised the need to maintain the pressure for an arms embargo in relation to Iran primarily, although not exclusively.

The right hon. Gentleman will be the first to understand the formidable difficulties in trying to organise a United Nations naval force. It has never been done in the past—

Mr. Healey: Korea.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I will come to Korea in a moment; I am talking about a United Nations naval force. Apart from the difficulty of obtaining the agreement of the Security Council, there would be the immense difficulty of trying to agree joint operational instructions, including rules of engagement, in many languages, and the equally immense difficulty, which has been proved so often in the past, of agreeing on problems of burden-sharing and the time involved in achieving that.

The difference between this conflict and the two matters to which the right hon. Gentleman referred is that, in Suez, the conflict had already come to an end and United Nations' participation was concerned simply with clearing up the consequences. In Korea, there was a united effort to try to check the agressive onslaught of one belligerent. The position is infinitely more complicated in the Gulf, where one is trying to persuade two belligerents to bring the conflict to an end. The right hon. Gentleman's proposal has not been dismissed lightly, but it does not commend itself to the Government.

Mr. Dennis Walters (Westbury): In his talks with Mr. Shultz the other day, did my right hon. and learned Friend, while welcoming the measured American response in the Gulf, point out the need for American policy to be less concerned with excluding the Soviet Union from the middle east and more concerned with co-operating with it in bringing about a settlement in the Gulf and in other areas? Would it not be dangerous if the Soviet Union began to take a strong pro-Iranian position?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The corollary of my hon Friend's thoughtful question is that one must be worried about the extent to which the Soviet Union may be looking after its interests in exactly the way that he foreshadowed. It is most important to bear very clearly in mind the dangers of such motivation on the part of the Soviet Union, but having identified that danger, I agree that it is also important for the two super powers—the United States and the Soviet Union — together with the other permanent members of the Security Council to be ready and willing to talk and work together in support of a firm and effective joint policy to bring this war to an end. For many years, a shortcoming of the United Nations has been the absence of a willingness of the five permanent members to work together. A modest prize in the present struggle has been the willingness of the five permanent members to work together. We intend to hang on to that, but only in support of an effective policy.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): The Secretary of State mentioned the difficulty of having rules of engagement in several languages. Is it not correct that we and the United States speak the same language? May we have an assurance that the rules of engagement for the Armilla patrol have been discussed with the United States and that their rules of engagement have been discussed with us, especially in relation to their response to Iranian attacks and their attack on an oil production platform? Is the Secretary of State mindful of the fact that similar American assets are well away from the Iranians, whereas our assets in the North sea might be vulnerable?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman introduced a rather different aspect towards the end of his question. During the years when several naval forces have been present in the Gulf, there has been practical co-operation and close contact among the vessels operating there. Such informal co-operation is useful and important, but there is no intention to create a formal integration of the contingents or of their operating instructions.

I am not prepared to discuss our rules of engagement in detail, although they are obviously reviewed constantly in the light of changing circumstances; but they are calculated to be non-provocative, de-escalatory and appropriate to the fulfilment of the defensive functions for which the Royal Naval assets are in the region.

Mr. Michael Latham (Rutland and Melton): Is not the gloomy truth that this latest ceasefire resolution has been no more successful than all the previous ones, and that neither of the two belligerent powers is really interested in implementing it? If we are to have positive action, will it not come from the United States and the Soviet Union working in concert to impose a solution?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The gloomy truth is, as my hon. Friend puts it, that the acheivement of a conclusion to the conflict, which has now run for some seven years, is a task of immense difficulty. The task being undertaken by the United Nations and the secretary-general, as I have emphasised many times, falls not far short of impossibility. That is all the more reason for us to try to arm the secretary-general with the authority that he needs to achieve a chance of success, and all the more reason, as my hon. Friend says, for the five permanent members, as leaders of the 15 members of the Security Council, to achieve a united policy with some clout and authority behind it.

Regarding my hon Friend's last point, close co-operation between the United States and the Soviet Union in good faith, with a willingness by the Soviet Union to play its full part, is an essential feature of what we need to bring the conflict to an end.

Dr. David Owen (Plymouth, Devonport): While the United States' naval action was perfectly acceptable in terms of the United Nations charter, surely the Foreign Secretary would agree that there is an obligation to seek a peaceful settlement in terms of the United Nations charter. How can the United States expect the Soviet Union to apply sanctions to Iran when the United States is refusing the Soviet Union's offer to use its minesweepers as part of a United Nations force, and when the Soviet Union has also agreed to repay all its debts on United Nations' peacekeeping? Those are two constructive steps taken by the Soviet Union that surely need a British response, even if there is no response from the United States.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The British response to the decision by the Soviet Union, after a prolonged delay of many years, to pay its contributions to the costs of peacekeeping and other United Nations activities is to welcome it warmly, and to recognise that it is a belated recognition of what the Soviet Union should have been doing. The British response to the suggestion made by the right hon. Gentleman for the establishment of a United Nations naval task force is the one that I have just described. That does not diminish the force of his point that the Americans were entitled to take prudent and restrained military action in self-defence. In support of his second point, it is important for the Soviet Union to be ready to co-operate with the United States, and vice versa, with the other permanent members in support of the united action, which is the only possible prospect of bringing this conflict to an end.

Mr. Speaker: I remind the House that the private notice question is an extension of Question Time. I have allowed it to go on longer because of its importance, but I can only permit two more questions—one from either side.

Mr. Ray Whitney (Wycombe): My right hon. and learned Friend has spoken of the excellent work of the Royal Navy's Armilla patrol. Does the operation of that patrol continue to be restricted to the lower Gulf? If so, what consideration is being given to the protection of British shipping operating in the northern Gulf?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend knows that the area of operation of the Armilla patrol does not extend throughout the whole Gulf. Its resources are necessarily limited and it makes good sense to concentrate its effectiveness on an area in which the majority of British shipping movements take place, and in which the greatest risks are. Beyond that, British shipping is given the clearest advice about the limits of the assistance that can be given by the Armilla patrol.

Mr. Bruce Grocott (The Wrekin): Will the Foreign Secretary confirm that, with the exception of one embarrassing week in the summer, British foreign policy in the Gulf, as in other parts of the world, consists of the Prime Minister ringing up the White House and asking the President what she should do next? When shall we have an independent foreign policy again, and will the right hon. and learned Gentleman explain how our policy in the Gulf differs from that of the United States?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It differs so fundamentally that only the hon. Gentleman cannot see the difference.

Storm Damage (England)

3.49 pm

The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Nicholas Ridley): I wish to make a statement about the hurricane force winds which hit southern England early last Friday morning. Tragically 19 people were killed. We offer heartfelt condolences to their relatives and friends. There was widespread damage to property and trees; road and rail links were blocked; electricity and telephone lines were brought down on a large scale. Most of the damage was caused by falling trees.

Ever since, emergency teams from the local authorities, the electricity supply industry and the other services affected have been working incessantly, helped greatly by the armed services. They have done a magnificent job. Normal services have now been restored to the great majority of people. They will continue to make every effort. About 4 million electricity consumers have been reconnected, although 168,000 are still without supply. The electricity supply industry is making every effort to reconnect the bulk of them by the weekend, but the extent of the damage in some areas and the continuing adverse weather may result in some consumers not being restored till next week. The industry is working closely with other emergency services to minimise hardship to those still affected.

It is too soon to estimate the overall costs of these events, but I have already announced the Government's decision that the existing financial arrangements to assist local authorities in emergencies—known as the Bellwin scheme — will be available in the areas affected in England for emergency work connected with that storm damage. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales will be making a separate statement on those areas of Wales affected by the severe flooding over the last few days.

Prudent local authorities have long provided in their budgets for contingencies and emergencies, but in 1983, after consultation with the local authority associations, the Government issued guidelines

"To provide special financial assistance to local authorities who, as a consequence of an emergency, would otherwise incur an undue financial burden in providing relief and carrying out immediate works to safeguard life or property or prevent suffering or severe inconvenience to affected communities."

Under this scheme, authorities are themselves responsible for the first tranche of expenditure on emergency work. The amount that the authorities most affected will be expected to find from within their existing budgets is likely, on average, to be slightly below 0·5 per cent. of their GRE. I am setting the threshold at expenditure equivalent to the product of an exclusive penny rate for county councils and of 0·15p for shire districts. Expenditure above that will be eligible for 75 per cent. grant assistance from Government. The threshold in London will be based on the product of a 1·15p rate divided between tiers according to GRE shares. The Department is writing today to the local authority associations and to those authorities that initially appear most likely to be affected explaining details of how the scheme will operate. I am placing copies of that letter in the Library and in the Vote Office. It will be up to any authority that considers itself eligible for such assistance to apply to the Department. The scheme does not cover losses that are insurable.

I shall take account, too, of the effect on rate support grant. In response to requests from a number of councils, I propose that where a local authority gains grant assistance under the Bellwin scheme, the proportion of expenditure above the threshold borne by the local authority should be excluded from the definition of total expenditure, and will not, therefore, result in loss of grant. I shall be consulting the local authority associations on the precise terms of the total expenditure exclusion.

Turning to the capital side, insurance payments for loss or damage are anyway outside the capital control system, but to help local authorities with capital works in restoring their buildings the Government will be giving limited additional allocations for expenditure in the current year.

I recognise too, that the public feel deeply about the massive damage that has been done to mature trees. There is a strong feeling that we should replant for the benefit of future generations.

The royal parks are my direct responsibility, and we will press ahead with clearing and appropriate planting as fast as possible. There are already in existence for rural areas Countryside Commission schemes for grant assistance to local authorities and private owners for tree planting. I propose to extend these schemes in three ways to cope specifically with the loss of trees as a result of the hurricane force winds. First, for this temporary purpose, the rate of grant aid for local authority planting will be increased to 90 per cent. Secondly, and also temporarily, these schemes will be extended to cover London and other urban areas. Thirdly, the Countryside Commission will have discretion to grant-aid at a higher rate than under its present scheme historic landscapes of great value where the scale of tree loss justifies this. I shall make extra resources available in the current year for these schemes. These extensions will enable the taxpayer to contribute to restoring our heritage of fine trees for future generations. In addition, my Department will be issuing through the press to householders, guidance on the protection of surviving but damaged trees.

My right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is urgently consulting the European Commission with a view to increasing the rates of grant under the agriculture improvement scheme for shelter belts, hedges and traditional walls in the storm damage areas to 60 per cent., with conifer belts at 30 per cent., until the end of 1988-89. He will also be providing special additional help to Kew gardens and Wakehurst place which suffered severe damage of national and international significance. My right hon. Friend is also arranging for the farm and countryside initiative to provide help to some particularly hard hit rural communities both for tree clearing and tree planting.

The measures that I have announced today will provide both for the appropriate short-term assistance to local authorities in their emergency work, and for repairing, as soon as possible, the long-term damage to the environment

The House will wish to join me in thanking the local authorities and all the emergency services for their unstinting efforts, and in offering sympathy on the loss and suffering experienced by people in the areas affected.

3.56 pm

Dr. John Cunningham (Copeland): I thank the Secretary of State for responding so promptly to our request for a statement. I associate my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition and my right hon. and hon.

Friends and myself with the condolences that the Secretary of State expressed to the relatives, friends and families of those people who lost loved ones. I also—it is a rare treat for me—reiterate what the right hon. Gentleman said about local authorities. He said, "They have done a magnificent job." That is true, and the real merits and values of good local government and good local authorities have come very much to the forefront in the aftermath of these appalling events.

I also welcome what the right hon. Gentleman said about the damage to our national heritage and the measures that he is taking on tree replanting, grants and associated financial measures for the long term. All those aspects of his statement are very welcome. I should like to ask him a number of specific questions about financial assistance to local authorities. Why is the Secretary of State excluding the product of an exclusive penny rate from the assistance? It will be instructive for the House to know that for Kent county council that will mean an immediate bill of £2 million. For Hampshire, the bill is £2·3 million; for West Sussex, £1·1 million; for Brighton, £253,000; for Reading, £275,000; and for Hove, £151,000. I make that point because the suggestion that the product of a penny rate can be easily met by local authorities in the current financial climate is totally false. The Secretary of State and the Government should be generous and take into account the total costs to local authorities of this unprecedented storm damage and not exclude anything from the calculations.

Why is the Secretary of State not excluding the product of a penny rate from the consequences of penalties? Most of the affected local authorities are in penalty and, although the statement does not make it clear, that expenditure will be affected by the penalties imposed by the Department putting an additional burden on the ratepayers in those areas. Will he reconsider that and be more generous?

In so far as the statement refers to additional capital expenditure in the current financial year, will the Secretary of State reconsider these points? It is abundantly clear that much of the damage has not yet been properly assessed, let alone costed. The financial consequences and the costs of reparation will go well beyond this financial year and probably well beyond the next. The Secretary of State should—and I ask him to consider this point—set up an inquiry or joint working party with the local authorities to consider the full long-term financial implications of the damage for the authorities and the ratepayers, the extent of the damage and the real cost. The Secretary of State is quite right to state that the cost cannot possibly be quantified in the short time that has elapsed since the devastating storms occurred.

I want the Secretary of State to consider the position of individual families who simply may not, even taking their insurance into account, be able to make good the damage to their homes and property. There is a special problem with families in receipt of supplementary benefit who can only be given assistance on schemes costing a maximum of £325. That is nowhere near sufficient to help them to make their homes sound, safe and secure again. Will the Government consider that and let us have a statement from the Secretary of State for Social Services or a further statement from the Secretary of State for the Environment?

It is abundantly clear that the so-called Bellwin measures were not designed to cope with a disaster of this magnitude. They exclude all matters which in the Government's judgment should be covered by insurance. The Secretary of State and the House know full well that in the prevailing financial climate many local authorities are not insured for many of their buildings. Will the Secretary of State consider that and discuss the implications with the local authority associations?

We are grateful for the statement and support much of what the Secretary of State has said on the Government's behalf. However, I have asked five important financial questions concerning local authorities, ratepayers and some individual families, including pensioners. I hope that the Government will look again at those matters and will make a further statement to the House.

Mr. Ridley: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his comments at the beginning of his remarks and for the support that he gave to parts of my statement. However, I must pick him up on matters about which he appeared to quibble as there are sound answers to all his points.

First, the Bellwin rules were negotiated with the local authorities in 1983. It was then envisaged by the Government and by the local authorities that local authorities had some responsibility for providing contingency for all sorts of emergencies. Section 138 of the Local Government Act 1972 gives them the power, and indeed, it might be said, places a duty on them, to make spare resources available for emergencies of this nature. It was agreed then that over and above a threshold the Government would come to the rescue, and that is precisely what we are doing. Moreover, I must stress that we have effectively lowered the threshold from the penny rate postulated in 1983 because we have not taken account of inflation on that penny rate. Therefore, the scheme that I have announced today is more generous than the original Bellwin rules.

Within the concept of local authorities having a contingency for emergencies for which presumably they have budgeted, it is not a matter of authorities losing grant if they spend money below the threshold because they have budgeted to spend that money and included it in their accounts. It would be wrong to give a disregard—in the old-fashioned language—for money of that kind or to alter the definition of total expenditure in that way.

With regard to the capital accounts, the hon. Gentleman was fair to say that we have no means now of guesstimating the capital damage. All I have said is that for immediate capital repairs we will make extra allocations available as and when we know the scale of the problem during the current financial year. Of course, if there are knock-on effects in future, we will consider them when we know the scale of the damage and the problem.

With regard to the points raised by the hon. Gentleman about insurance, it cannot be right that some authorities should have prudently taken out insurance while others did not or made no provision for carrying their own insurance. It is wrong that the omission to insure should go without question when providing capital allocations in future.

The hon. Gentleman's final point referred to help for those on benefit who have suffered damage to their homes and property. I confirm that the DHSS has schemes available to help. If anyone has a problem in that respect, the best thing to do is to contact the DHSS or my right

[Mr. Ridley]

hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services as there are arrangements to help in these special circumstances for individual cases.

Sir Peter Hordern (Horsham): Is my right hon. Friend aware that my constituents and other people in Mid-Sussex are grateful for the work of the emergency teams, local authorities and electricity boards during the disastrous crisis that was inflicted upon them by the storms of Thursday night and Friday morning? Will he confirm that after local authorities have spent the product of a penny rate they will be entitled to receive from the Government 75 per cent. of all additional expenditure and that there will be no clawback as exists under present arrangements?

Will my right hon. Friend also be generous in his acceptance of the claims or requirements of local authority capital expenditure for roofs that have been blown off schools? Finally, will he comment on the devastation caused not only to areas of parkland in public ownership, but to National Trust properties with beautiful gardens in which trees have been blown down?

Mr. Ridley: I am grateful to my hon. Friend and will certainly pass on his remarks about the splendid work of the emergency services. I confirm that over and above the product of a penny rate in shire counties and a 0·15p rate in shire districts—and of course those may be added together for any particular locality—the Government will meet 75 per cent. of the expenditure incurred and that there will be no clawback, as my hon. Friend called it, of the local authority's share of that excess spending.

I note my hon. Friend's comments about capital allocations. I have already mentioned those and we will want to consider the scale, scope and size of claims before we proceed further. However, I acknowledge that extra would be made available this year when the needs are calculated.

What I said about the Countryside Commission having discretion to aid areas such as parkland can be supplemented by a helpful statement that was made this morning by English Heritage. It, too, will be prepared to earmark special funds from its own resources for aiding areas such as parkland. I think that the hon. Gentleman will find also that the National Heritage Memorial Fund can assist such areas. There are three sources of help for the special gardens, parks and other areas of our countryside where the damage has been devastating. I think that we would all like to be sure that adequate funds were available to restore, so far as is possible, by replanting, though it will take generations to restore some of the glories that we have lost.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): I join the Secretary of State in expressing condolences to those who have been bereaved and have suffered loss and thank him for his statement, both generally and inasmuch as it reflects the work done by local authorities and statutory services, which is appreciated by all.

Is the right hon. Gentleman able to give the House the minimum estimates that have been given to him of the cost to local authorities? Some figures have appeared in the public domain and I should like to know whether he has a figure that he can give to the House. Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Bellwin formula was devised before rate capping came into operation and that there are many rate-capped councils, including Brighton, which have suffered the worst of the devastation, along with many in inner London? Will he look favourably on applications for further grants for local authorities, bearing in mind that they are in the second half of the financial year and under considerable financial restraint that was not envisaged when the Bellwin formula was devised? These authorities may need both capital and current allocations.

I thank the Secretary of State especially for extending the grant assistance scheme in rural areas and in inner cities. It is often in urban areas that the natural environment needs the most protection and support.

Mr. Ridley: I cannot give the hon. Gentleman any sensible estimate of the revenue costs or capital costs of recent events. The figures that local authorities have been suggesting clearly include both elements, and may include also a few other things that should not be taken into account. It is impossible to give any estimates of costs until we have more information.

All authorities are, in effect, rate capped because once a rate has been fixed it is impossible to raise it. Rate-capped authorities, like other authorities that are not rate-capped, are under a duty to make provision for emergencies, and presumably prudent authorities—some of them are run by the Liberal party—have taken care to establish contingency funds for events of the sort that we are discussing. It would not be right to go back on those matters now. We shall aid any authority that incurs expenditure over and above the threshold, which takes care of the fact that this was an extraordinary and unprecedented event. This aid will be provided by extra grants.

I am grateful to the hon. Member for what he said about planting in inner cities. The damage to trees in our inner cities has been terrible, and I am pleased that the Government have been able to take special measures to give help to private individuals and to local authorities, which are the main owners of urban trees, to ensure that old tree roots that have to be grubbed out can be grubbed out and that new trees are available for planning. In all the circumstances, this is an unprecedented but fully justifiable step to take.

Mr. Michael Lord (Suffolk, Central): My right hon. Friend will know that Suffolk has suffered as badly as any other county from the hurricane. We are grateful for the help that he will give in respect of tree planting, which is extremely necessary. Will he urge local authorities to do their best to advise those who have had their trees blown over in the gale, especially large mature trees, that the fallen timber may have some value? If they make a careful check, they will find that the value of the fallen trees will help to defray the cost of removal and will lead to the timber being put to sensible use.

Mr. Ridley: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I acknowledge what he has said about trees. Many of the trees which have unfortunately been blown down have a considerable timber value provided that they are not cut into short logs. It will be important for those who have lost trees to try to preserve the trunks for the benefit of the furniture trade and for the benefit of their own pockets.

Mr. David Blunkett (Sheffield, Brightside): Does the Secretary of State agree that non rate-capped authorities

have the ability in the following year to restore the contingency or reserve funds that they have had to raid to meet the expenditure that will be incurred this year? Does he agree also that there is no logic in exempting authorities over a penny rate or districts over a 0·15p rate in meeting 25 per cent. of the expenditure, against the background of the penalty and clawback system, and not exempting the first penny, which in some cases, as my hon. Friend the Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) has said, can amount to millions of pounds?

What will the right hon. Gentleman say to his supporters in places such as Hampshire who are asking why they should pay more than £1 for every £1 spent? They did not choose to do so at the beginning of the year when they drew up their budgets, and the damage to the environment will involve them in considerable expenditure. The right hon. Gentleman's absurd penalty and clawback system will force them to pay money to the Exchequer that should go to restoring their environment.

Mr. Ridley: As usual, the hon. Gentleman is wrong. Rate-capped authorities can adjust their budgets for the following year in the same way as non rate-capped authorities. Rate-capped authorities need to cut the rubbish from their budgets and get on with the real spending that is necessary. There is every justification for limiting Government assistance to expenditure over the threshold.

From time immemorial local authorities have provided for emergencies of all sorts, be it snow, flood, frost or gale, and it is only when the expenditure that they incur is above normal contingency provision that the Government have come to their aid. On this occasion we have come to their aid with more generous help than they would have expected under the Bellwin rules by not revaluing the penny rate for inflation and by giving an extra allowance for district councils as well as county councils. I expected the hon. Gentleman to give a greater welcome to my statement but I recognise that he has no constituency interest in this matter.

Sir David Price (Eastleigh): Is my right hon. Friend aware that we in south Hampshire experienced the first blast of the hurricane and an effective partnership between all public services and we the amateur public, to which I feel insufficient attention has been drawn? Is my right hon. Friend aware also that the heat and burden of subsequent days has fallen especially on the Southern Electricity Board and its admirable linesmen, who have been out in all weathers, and not so much on the local authority? What is my right hon. Friend offering to the electricity boards, which I believe have a greater claim on the public purse than local authorities?

Mr. Ridley: I agree entirely with my hon. Friend that the co-operation and partnership that developed in the wake of the hurricane force winds was marvellous. I agree also that electricity supply workers have made a marvellous contribution to restoring power to millions of people whose supply was cut off. I, too, pay tribute to them. It is perhaps an example to local authorities that, as I understand it, the electricity supply industry, has decided that it should take the costs of restoration itself. It will not be specially rewarded for the great work and enormous cost that it has incurred in restoring supplies.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Will the Secretary of State pay tribute to the direct labour organisations of London Labour authorities, particularly the London borough of Ealing? That authority was able to get its DLOs out by 3 am on Friday 16 October, when private contractors could still not be found. The DLOs made a sterling effort to clear up the damage caused by the storm.

Will the Secretary of State acknowledge that many London boroughs, particularly the Labour boroughs, have not the contingency reserves to deal with the problem that they now face? Will he tell the House what he calculates that the Government's contribution will be, if he has any figure in his head? Will he also tell us what his Department is doing to monitor closely the full impact of the storm on London boroughs, and whether he will be making a further announcement?

Mr. Ridley: I do not wish to play politics with what has been a national tragedy, as the hon. Gentleman has done. I pay tribute to both direct labour organisations and private contractors, and to individuals of all sorts who contributed to the relief of the distress of Friday morning. I do not wish to distinguish between them.

I have no idea of the ultimate costs. The Government have entered into a commitment to aid local authorities without a precise figure in mind, and I am sure that that is how the House would wish it.

We shall, of course, monitor the costs, on both the revenue and the capital sides, and when information on the likely cost of last Friday's events is available we shall give it to the House. At present, however, I cannot give any estimation of it.

Mr. Mark Wolfson (Sevenoaks): I thank my right hon. Friend for his statement, and welcome it as being of considerable help to the most hard-pressed authorities which have been the worst hit by the storm. However, I have considerable concern about his references to the contingency arrangements that he expects local authorities to have made in planning for problems of this nature. Does he appreciate that the amount needed is far beyond any normal expectations? Is he aware of the extent of the damage, and will he assure us that he is giving due attention to the prudent authorities that are dealing with a problem that is beyond any reasonable and sensible expectation?

Mr. Ridley: Prudent authorities—of which I am sure his is one — will have made some provision for emergencies. I believe that nearly all authorities make such provision. Where such provision has been exhausted by the nature and extent of the damage and its resulting costs, the Government are meeting all demand above the threshold that we have set with grant assistance at the rate of 75 per cent. That acknowledges that there has been an unprecedented and expensive event. I should have thought that my hon. Friend would consider that a proper partnership between local authorities—which are, after all, not creatures of the Government and which can and should make their own provision for emergencies—and central Government, whose proper role is to come to the rescue when costs are way beyond what could have been expected or forecast.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): If the Secretary of State is serious about not playing politics with a national tragedy, will he have a word with those Tory Members who have sought in the past five days to make

[Mr. Dave Nellist]

the Meteorological Office the scapegoat of that national tragedy? Will he arrange for the Secretary of State for Defence, who is responsible for the service, to point out that in the last 10 years 1,000 jobs have gone, that the staff are working with an old computer, and that there has been a reduction in ocean-going weather ships? Is the pressure of cost cutting and of shuffling staff around like a stage army to continue?

While a restoration of adequate manning levels in the Met Office would not prevent such a national tragedy from occurring again, it might improve the odds of more early warnings, so that local authorities and the people in the areas who have suffered would not have to go through the same experience. Will the right hon. Gentleman tell that to the Tory Members who have been playing politics during the past five days?

Mr. Ridley: I can make no comment about the Met Office. However, I understand from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence that the Director-General of the Met Office, Professor John Houghton, has already instituted an internal inquiry into the weather forecasts made by the Met Office in the period preceding the storm. My right hon. Friend has today invited Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer, the chairman of the University Grants Committee, and Professor Robert Pearce, the head of the department of meteorology at Reading university, to consider the findings of the internal inquiry when they are available and to report their conclusions to him. My right hon. Friend will, of course, inform the House further as that inquiry proceeds.

Mr. Terence Higgins (Worthing): I join in congratulating the emergency services on their rapid and effective response. I particularly welcome my right hon. Friend's proposals for the replanting of trees, which have been badly hit in coastal areas such as my own. But will my right hon. Friend cut through the financial jargon and make one point clear? If a prudent local authority has had to spend an extra pound on dealing with the crisis, is it true that it will have to spend—in the case of Worthing, anyway—an extra 40p with every pound because of withdrawal of grant? Can my right hon. Friend give an assurance that that will not happen?

Mr. Ridley: I agree with my right hon. Friend's tribute to the emergency services. But most local authorities have, or at any rate should have, budgeted for a certain contingency and taken into account the grant consequences of allowing that amount of contingency money to lie in their budgets. It is not a forfeit of grant if they have to expend what they have allowed. They may have made a gain in grant if they have had a fortunate year with no emergency, and thus no contingency money having to be spent. The Government's assistance starts over and above the threshold.

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): Is the Secretary of State aware that in my area, Waltham Forest, the local authority has already been notified of 700 dangerous structures, and trees have been destroyed in virtually every road in the borough? Does not the right hon. Gentleman's statement mean that the local authority will still be forced to pay out a significant sum towards repair? Does it not also mean, because of the paucity of the right hon. Gentleman's response and because the authority is rate capped, that paying for the storm damage will necessitate direct cuts in social services, housing and education being forced on the area?

Mr. Ridley: I do not know the cost of the work in the hon. Gentleman's borough, and I do not know how much is capital and how much revenue expenditure. However, I imagine that any prudent borough—I do not know whether that includes the hon. Gentleman's borough—will have put aside a certain sum to make allowance for such contingencies. I hope that the hon. Gentleman is not saying that Waltham Forest has made no contingency plans. That really would be an irresponsible thing to do.

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): I welcome my right hon. Friend's statement. However, hon. Members may think that the south of England bore the brunt of the storm: I leave them to imagine what happened to the Isle of Wight. We are running very short of roofing material and scaffolding. I draw my right hon. Friend's attention particularly to a decision made by the regional office of the Manpower Services Commission, as it used to be called, not to allow staff on community programmes to help in the clearing-up operations. I find that extremely frustrating, and I ask my right hon. Friend to take up the matter with the Secretary of State for Employment and seek an early clarification. The position is impossible with unemployed people on community programmes not being allowed to take part in this work.

I also ask my right hon. Friend to commission an early study to find out whether there is any relationship between the damage done to dwellings for which an improvement grant has been received and cases in which such a grant has not been received.

Mr. Ridley: I sympathise with my hon. Friend. The Isle of Wight has indeed had a very severe time. I shall certainly look into the point that he raised about the shortage of building materials and will take up the MSC point with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment, who is responsible for such matters, and I shall ensure that an answer is sent to my hon. Friend immediately.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Patently it will not be possible to call every hon. Member who wishes to ask a question. We have another statement after this, as well as a series of Standing Order No. 20 applications, followed by two major debates. I shall allow questions to continue for a further 10 minutes; then we must move on. I ask hon. Members not to repeat questions that have been asked before, and to put their questions briefly. I also ask the hon. Members whose constituencies have been most affected to rise.

Sir Eldon Griffiths (Bury St. Edmunds): While recognising the primacy of local authorities in tackling the problem, may I ask my right hon. Friend to cast his mind back to the last time that we lost many trees, through Dutch elm disease? There was created then a large voluntary effort called "Plant a tree in '73, and plant some more in '74." Will he seek to enthuse not only local authorities but businesses, schools and many people to get together and see that our old friends, the trees that have been destroyed, are replaced by voluntary effort as well as by local authority assistance?

Mr. Ridley: The significance of my announcement—that the Countryside Commission is to begin a major programme of tree planting and replacement — is considerable. It will provide an opportunity not only for the work to be done and to be grant aided but for it to be accompanied by a considerable publicity campaign. The total cost of the measures that I have announced for replacing trees, to be borne by my Department as opposed to that of my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, could be as much as £3 million. That shows the measure of the Government's determination to provide the necessary funds.

Ms. Joan Ruddock (Lewisham, Deptford): The Secretary of State seeks to rest his case on what is a prudent authority. In a national emergency of this kind, surely he should not be making a judgment about what is a prudent authority: he should be considering the needs of the people whose homes and environment have been damaged. My constituency lies within the London borough of Lewisham, and already we know of 400 damaged homes, of 500 trees that have been brought down and of 2,000 trees that have been damaged. There has also been damage to pavements. That damage has been caused in an environment to which the Government have already agreed priority should be given — the inner city. Lewisham is putting its house in order and is trying to meet the Government's budget requirements. How will it be able to do that job with the kind of debt that it will further incur as a result of the measures that the Government have announced?

Mr. Ridley: I have no doubt that Lewisham is a prudent authority that has made provision for such events. I am delighted to be able to help Lewisham by grant-aiding the amount of the expense that is beyond what any prudent authority could have forecast.

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North): The admirable work that was carried out over the weekend by Kent county council, Thanet district council, Canterbury city council and the emergency services was augmented by the community, in particular by the farming community. Many of those who did most and who gave most are also those who have lost most. Some of that loss will be a matter for the Ministry of Agriculture and the Treasury. However, may I express to my right hon. Friend the hope that the response to this genuine emergency will be interdepartmental and that it will be swift, sympathetic and flexible? Will he assure the House that the worst fears that were expressed by the leader of Kent county council on the "Today" programme yesterday morning and on "Coast to Coast" last night are entirely unfounded?

Mr. Ridley: I think that my hon. Friend will agree that the Government's response has been swift, co-ordinated and flexible. We have covered all aspects of the matter in one statement. It is very early in the day for us to be able to present to the House such a comprehensive package of measures to help, and, as I have already said, if further can be done as more becomes known, further will be done. My hon. Friend was right to pay tribute to all the people in his area who gave so much help during the emergency.

Mr. Charles Wardle (Bexhill and Battle): My right hon. Friend has commended the excellent work that was done by the local authority emergency teams. Is he aware that some of those teams quickly ran out of essential equipment and supplies because of the enormity of the task that they faced but that they could not get hold of any central Government co-ordinator to pass on their requests to other parts of the country that were less badly affected? Does not my right hon. Friend think that there are important lessons about emergency co-ordination to be learnt from this unhappy experience?

Mr. Ridley: Many people and large amounts of equipment were moved rapidly across the country from areas where they were not needed to areas where they were. Many people came down from the north to help to repair electricity lines, and many pieces of equipment were passed from people who did not need them to people who did. The Ministry of Defence provided large amounts of equipment as well as manpower. The response of those who were luckily not affected by the storm in supplying help to those areas that were affected by it was magnificent. However, my hon. Friend has to remember that many of the roads and railways were blocked and that it was not always possible for people to reach the areas that they would have liked to reach.

Mr. Bernie Grant (Tottenham): Will the Secretary of State explain to the House how local authorities could have been expected to predict the hurricane when professional weather forecasters could not do so? Is he aware that the borough of Haringey inherited a number of parks — for example, Finsbury park — from the Greater London council that his Government abolished? The result is that the borough will incur additional costs in clearing up storm-damaged trees, costs that nobody could have forecast. Will he give the House a guarantee that any expenditure that is incurred in clearing up the damage or in planting new trees will not result in penalties?

Mr. Ridley: I agree with the hon. Member that nobody could have been expected to predict the hurricane. That is why the Government are grant aiding expenditure over and above the threshold of what it might have been prudent to set aside. The hon. Member may not have heard me say that the Countryside Commission will be able to grant-aid local authorities in replacing damaged trees to the extent of 90 per cent. as opposed to the present 50 per cent., and that that grant is to be extended into London and other urban areas. That has never been done before, and it will be of massive help to local authorities that are seeking to replace the trees that have been lost.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): Does my right hon. Friend agree that it would be quite wrong to penalise local authorities on account of additional expenditure that they have incurred exclusively for repairing hurricane damage? With regard to uninsured and under-insured losses that have been suffered by private individuals, does he not agree that the time has come for the establishment of a national disaster fund to which the Government ought to make a generous donation?

Mr. Ridley: The purpose of my statement today is to make it clear that the Government are not seeking to penalise authorities and that we are coming forward with help. As for the private sector, we have to think very carefully before departing from the normal practice that private individuals are responsible for insuring and repairing their own property. It would be right, I believe, for the Government to leave it at that.

Mr. Kenneth Warren (Hastings and Rye): As my right hon. Friend knows, there were many tragic casualties, including people who were killed, in my constituency, and 75 per cent. of the houses have been damaged. May I thank him for the prompt response that his private office gave last Friday morning when it was asked for help, and may I ask him kindly to keep his door open? Although timber may be saleable at some time in the future, we have the problem of thousands of trees that simply cannot be moved. Will he kindly look at the enormous problem that is facing private householders, against which there is no insurance?

Mr. Ridley: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, and I can assure him that my door is always open, if he wishes to come and see me. There is no need to dispose of the mature timber that was blown down in the hurricane. It will keep for several years and it will not lose its saleability and marketability. If the market will not take immediately all the timber that has been lost, private individuals can keep some of the timber for later use.

Mr. Bruce Grocott (The Wrekin): As the whole tone of the Minister's rather lofty remarks is that all local authorities should have a hurricane contingency fund, will he confirm that his own Department has set an example and that such a fund exists within his own Department? Will he also tell us how much money is in that fund?

Mr. Ridley: The basic premise of the hon. Gentleman's question was wrong. I said that all authorities should have a fund for contingencies. The point of the Bellwin scheme is that authorities receive help over and above that level when the costs exceed the threshold. The hon. Gentleman may be deliberately trying not to understand or hear. If that is the case, the second part of his question does not arise because he muffed the first part.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): Is the Minister aware that in Southend-on-Sea, where 25,000 houses have been damaged, the problem is the shortage of basic building materials? Can his regional housing officers play some part in co-ordinating the activities for making good the shortage? Will he say how on earth the EEC can contemplate offering help when it is overspending its legal budget for this year by £7 billion?

Mr. Ridley: At the time of the storms supplies of building materials were short, mainly because of the large amount of building that is taking place under the Government's housing and other programmes. Thus, there is a shortage of some building materials. I shall do all that I can to ensure that supplies are available to those who need to repair damage to their houses. The point about the European Community falls to my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am well aware of the frustrations of the hon. Members I have been unable to call. Almost every constituency was affected by the storm. I shall give hon. Members who have not been called priority when the matter is next discussed.

Dr. Cunningham: I urge the Secretary of State to reconsider what he has said. Of course local authorities should be prudent, but how can he expect an inner-city borough such as Greenwich to spend the product of a penny rate, £408,000, or, in the case of Lewisham, £385,000, and then spend its contingency reserve and pay penalty on that in the face of this totally unprecedented damage? Should not the Government be grant-aiding all of that expenditure? If local authorities should, as he urges, spend all their contingency reserves now, what will they do for the rest of the winter?

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman is continually urging on the Government the need to treat local authorities as responsible organs of government. Any responsible organ of government would make provision for contingencies. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor has a contingency fund. How else does the hon. Gentleman think that we accommodate the overspending of Labour local authorities, except out of the contingency fund?

Mr. Andrew Bowden (Brighton, Kemptown): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot take points of order now. I must take them at the proper time.

Flooding (Wales)

4.43 pm

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Peter Walker): With permission, I should like to make a statement about the flooding situation in Wales.

Exceptionally high rainfall over last weekend resulted in extensive flooding over a large part of south-west Wales and localised flooding in north Wales. Further minor flooding has occurred overnight in north Wales. Several hundred properities were seriously affected by the floods. There has been widespread flooding of agricultural land, but livestock losses have been minor as flood warnings were given in sufficient time for stock to be moved to higher ground. Communications were disrupted but all trunk roads throughout the Principality are now open. A number of county roads remain closed. Electricity and water supplies were disrupted, but they are being restored as quickly as possible.

Hon. Members will be aware of the tragic train accident in which four people died. The preliminary indications are that the foundations of the bridge were undermined by floodwater. British Rail is conducting its own inquiry and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport has ordered an inquiry under the Regulation of Railways Act.

I should like to pay tribute to the work of all those involved in local authorities, the police, the fire service, the water authority and other organisations.

The Government have already made it clear that local authorities, which bear the prime responsibility for dealing with the situation, will be assisted with the extra costs that they incur. All their extra expenditure above a threshold defined as 0·4 per cent. of grant-related expenditure will attract special financial assistance at a rate of 75 per cent. in accordance with the Bellwin scheme, which was drawn up in 1983 in consultation with the local authority associations, including those representing Welsh local authorities. Extra expenditure above the threshold will be excluded from calculations of authorities' total expenditure to ensure that they do not suffer a loss of grant as a result of the unforeseeable extra costs with which they are now faced.

I am sure that the whole House will wish to express its sympathy to the relatives of those who have been tragically killed as a result of this flooding and to all those whose homes have suffered.

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): I thank the Secretary of State for coming to the House and making the statement. On behalf of the official Opposition I express our sympathy to all those who have suffered as a result of the flooding and we particularly offer our profound condolences to the stricken familes of those who died so tragically.

Like the Secretary of State, I should like to express our thanks and offer our congratulations to the military and civil authorities that responded so magnificently to a crisis that developed rapidly over so widespread an area.

I have welcomed the statement today, but it is three days since the flooding occurred. It is only today, at official level, that the Welsh Office is clarifying the financial position for councils. During those three days those councils and relief organisations have been making decisions involving spending not by the hour but by the minute. They have had to make those decisions in a vaccum. Late on Monday we had a general indication that the Bellwin formula would apply. But until now the councils have not known how far their extra spending would affect their liability to Government penalties for overspending. Therefore, will the Minister confirm and clarify one or two points? In the past, although there is talk of the Government meeting up to 75 per cent. of the cost, in similar situations, because of the way in which the Bellwin formula has operated, councils have had to meet two thirds of the bill of disasters. Does he recognise that that would be a penal cost to some of our poorer local authorities in Wales?

Will the Secretary of State confirm that what he said in his statement is not quite correct? I am sure that he did not intend to mislead anyone when he spoke of all expenditure over the threshold. Will he confirm that there is not an absolute commitment by the Government to 75 per cent. of the cost over the threshold? There is only a commitment to entertain claims, but those claims are judged, and must be judged, against the Bellwin criteria, which are vague and which mean that it will be a long time after decisions have had to be taken that the councils will know whether they have qualified for grant.

Councils need to be as sure as possible of the ground rules as soon as possible. Will the Secretary of State clarify a further two points that have been put to me on behalf of the councils today that underline the fact that they are unsure of these points? Will councils be safe from penalties not only in relation to the initial threshold rate that they will have to spend, but also on the 25 per cent., which I am sure is what the Secretary of State intends? Further, because of the uncertainty about the way in which the Bellwin criteria will operate, will they be safe from penalty in respect of any further necessary costs which were genuinely incurred by them at the time but which are eventually judged to be outside the Bellwin formula? The Secretary of State should understand that that is very important for some local authorities that are particularly involved in the present crisis in Wales. It is important for them that there should be no uncertainty about the penalty situation.

The Secretary of State will be aware that south Pembrokeshire stands to lose £240 of Government grant for every £100 of spending that it accidentally makes outside the Government's criteria. Preseli stands to lose £107 of Government grant for every £100 that it inadvertently spends outside the Government's criteria. It is not merely a matter of semantics; it is a real and serious problem.

In those circumstances, does the Secretary of State not consider it appalling that as recently as lunch-time today the Welsh councils that are directly involved in this relief operation and the Welsh Office still seem to be confused about the Government's intentions? I suspect that the right hon. Gentleman's Department did not want him to be aware of the fact that throughout the three days councils have received conflicting advice—which is worse that no advice. I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman will deplore that as much as I do. At 12.20 today the treasurer for an authority covering one of the worst affected areas, part of which is still under water, received the third version of the threshold figure for his authority from Welsh Office officials. Is the Secretary of State aware that the versions differed by as much as £100,000? At one time the treasurer to whom I referred was told that his authority might be

[Mr. Alan Williams]

responsible for a 3p rate before it received assistance from the Government. Subsequently he was told that the figure had been downgraded to 0.5p. He was given three conflicting versions in 24 hours.

If the system is so complicated that the Welsh Office cannot get it right, what hope have the councils had in the last three days when they have had to make spot decisions? At official level the Welsh Office has been a shambles. Perhaps it is just as well that the local authorities and not the Welsh Office had to deal with the flood crisis.

I welcome the extra money provided to help the worst-hit areas, but those areas will still be hard pressed to meet the remaining share of the cost of the flooding.

The system was devised in 1982. By now the Government should have devised a scheme which could be announced immediately an emergency strikes and which can be easily understood not just by the councils, but by the Government themselves.

Mr. Walker: I welcome the right hon. Gentleman's expressions of sympathy for the sufferers. They will be shared by hon. Members on both sides of the House. The right hon. Gentleman criticised the Welsh Office. I do not praise myself but I do praise officials at the Welsh Office, who set up the co-ordinating machinery. They worked 24 hours a day, and appreciation has been expressed in all parts of the country for the advice and guidance that they have given. I deeply resent the suggestion that those officials represent a shambles. The only case that the right hon. Gentleman cited was of a local authority querying its threshold. Some official probably made a guess and then corrected himself. I totally praise those officials and I hope that the House will do the same.

The flooding took place over the weekend and on Monday evening it was announced that a scheme which had been negotiated with the Welsh local authorities would be introduced. It is a new scheme. The Welsh local authorities were not ignored when that scheme was drawn up and they know its details. As soon as the size of the problem was known I went to my colleagues in the Cabinet and they agreed that we should make an immediate announcement that the emergency would come under the Bellwin scheme.

The right hon. Gentleman is critical of the speed at which the announcement was made. He should look back to the emergencies when he was a Minister, to the severe weather conditions in 1977-78 and 1978-79. There was a longer delay before an announcement was made and no known scheme was available. People complain about our lack of generosity, but when the right hon. Gentleman was in power the scheme operated involved 75 per cent. of additional expenditure above a threshold defined in terms almost identical to those which are being used now. The generosity of the Labour Government scheme in similar conditions was somewhat slower, less understood but of the same dimensions.

I shall send all local authorities a detailed letter describing the Bellwin rules and we shall answer any queries from local authorities.

Mr. Keith Raffan (Delyn): I thank my right hon. Friend for his statement and I join in his praise for the emergency services, the local authorities and the admirably prompt action by his officials at the Welsh Office.

Is my right hon. Friend aware that one of the main practical problems involves the division of responsibility? Will he review the maintenance of water courses to make it clear who is responsible so that necessary remedial action is not delayed by disputes between county, borough and water authorities?

Mr. Walker: Yes. I welcome my hon. Friend's remarks. I should like him to give me examples of any problems in his constituency and I shall look into them to see whether lessons can be learnt.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): I associate my party with all the remarks about bereavement and I thank all those who worked so hard. My constituency contains places such as Criccieth, Pentrefelin, Llanberis, Cwmyglo and Rhostryfan which were flooded. I welcome the Secretary of State's response and his visits to Wales this week.

May we clarify the details of the compensation? For example, if costs run over to 1988-89, will they be covered, particularly if there are capital implications such as bridges collapsing and requiring capital expenditure? If further tragedies or bad weather occur this winter, will they be covered by the Bellwin definition and will local authorities again have to meet the first tranche of expenditure? Will the Secretary of State organise a review of the emergency services to ensure that they have adequate equipment to respond quickly?

Mr. Walker: If a bridge is weakened as a result of the flooding we shall have to consider what happens on a case-by-case basis. A bridge might be scheduled for strengthening and so it would not qualify. I shall consider any long-term capital problems that arise. I do not know whether another penny rate will be involved if a second emergency arises. I shall check on that and let the hon. Gentleman know.

One must learn lessons from such incidents. On my visits I was very impressed by the speed and co-ordination of the emergency services. Co-ordination at Welsh Office and local authority level is important. I was impressed with the way in which local authorities took action so quickly. I am also full of praise for a group of individuals who are not often praised. I talk of the people involved in services such as the helicopter pilots from the Army Flying Corps who did a remarkable job visiting farms to ensure that everything was all right.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): I thank my right hon. Friend for congratulating the emergency services. I was in my constituency on Sunday when the flooding was at its height. The fire brigade acted in a most admirable manner, pumping out private buildings and shops and helping to relieve distress. The RAF Brawdy search and rescue helicopters, which are under threat of being removed from the area, also did excellent work in rescuing farmers and livestock.

I should also like to pay tribute to the amateur radio enthusiasts who set up a radio link with the neighbouring constituency of Carmarthen in the Pembrokeshire district council offices. It was the only communication link at that time and local authorities were thus able to co-ordinate their action.

I spoke to my right hon. Friend on Monday about my next question. I refer to the A40 at Haverfordwest, which is the subject of a major road scheme. There is some

question that, because of the scheme, the water course of the river Claddau has been altered dramatically and that that may have caused the flooding. How are the inquiries going on that matter?

Mr. Walker: I appreciate that that last matter is of considerable concern to my hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) and his constituents. I believe that the nature of the flooding in the area was different from what had taken place in previous circumstances. Therefore, examination must be made by the water authority as to what, if anything, affected the area in a particular way when the flooding took place. I have consulted the chairman of the water authority on this matter and action is being taken to see that that examination takes place.

I note with interest the point my hon. Friend has made about people using amateur radio links. I was asked whether there would be a review of the emergency procedures and I believe that there are lessons to be learnt. For example in Carmarthen, where the telephone exchange was immediately put out of operation due to the flooding, there were considerable problems with regard to emergency calls and the telephone services. We shall have to consider methods whereby such calls can be effectively delivered to the emergency services when such incidences occur. In Carmarthen, the local radio experts were of considerable help to the police.

Mr. Donald Coleman (Neath): The right hon. Gentleman will be aware that it was not only flooding that caused problems during the weekend's heavy rain. Has the right hon. Gentleman been advised of the damage that has been done at Panteg in the Swansea valley as a result of the mountain slippage caused by the heavy rains? Will the Secretary of State consult the Lliw Valley borough council and other local authorities in Wales that have to contend with difficulties and slippages of this nature with a view to drawing up legislation that will enable local authorities to take early action in respect of these dangerous geological conditions? Will the damage at Panteg attract Government assistance as a means of helping to resolve that problem? Finally, I pay tribute to the work of the people at Swansea Sound and BBC Radio who alerted people to what was happening at the weekend.

Mr. Walker: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for mentioning his thanks to the media for conveying the flood warnings that, I am glad to say, the water authority gave in good time. Had those flood warnings not been given, many more cattle, sheep and perhaps people would have been injured. With regard to the mountain slippage, I cannot give any assurance about payment, but I promise to look into the matter immediately and consult the local authorities. I shall let him know the outcome.

Mr. Richard Livsey (Brecon and Radnor): I thank the Secretary of State for his statement and, on behalf of my party, may I extend sympathy to those who have been affected by this great tragedy.

I believe that it is the elderly as well as the farming community and those in business in certain parts of Wales who have been most affected and suffered grievously as a result of this flooding.

Will the Secretary of State consider especially the problems of those areas most affected in Dyfed and Gwynedd and ask himself whether the Bellwin formula is adequate when those authorities are already in extreme difficulties with their budgets?

Secondly, as regards the Glanrhyd accident and the tragic loss of life, will he pressurise British Rail and his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport to ensure that the bridge is replaced at the soonest possible moment because the possible closure of the central Wales railway line will have severe effects on the economy of central Wales? Will the Secretary of State ask the Welsh water authority what research it has done, subsequent to the flooding, because six inches of rain fell in the area of Llyn Brianne? It should consider whether some of the flooding in the Towy valley was a result of excess water coming from the Llyn Brianne dam.

Mr. Walker: I shall study, together with the water authority, its detailed examination of what has taken place. The rainfall was incredible when one considers that in 25 hours more rain fell than normally falls in the month of October. Therefore, substantial problems were bound to arise. From my point of view, one of the most interesting things has been discussing with the water authority where it was disappointed in the sense that it had carried out flood prevention work but floods had still occurred, and also where that flood prevention work had succeeded. I am pleased to say that, in many locations where the authority had carried out important work, such work succeeded. In those places where the prevention work was not successful, it was due to the degree of flooding and the downpour. However, I shall raise the hon. Gentleman's question with the water authority.

With regard to the repair of the bridge, I shall certainly convey to British Rail the importance of the line to a range of people in Wales. Having seen what was going on yesterday, it is obvious that a great deal of work has been carried out immediately to deal with the train and the totally collapsed bridge. I am afraid that there is unlikely to be a quick solution when one considers the size of the problem, but I agree that it should have a high priority.

With regard to the existing formula, I agree that when a scheme is put into operation any Government must consider how effective it is. A great deal of work went into creating the formula, in close consultation with local authorities, including the Welsh local authorities.

Mr. Donald Anderson (Swansea, East): Does the Secretary of State intend to apply to the EEC disaster fund as there are good precedents for assistance with flood damage? Further, with regard to the Glanrhyd bridge disaster, does the Secretary of State believe that the repairs should be borne wholly out of British Rail's resources, or are there special contingency funds available from central Government for the repair of that bridge?

Mr. Walker: On the hon. Gentleman's latter question, I cannot be certain but I would guess that that repair would be part of the overall operations of British Rail. I am not responsible for British Rail, but I would guess that, as a result of the spread of the risks throughout the United Kingdom, British Rail is self-insured for hazards and risks such as the bridge disaster. In terms of capital investment of that description, when compared with the whole of its capital investment programme and its current position, I do not believe that the repair of the bridge wil be a major problem to British Rail.

[Mr. Walker]

As regards the EEC disaster fund, I gather talks have taken place between the Foreign Office and the European Commission about the availability of such grants and I presume that some conclusion will be reached.

Mr. Alan W. Williams (Carmarthen): May I ask the Secretary of State to instruct the Welsh water authority to look again at its flood prevention scheme for Carmarthen? In 1979 we had a massive flood in Carmarthen — the worst in living memory and the worst for 100 years. Following that flood, the Welsh water authority set up a flood prevention scheme and invested about £600,000 in various defences. We were told then that that scheme would cover a flood as bad as 1979—we did not expect such a flood for another 100 years. However, within eight years that flood has occurred.

In particular, the Welsh water authority should look at the southern bypass and its big embankment that acts as a dam holding water back. It should consider a new bridge for Carmarthen at the eastern bypass. As the hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) has already said, there is concern about what happened at Llyn Brianne during the course of Sunday night. Llyn Brianne is a massive reservoir at the head of the Towy and it was discharging enormous volumes of water. At this time of the year, no reservoir should be full, but it is clear that that reservoir was discharging enormous volumes of water. Will the Secretary of State ask the water authority to look into these matters?

Mr. Walker: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that I visited his constituency yesterday with the chairman of the Welsh water authority. Since 1979, that authority has spent £650,000 to try to improve flood prevention. Given the circumstances of the 1979 flood and any flood in the past 100 years, that prevention work was, in the authority's view, totally effective. Unfortunately, the scale of the recent flood was unprecedented. When I spoke to some of the hon. Gentleman's constituents yesterday, some of the more elderly constituents told me about the flood of 1930 as well as the 1979 flood. All were in agreement that the problems associated with the recent flood were greater than any could remember.

As the hon. Gentleman has said, the nature of that flood prevention was the building of a wall which now acts as a dam. I am told that when the river level falls further, it will be automatically drained from there but the present levels have created a dam. I am sure that the water authority will review the situation and consider whether there are lessons to be learnt. I discussed with the engineers and the chairman of the water authority all the known criteria of 1979 and the prevention methods they used were sensible and correct. They did not take into account the freak flood of the dimensions that took place. Obviously when something as tragic as this has taken place, full examination must be made to consider whether any lessons should be learnt.

Mr. Alun Michael (Cardiff, South and Penarth): Does the Secretary of State accept that the wine of generosity that has been poured out on previous occasions by his predecessors has turned to vinegar on the tongue on many occasions because of the way in which detail has been treated a long time after the event? For instance, elements of expenditure have been argued one way and another over a long period, which makes it difficult for local authorities to know where they stand. Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that the much greater and tighter controls on local authorities nowadays make that even more important and difficult to cope with? Will he seek to arrange a way of making sure that things are as clear as possible as soon as possible, and ensure that things are not passed from one local authority to another because of the knock-on effect of decisions in Wales?

Mr. Walker: I understand what the hon. Gentleman says. Before I send the letter explaining in detail how the scheme operates I shall urge local authorities, if they are in doubt about any form of expenditure, to consult officials in my Department so that quick clarification can be given.

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): When the Secretary of State is pondering the lessons taught by the severe weather for the future, will he ask his officials to examine the extent to which trunk roads and other major roads in Wales, especially mid-Wales, were flooded? Will he bear it in mind in particular that the A483 road on either side of Welshpool and the A487 at Dyfi bridge flood in far less severe weather than in the past few days? The floods were simply worse this time. Will the right hon. Gentleman seek solutions to the persistent flooding that occurs on those roads and severely disrupts industry in mid-Wales?

Mr. Walker: I can undertake only to look into the problems that the hon. and learned Gentleman has drawn to my attention and see whether there are solutions to them. From a previous incarnation, when I was Secretary of State for the Environment, when transport came under that Department, I know that there are problems of road flooding that are impossible to solve without gigantic expense. Because of cost-effectiveness, on occasions flooding cannot be avoided. I shall certainly look at the two cases mentioned by the hon. and learned Gentleman.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones (Ynys Môn): Will the Secretary of State clarify the position for some riparian owners following my discussions with Welsh water authority officials? They have explained that their responsibility in many cases is for the beds, not the banks of rivers. Riparian owners, whether private individuals or companies, are responsible for repairs to what, in some cases, can be described only as severe structural damage. There is always the possibility of insuring against that risk, but is the Secretary of State aware that some of those people have been flooded so often this year that certain insurance companies are not prepared to insure them against that risk? Will he explain to the House whether it is possible to find resources for those people if it can be shown that there has been severe structural damage and they have been unable to insure themselves against such damage?

Mr. Walker: If someone finds that he is uninsured against such a risk, in principle it is unlikely for the Government to take on that risk on his behalf. However, if the hon. Gentleman can give me specific examples of where that is a problem, I shall look into them.

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): In his discussions with the chairman of the Welsh water authority during his tour, did the Secretary of State discover whether the Llyn Brianne was fuller than it should have been and, when the five inches of rain fell in the head waters of the river Towy, whether it could not hold back the head waters and thus

allowed a greater rush of water down the river Towy, knocking out the bridge at Glanrhyd? Was the rush of water greater than might have been the case had the Llyn Brianne had the spare capacity to hold that five inches of rainfall?.

Mr. Walker: I did not discuss that with the chairman of the Welsh water authority. If it had been the case, it would have been mentioned as a factor in the briefings and reports that were given to me by the water authority. As the hon. Gentleman has raised the matter, I shall immediately have it raised with the water authority and let him know the position.

Mr. Roy Hughes (Newport, East): Does the Secretary of State appreciate that we in the Labour party recognise the splendid efforts of the emergency services? However, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) stated, there has been unnecessary concern and anxiety over the past three days because of the Welsh Office's indecisive attitude over the financial support that is to be made available to alleviate all the damage that has been caused. It is still not clear whether local authorities are to be penalised for expenditure that is incurred but is subsequently deemed to fall outside the Bellwin criteria. Will the right hon. Gentleman clear up that point? Does he further appreciate that positive and genuine financial support is needed for our local authorities, and particularly for individuals whose homes have been wrecked and who are in poor circumstances and on social security?

Will the right hon. Gentleman remind his Cabinet colleagues that he is dealing with impoverished south Wales, which should be dealt with differently from the prosperous south-east of England? What about the bridges in Dyfed alone – 1,400 of them? A pre-flood inspection showed that it would cost £12 million to bring them up to standard. Surely a revised figure now would be far higher. Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that more stringent precautions are necessary following the Glanrhyd bridge tragedy? I should like to add my sympathy to the relatives of those who so tragically lost their lives. What steps are being taken in conjunction with British Rail to ensure the speedy reopening of that important rail link, which is the lifeline of mid-Wales?

Mr. Walker: On the latter point, British Rail is putting all its resources into clearing away the debris. It will then restore the service as quickly as possible. I am sure that it recognises the importance of that service to mid-Wales. The inquiry will take place under the Regulation Railways Act. I am sure that the facts of the tragedy will be made known when the report of the inquiry is made public.

The hon. Gentleman referred to speed. I defy him to find another case such as this. Serious flooding took place on Sunday night primarily and through Monday morning, and on Monday evening the Government announced the financial services that would be made available. It is absurd to make criticisms. We have heard the cry, "Shouldn't you have bigger grants for impoverished south Wales than for London and south-east England?" Even if there was a case for that, such a case was never conceded by the previous Labour Government when they gave similar grants to similar local authorities.

Redbrook-Woolley Collieries Complex

5.18 pm

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the proposed closure of Redbrook-Woolley collieries complex."

The matter is specific because it relates to British Coal in general and to my area in particular. It is urgent because of the loss of 1,300 jobs.

The complex came into being during the past six years. North Gawber colliery disappeared. Levels of management were placed at either end of the complex. Woolley colliery is in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe), who will make his maiden speech today if he catches your eye, Mr. Speaker, and will probably refer to it in more detail than I can in my application.

While the complex was coming into being, manpower was run down, surface installations were closed, and Dodworth colliery was closed. The men travelled via Redbrook. Almost 1,000 jobs were taken out and £20·5 million was spent in Redbrook on deepening, sinking and widening shafts. Surface installations, showers and lockers, car parks and lamp rooms were built. The trade unions co-operated fully with the management in that. The material travelled underground to a new huge washer that cost £46 million.

Originally, the collieries of Caphouse, Emley Moor, Dodworth, Newmillerdam, North Gawber, and Bullcliffe Wood were included in the project. However, I accept that orders change as do systems, but it must be asked why, after six and a half years, when the paint is hardly dry, this has come about. We now have only three collieries in the area, Denby Grange, Calder and Park Mill. The total cost of refurbishment was about £150 million. We have the best mining engineers and the best miners in the world and we have to ask why this has happened. More importantly, what will happen to the capital cost of the project? Will it be spent on the existing collieries, because if it is not they will close.

I am seeking the debate so that we can look at the area, consider the capital cost and examine how, by working with the board and the union in a positive way, we can save the collieries under threat of closure and ensure that all existing collieries survive.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the proposed closure of Redbrook-Woolley collieries complex with the loss of 1,300 jobs."

I can well understand the impact that the closure will have on the hon. Gentleman's constituency, but I regret that the matter he has raised is not appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20 and that I cannot submit his application to the House.

SBG Engineering Ltd. (Closure)

5.22 pm

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the proposed closure of SBG Engineering Ltd. workshops in Falkirk in my constituency."

The matter is obviously specific and it is important because it involves 150 skilled jobs in Falkirk district where about 10,000 people are already out of work. The matter deserves parliamentary attention because SBG Engineering Ltd. is a publicly owned company. It is part of the Scottish Transport group, which is accountable to the Secretary of State for Scotland who, in turn, is supposed to be accountable to the House. Furthermore, the reason for the proposed closure is the failure of the Government policies on public transport, particularly inadequate Government support, the deregulation of bus services and the threat of privatisation.

A couple of years ago I led a delegation to Michael Ancram, alias the Earl of Ancram, who was then the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland. We warned him then that the Government's policies would lead to a disastrous reduction in public transport services and a disastrous reduction in job opportunities within public transport. However, he would not listen to us. *[Interruption.]* He lost his job at the general election but, more tragically, his policies are threatening the jobs of 150 of my constituents.

Deregulation and the threat of privatisation have meant masses of cutbacks in the size of the Scottish Bus group fleet and, therefore, an alleged over-capacity in the engineering operations that service that fleet. For some inexplicable reason, SBG Engineering Ltd. has picked on the Falkirk workshops for closure despite the fact that I have been given evidence that the Falkirk operation is the most profitable of all the SBG Engineering Ltd. workshops in Scotland. I have been given important information today showing that the Scottish Bus group has been giving engineering work to the private sector. That work could have been done adequately by SBG Engineering Ltd., which is its sister company in the public sector.

I have taken up the matter with the Secretary of State for Scotland but, so far, he has failed to reply to my letter. I have also taken the matter up with Mr. Ian Irwin, the chairman of the Scottish Transport group. He has failed to answer some of the pertinent questions I put to him about the proposed closure. That information is vital to the work force in its battle to save jobs. I tried every means at my disposal to pursue the matter during the parliamentary recess, but without success. Therefore, on behalf of my constituents, I urge you, Mr. Speaker, to allow this important matter to be debated on the Floor of the House.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the proposed closure of SBG Engineering Ltd, workshops in Falkirk."

I have listened with concern to what the hon. Gentleman has said about the proposal to close the workshops in Falkirk. Now that the House has resumed I hope that the hon. Gentleman will find other methods of raising the matter, but I regret that it is not appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20, and I cannot submit his application to the House.

Whitley Hospital, Coventry

5.25 pm

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the decision by the health authorities of Coventry and the West Midlands to close Whitley hospital in Coventry."

The decision on closure was taken last Wednesday at the regional health authority meeting in Birmingham. It was taken despite lobbies and delegations to that and other meetings in which, with the staff at the hospital, the health trade unions in the city and the patients relying on the services, I was involved. It was also taken in spite of a petition of 44,000 signatures. It is the largest petition in the history of Coventry and has been signed, so far, by one in seven of the city's population.

The matter received barely 10 minutes at the meeting last Wednesday. It was considered by a body of people who, in most cases, had not had the documents relating to the closure for more than 48 hours.

Whitley provides essential National Health Service facilities for the elderly in Coventry and the closure ends long-term care by the NHS of the frail, elderly in Coventry. Seven years ago Whitley was targeted for development as Coventry's second district hospital and was to be up-graded to 500 beds. Four years ago it was redesignated as a site for development and a centre of excellence for rehabilitation services. Those detailed plans have been quietly buried as the financial crisis in the NHS, locally, regionally and nationally, has escalated. Coventry is under-funded by £1·5 million this year.

The proposal is to sell Whitley hospital to private enterprise. That will cut the NHS budget in Coventry but it will cost the Department of Health and Social Security as much, if not more, in other forms of subsidy. It will cut NHS facilities by 200 beds and will lead to either job cuts or a reduction in wages and conditions of service for those who remain in employment.

Privatising an NHS hospital for the elderly gives credence to the comments of the chairman of the regional health authority who has said, in relation to the provision of hospital services, that there is some evidence to suggest that young people should count as a priority. That has been backed up by a junior Health Minister, now sitting on the Treasury Bench, who said:

"Those who do not get priority always raise objections but I believe this idea deserves serious consideration."

That Minister should speak to the people of Coventry such as the parents of incontinent, handicapped children who have been told this week that their allocation of free NHS incontinence pads is to be reduced from six to two a day, robbing those kids of their dignity. The Minister should speak to the cancer patients in Birmingham who have been told in recent weeks that the NHS is full up. The closure of Whitley hospital further illustrates the fact that the Health Service is not safe in the Prime Minister's hands. In her opinion, her hands and legs were not safe in the Health Service. My constituents do not have the money to use private medicine and we need Whitley hospital. The House should debate the matter.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the decision by the health authorities of Coventry and the West Midlands to close Whitley hospital."

I well understand the hon. Gentleman's strong feelings, but I regret that I have to give him the same answer as I gave to his hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan). The matter is not appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20 and I cannot submit his application to the House.

Palace of Westminster (Security)

5.28 pm

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to raise what I consider to be a serious point of order concerning the vetting procedures operating in this House for staff employed by hon. Members.

In August of this year I appointed Mr. Ronan Bennett as a temporary research assistant and, after application, a pass was issued to him to enable him to enter this building. One week later a disgraceful story appeared in the *News of the World* which attacked Mr. Bennett and me. After that, a story appeared in the *Sunday Times* claiming that his pass had been suspended and that he would no longer be admitted to this building. On the following day I received a letter from you, Mr. Speaker, saying that his security pass had, indeed, been suspended and that it should be returned to the office.

I understand that, on security advice, Mr. Bennett has been declared unacceptable to be issued with a pass to enter this House. I wish to make it clear that Mr. Bennett had one conviction against him quashed in 1975 and, following a three months trial in 1978, a case against him was dismissed and he was acquitted. There are no convictions against Mr. Bennett — he is an innocent man.

Mr. Bennett is employed by me to investigate miscarriages of justice in this country. I wish to know under what powers his pass to enter this building has been withdrawn. His character has been smeared and his employment prospects damaged through statements by the security services. None of those statements has been made public. No evidence against Mr. Bennett has been offered to him, to me, or, as far as I am aware, to many other people. Therefore, there is no way that he can rebut the allegations; he knows only that there are such allegations and that there is no appeal against them. A basic miscarriage of justice is taking place in front of our very eyes. There is no appeal against an accusation made against Mr. Bennett, which is obviously very damaging to him.

It is a transgression of democracy to allow security services to decide, on the basis of unpublished information or opinion, who should or should not enter this building. Do you agree, Mr. Speaker, that if we allow such a proceedure for the vetting of hon. Members' staff to proceed it removes from this House and hands to unelected, unaccountable security services the power to decide what should happen in this House? Hon. Members are elected to represent their constituents; they are not elected to be prevented from carrying out their work by the security services acting in secret and smearing someone's character in this way.

I would like you, Mr. Speaker, to state now under what powers you have ordered the withdrawal of Mr. Bennett's pass and what action can be taken now to protect the rights of constituents who elect Members of Parliament to represent them and to employ those whom they think fit to carry out their duties on their behalf.

Sir Eldon Griffiths (Bury St. Edmunds): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it not the case that an all-party Committee of this House as recently as 1984-85 considered very carefully the problem of large numbers of research assistants gaining access to the Palace? Is it not also the case that that Committee, on which distinguished hon. Members from both sides sat, reached the conclusion that the onus of ensuring that the rare, undesirable appointees should not come here rested with the hon. Member himself, and further and precisely that the hon. Member should not

"pursue the application in the face of an adverse (and confidential) report on the security status of the applicant"?

Am I not right in saying that those were the views of an all-party Committee of this House? Although its report has yet to be debated, I am sure that you wished to bear those conclusions in mind in reaching your decision.

Mr. Tony Benn (Chesterfield): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the recommendation referred to by the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) has not come before the House and no authority has been granted by a Select Committee, whose report has not been discussed, giving such powers to you, Mr. Speaker. This is not the moment to debate the matter, but it is important that certain facts should come out, and I wish to put some questions to you. When was the request made to you, and by whom? Who carries out the vetting? Under what authority did you act? Those are the central questions, rather like the Zircon case that went to the Committee of Privileges.

In addition, does the vetting apply to the staff of the House of Commons? I believe that it does. Does it apply to journalists? Is every Lobby correspondent vetted before being allowed to come into the House? Does it apply to visitors? I understand from my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) that there is no objection to the gentleman in question attending the House as a visitor, although evidently he cannot come here to work. Does it apply to Members of Parliament? One hon. Member who has not taken his seat — the hon. Member for Belfast, West (Mr. Adams) — would certainly incur the displeasure of the security services, even though he has been elected to this House.

The point that I wish to draw to your attention, Mr. Speaker, is that your decision has enormous constitutional importance, far beyond the question whether a person has been badly used. However, anyone in such a position would find it impossible to obtain employment because it would be said, "Mr. Speaker has said he is a security risk, because by withdrawing his pass he has tried and convicted the man"—*[Interruption.]* I put it to you, Mr. Speaker, that that is how any employer would regard your decision. That man has not been tried in this matter and he has been acquitted of all other charges, yet he has been told that he is not regarded as a safe person to advise an elected Member of Parliament. In the end, the rights involved are not those of a research assistant—no one has the right to be a research assistant — but those of an elected Member to employ whom he wishes to advise him in serving the constituents who elected him.

I cannot imagine a graver case than this. I ask whether you, Mr. Speaker, would be so kind, at an appropriate moment, to answer my questions and to arrange for a debate so that the House can consider whether it wants to reverse the decision of Speaker Lenthall when the five Members were demanded by the King on the ground that they were a security risk. I believe that exactly the same principles apply in this case.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. It might be helpful to the House if we did not spread this point of order further than the point on which it was raised. The right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) has put to you a proposition that was not part of the original point of order. Whatever the original complaint may be, it is not about who hon. Members may or may not employ as research assistants. The question is confined to access to this House, for whose security you are responsible, Mr. Speaker. It is the protection not just of hon. Members, but of everyone in the Gallery, the staff of the House and children visiting the House in the mornings with either hon. Members or guides should explosive devices go off. The question that should not be subsumed is who hon. Members may employ as research assistants, because that is not the issue. The point at issue is access to the House.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I believe that everyone recognises that you acted on the advice of the appropriate authorities. The intervention by the hon. Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) does not help. He said that it was a question not of employing research assistants but of access to the House. Obviously, if an hon. Member employs someone to work for him it is expected that that person will work in the House of Commons. I imagine that there are few, if any, research assistants who do not work in some part of the House.

The matter is important because who is to decide whether we can employ a particular person? Will the security authorities decide whether a person has their approval? As I understand the position outlined by my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn), the person concerned was charged but not convicted. Therefore, in law we are dealing with an innocent person. It would be inappropriate to allow this matter to go by on the nod because other such cases would come before us in due course. I beg of you, Mr. Speaker, to appreciate that the matter of great importance, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) said, is that we have the right to employ whom we wish, and that we should try to establish and confirm that right. We should not be at the mercy of the security authorities to decide, on information unknown to us, whether Mr. X or Mr. Y should be employed in this House.

My understanding is that this is the first such case, so I believe it to be necessary that a statement be made at the earliest opportunity. No one has ever accused me of having the least sympathy with any terrorist group. I have only contempt for those who wage terrorism, whether in Northern Ireland or anywhere else. However, an important constitutional issue has been raised and the House is entitled to a statement on it.

Sir Fergus Montgomery (Altrincham and Sale): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wonder what all the fuss is about. Had the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) bothered to read the unanimous recommendations of the House of Commons Services Committee, published on 31 January 1985, which state clearly in paragraph 23——

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): No resolution of the House.

Sir Fergus Montgomery: Not a resolution of the House, but a recommendation by an all-party Select Committee. Paragraph 23 states:

"We therefore recommend that a Member who applies for a pass for a secretary or a research assistant . . shall be required (i) to provide reasonable details on the background of appointee; (ii) to allow a short period to elapse between the making of the application and the issue of a photo-identify pass; and (iii) not to pursue the application in the face of an adverse (and confidential) report on the security status of the applicant. A Member dissatisfied with an explanation of a refusal to issue a pass is at liberty to make representations to the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee."

I wonder why the hon. Member for Islington, North did not do that instead of making an attack on you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that you will agree that if every recommendation made by a Select Committee, especially the Select Committee on Social Services, was acted upon automatically before it was debated, a few hundred thousand people might be substantially better off. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) said, the recommendation has not been debated, and Tory Members are simply raising a blue herring.

In addition to the questions posed by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield, I ask one simple question. In the case of my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn), there is a question mark over the employment of a research assistant because of lack of a security clearance. Have you, Mr. Speaker, or any other competent body within the House, refused the employment of any other research assistant? Are there any other current investigations? For example, is there an investigation into the research assistant employed by the hon. Member for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle) — a certain Mr. Hoyle — who, apart from being a senior official of the late, unlamented Federation of Conservative Students, has been on patrol with the Contras in Nicaragua and paraded himself round the country supporting a terrorist organisation? Are those grounds for investigation or are investigations conducted only as a result of smear tactics against Labour Members?

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I know that you will be making a statement after this series of questions——

Mr. Speaker *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Skinner: You are not? If not, I think it would be advisable for you to reconsider the matter. There are many problems with vetting the people employed here. For instance, let us consider a Tory Member of Parliament who may employ someone who is or was a member of the National Front. Are you prepared to take upon yourself the task of vetting all applications from the Tory party? Are you aware that it was reported in *The Guardian* the other day that during the election campaign a former member of the National Front, Mr. Peter Shipley, was working in No. 10 Downing street to help with the election? Once you start down this road, Mr. Speaker, you will set a hare running that you will never be able to catch.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I may deal with the matter in relation to the points of order that have been made to me. I ask the House to accept that this was an extremely difficult decision for me. The right hon. Member for

[Mr. Speaker]

Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) has drawn our attention to Speaker Lenthall, and I assure him and the whole House that I bear constantly in mind the freedoms that we have achieved in this place over the centuries. However, I had to face the fact that, in 1965, control of this part of the Palace was vested in me. Against the background of the information which I received, I had no option but to suspend the pass. I do not propose to discuss the matter in the House, but if hon. Members wish to change the rules they should ask for a debate on them or ask the Select Committee on Services, which has not yet been set up, to consider all the issues involved.

Mr. Cranley Onslow (Woking): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Many hon. Members will have great sympathy with you in the difficult position in which you were placed by the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn), who might have dealt with the matter differently. It would have been to the great advantage of us all if he had. I hope that the Leader of the House has noted your comments about a possible debate, because plenty of hon. Members would wish to support what you have done and the decision that has been reached.

Mr. Corbyn: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. What redress is now open to Mr. Bennett to clear his name, which has been smeared over every newspaper and on television and radio? He has been effectively prevented from carrying out his work in this building. What redress is open to me, if I employ someone to work with me in my duties representing the people of Islington, North and I am frustrated in doing that by an opinion offered in secret by the secret service? Is that not a negation of the democracy for which the House stands, which is meant to allow a constituency to elect a Member of Parliament to carry out his duties to the best of his ability? On this occasion, I have deliberately been frustrated by secret evidence that is not made available to me or, publicly, to anyone.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman knows that his research assistant is not denied employment with him. What has happened is that his pass to enter this building unattended has been suspended. Until that matter is resolved, he can continue to work for the hon. Gentleman, as I believe he has been doing for some time.

Mr. Benn: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the fact that you did not want to make a long statement, but several factual questions were put to you and it would be helpful if, before we had a debate—on whatever motion it may arise—we had answers to those questions which will be recorded in *Hansard*. No one criticises you, Mr. Speaker, but we elected you to protect us from the Executive, whose agents the security services are. I am sure that you reflected on this matter, Mr. Speaker, but once you gave permission to the security services to vet research assistants, you necessarily gave them authority to intercept telephone calls between Members and their research assistants. No one could vet a research assistant unless he had listened to telephone calls and opened correspondence between that research assistant and the Member.

I return to the point that I made earlier: this constitutes a licence to an unaccountable security service to vet Members of Parliament and their correspondence and contact with the people whom they employ. I ask you to answer the factual questions, and then we shall take up the matter in the proper way through parliamentary debate and decision.

Mr. Speaker: It is my undoubted responsibility to protect Members of this House, and that was the basis on which I took this decision. The House should remember that we have had one hon. Member murdered on the premises. We have had an attempt to blow up Westminster Hall. We have had one Member murdered in his constituency, and on two occasions we have had things thrown from the Gallery into the Chamber. I must tell the House that, against the information which I received, I could have made no other decision in the interests of the Members of this House. It is for the House to resolve whether that decision was right.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): That is a disgraceful statement.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Members for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) and for Altrincham and Sale (Sir F. Montgomery) have already drawn attention to the fact that this matter was dealt with fully in the Select Committee report. The proper course for the House would be to debate that part of the report.

Mr. Benn: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. The answer that you have just given makes the position infinitely worse, because the only interpretation of your explanation is that my hon. Friend's research assistant might have been a person who would have murdered—

Mr. Speaker: I shall stop the right hon. Gentleman there. He has totally misinterpreted my remarks and represented them quite unfairly. I said that I had to take this decision against a certain background. I made absolutely no allegations about any individual, research assistant or anyone else. I had to take the decision against that background, because it is my duty to protect the Members of this House and all who work in the Palace.

Mr. Sydney Chapman (Chipping Barnet): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Will you confirm that your ruling has been to say that that particular person is not allowed to visit certain parts of the Palace unattended? Is it not true also that even hon. Members cannot visit certain parts of this House?

Mr. Winnick: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is there not here a matter of natural justice? Time and time again, when we have debated individual cases that do not affect hon. Members, the point has been made that people who consider that they have been unjustly treated should have some right of redress or appeal. Clearly, serious allegations have been made against this person. The hon. Member for whom he wishes to work states that there is no substance to those allegations.

The person concerned clearly believes that he is innocent and that he has no desire to kill or to carry out an act of terrorism. However, the implication of the report that obviously went to you, Mr. Speaker, is that he is not a person who could be safely allowed on the premises—otherwise, his pass would not have been taken away. I am, and everyone must be, concerned about the safety of the building, not only for ourselves but for all who work here.

We are not selfishly concerned only about our safety in the Chamber but about that of all those who are employed here, be they Officers or staff.

You, Mr. Speaker, have stated that the pass has been suspended; that means, as I understand it, that there is a possibility that it will, at some stage, be returned to the person concerned. Will this gentleman be given any opportunity to put his case, either to you or to a Committee? Surely, Mr. Speaker, we cannot leave the matter on this basis. Conservative Members are not interested; they believe that it is all perfectly in order. However, those of us who are concerned with justice, for our own constituents or anyone else, simply ask you whether we can pursue the matter beyond today and whether the person can be interviewed so that he may put his case and we can have another statement to the House. It would be wholly unfair and a denial of justice if we left the matter as it is.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I realise that you are in a difficult position, but there may have been some misunderstanding of your reference to the tragic murder that took place in this building. I believe that it is important that you clarify exactly what you meant, one way or the other, whatever the implications of what was mentioned.

Will you accept, Mr. Speaker, that some of us are alarmed that we have to take the say-so of the security services on this matter? While I would not dismiss it, I would have been happier if the information from the security services had at least been made available to one or two of my right hon. Friends who are Privy Councillors. *[Interruption.]* My point of view may be different from that of some of my hon. Friends. I should like the information to be made available, for example, to former Home Secretaries or others who have had similar responsibilities and who are Opposition Privy Councillors.

Mr. Speaker: We have a heavy day before us, and I am not certain whether we can take this matter further today. Patently, the issue must be resolved, and it is for the House to resolve it. The machinery for that exists, and many, if not all, of the points that have been canvassed with me today can legitimately be raised in that debate.

Mr. Nellist: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. You state that no implication was to be drawn from the catalogue of events that you mentioned some 10 minutes ago — they were merely a backcloth to the decision that has been taken. Presumably, however, those who drew up the report given to you, verbally or in writing, regarded the employment of Mr. Bennett by my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) against the implications of that catalogue of events. Has that report been given to my hon. Friend or to the person he is employing? Has a report been drawn up such that the person who has been accused has no right even of seeing the charges against him, let alone of defending himself against them?

Mr. Speaker: Let me make the point absolutely clear. I took this decision against the background that I have mentioned. I mentioned it because I, with the former right hon. Member for Wakefield, Mr. Harrison, happened to be first on the scene at that time, and it affected me deeply. I was also present in the House when the other episodes took place. I make no accusation or allegation against anyone—it was simply background.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Rather than having a debate, as you suggested, and a full-blown confrontation on this issue, I suggest that, in view of the way in which the representations have been made, you will probably accept that there is a strong body of feeling in the House that there should be intervention in the employment of research assistants and their use of the facilities of this House only in the most dire circumstances, which have not, by any means, been demonstrated. I therefore suggest that, rather than persisting with the idea of a debate, you review the position in the light of the representations that have been made, with a view to restoring the pass in the near future. That would be the best method of resolving the dispute. In this way, you, Mr. Speaker, can give full weight to the serious concerns that have been expressed about hon. Members' assistants.

I recall that when there was a flood of American assistants who were offered free of charge to Members of this House, some people raised the question of a CIA presence in the House and the possible subversion that that might entail. The view of the House at that time was that there should be no interference in the matter because an important right of hon. Members was that of being able to choose assistants. It therefore followed that permission should be given to allow those Americans to assist hon. Members in the House. In view of that background of tolerance, I hope that you will review the position sympathetically in the light of the evidence that has been put forward.

Mr. Corbyn: Further to that point of order, Mr Speaker. You must be aware that there is considerable disquiet in the House about the decision that you have taken, whose effect is this: an innocent man has been found guilty on evidence that we know not for offences that we know not, and he is prevented from gaining employment in the future because his character has effectively been smeared by this House.

I was brought up to understand that the court of Star Chamber was the opposite of justice in this country. We are now witnessing a system of justice under which someone is condemned with no right of hearing or appeal. I am sure that you, Mr. Speaker, must be aware that the matter cannot be allowed to lie here. Hon. Members have suggested that it be referred to the Services Committee, which does not exist. They have referred to the Select Committee report which, in any case, is out of print and was never debated in the House. I ask that you seriously consider the points put to you by hon. Members this afternoon about this fundamental denial of justice, and, perhaps, on reflection, make a statement that you are prepared to restore Mr. Bennett's pass and that you are prepared to allow hon. Members to debate the serious and important issue of how they go about their business as elected Members of the House, free from the frustrations of secret evidence given by the security services.

Mr. Speaker: It would not be appropriate for me to make any statements other than what I have already been able to say today in answer to the points of order. I think that the matter should be debated, and I hope that it will be.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Ordered,

That the draft Education Support Grants (Amendment) Regulations 1987 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Parliamentary Constituencies (Wales) (Miscellaneous Changes) Order 1987 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c. — [*Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.*]

Orders of the Day

Public Utility Transfers and Water Charges Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

6 pm

The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Nicholas Ridley): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Mr. Speaker: I have selected the manuscript amendment in the names of the leader of the Liberal party and others. Copies are available in the Vote Office.

Mr. Ridley: The Bill has two distinct purposes. The first clause confers an express power on the water authorities in England and Wales to prepare for the restructuring and privatisation which we propose for them; it also confers a similar power on the electricity supply industry in England, Wales and Scotland to prepare for privatisation. Later clauses deal with water metering.

Privatisation has been a central element of our success in redefining the proper role of Government. So successful has it been that we are awaiting the imminent conversion of the Labour party. At the Labour party conference the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) described share ownership

"as just one instrument in order to hand real power to working people".

What an admission after decades when the truth of the failure of nationalisation was staring them in the face. We have disengaged ourselves from a range of activities in which the involvement of Government is more harmful than helpful. With the sale of BAA in the summer of this year, we have privatised 16 major companies. The best people to manage these businesses are the managers themselves, not Ministers. We have given them the commercial freedom they need, with access to private sector capital. We have transferred about one third of the 1979 state sector and about 650,000 jobs into the private sector. We have also seen the level of share ownership among the population increase by a factor of three.

The success of privatisation is witnessed by the millions who hold shares in the privatised companies and by the millions more who, in June this year, returned us to office. In our manifesto, we promised to continue this policy by privatisation of the water and electricity supply industries. The Bill is the first step towards keeping that promise. We do not expect to introduce the main legislation for either privatisation during the current Session, but enactment of the Bill will give both industries a firm basis on which they can prepare themselves fully for the future that we propose for them.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): After the events of last week, does not even the Secretary of State realise that it would be crazy to break up and privatise the electricity industry? Surely last week demonstrated once again how basic electricity is to the nation's life. Therefore, even this Government should reconsider their proposal.

Mr. Ridley: After the events of last month, when the Labour party began to come to terms with the 20th century, I should have thought that the hon Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) would not be so unwise as

to risk disfavour with his new leadership by causing any suggestion to arise that he was not in favour of privatisation.

Mr. John Prescott (Kingston upon Hull, East): Get on with the Bill.

Mr. Ridley: The hon Member for Walsall, North interrupted me. I will not give way to him again—or to the hon Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott).

The water authorities have a complex range of functions. To the public, the authorities are suppliers of water and disposers of sewage. These two essential utility services constitute about 90 per cent. of their business—and they are large businesses. Altogether, they employ about 50,000 people, have capital expenditure of about £1 billion per annum, and turnover of over £2 billion. The authorities were constituted on their present lines in 1974 when the 10 authorities were amalgamated from more than 1,500 predecessor bodies. They have made considerable strides in improving operating efficiency and financial performance. For example, although staff numbers grew during the previous Labour Government, since 1979 they have fallen by about 20 per cent.

Although investment under Labour fell by 30 per cent., since 1980-81 we have increased investment in volume terms by over 35 per cent. There has been massive investment in the sewerage system and in sewage treatment which together account for approximately half of capital expenditure by water authorities. Investment in cleaning up rivers and beaches is 15 per cent. up since 1980. Capital expenditure next year, not all of which can be described as "investment", will allow each water authority to renew and replace assets at a sensible rate and to improve the performance and quality of services as the public and their statutory obligations require.

In 1974 hardly any capital expenditure was financed from internal sources, but in this financial year almost all capital expenditure is being financed internally. That has greatly strengthened the financial position of the authorities. Following privatisation, it will be for the directors of the plcs themselves to decide how capital expenditure should be financed. When they have to raise additional funds, the plcs will have to compete on the capital markets for the best and most favourable terms and conditions that they can get. That will be a spur to improving performance, as well as a relief for the taxpayers.

The water authorities are now ready for transfer into the private sector. No doubt Labour Members will argue, as the hon. Member for Walsall, North did, that water services are inherently matters for public sector responsibility and control, despite their near conversion on the road to Brighton. They will say, as did the hon. Member for Walsall, North, that it is impossible to privatise something that is so essential to public health. I agree that water is essential to public health. So are sewerage and sewage treatment and disposal. So, indeed, are many other things—not least the food that we eat. What matters is not who owns and runs the provision of essential goods and services, but whether the regulatory framework adequately protects the public. We have statutory food standards which regulate the quality of food produced by the private sector. We have building regulations which lay down minimum standards for new homes.

Drinking water must also comply with statutory requirements which are binding on the private sector water companies as much as on the public sector water authorities. There has been a long and distinguished tradition of private provision of water services. The statutory water companies supply about one quarter of the population in England and Wales. There are also numerous overseas examples of private sector bodies providing high quality water services to the public. The final answer to the hon. Member for Walsall, North is that one quarter of water has already been privatised and he has never complained about it.

I recognise that the provision of water services is a natural monopoly. That is why we intend to impose on the utility companies, which will be successors to the water authorities, a number of controls on both the economic and the environmental aspects of their activities. These will include a control over the prices they charge to the public. There will be a Director General of Water Services to make sure that they comply with these conditions of appointment and to protect customers from the dangers of monopoly abuse. The director general will be able to make comparisons between the plcs and to use the example of the most efficient as his yardstick for what is achievable.

I must add some words about the control of the environmental aspects of the activities of water authorities; the protection of river systems — the management and conservation of water resources, pollution control, fisheries, navigation, land drainage and flood defence, recreation and conservation. Our White Paper published in February 1986 proposed to leave these functions—except for land drainage and flood defence—with the privatised water authorities, subject to a number of detailed controls. After further consideration, and having listened carefully to the arguments, I came to the conclusion that these functions are essentially a public responsibility. I could not accept the principle that one private body should determine what another can take out of a river or put into it or how much it should be charged for so doing. Such decisions are inseparable from decisions about the management of the river regime, and must be consistent with it.

The business of protecting the environment and the conservation of rivers, and of ensuring that all the disparate interests, including those of the utilities, are protected, is essentially a public sector regulatory function. Therefore, we propose to set up a National Rivers Authority. We published a policy and consultation paper in July describing how we envisage it would operate. Our revised proposals have been welcomed by most of those responding to the July paper, particularly by those are are concerned about conservation. There has been a feeling, shared by the Select Committee on the Environment in the last Parliament, that with or without privatisation we should consider some independent regulation of water authorities in order to maintain the progress in cleaning up pollution in our rivers. The National Rivers Authority will do just that.

Sir Eldon Griffiths (Bury St. Edmunds): While I would have preferred my right hon. Friend to go ahead on the lines of his original thoughts about this matter and not create a new quango such as the NRA, I recognise the philosophy that has led him to that decision. While there may well be a case for the public sector to retain the

[Sir Eldon Griffiths]

monitoring, supervision and regulation of the plcs, does he need to create a new executive body to interfere, to spend and to intervene in the hydrological cycle and the integrated water basin management which are at the heart of the 1973 Act?

Mr. Ridley: My hon. Friend's ambition is that the regulation of the environmental aspects of the water industry, which is what we are talking about, should be kept to a minimum in terms of size, cost and interference. Equally, I am sure he will agree that such a regulatory body should have the powers and the ability to discharge those functions that are properly for the public sector. Indeed, they are properly for me to account for to this House. Without sufficient powers I would not be able to do that. That which we seek is, I think, the same as that which is sought by most water authorities—to get the precise boundaries of the National Rivers Authority exactly right to perform those functions.

Sir Hugh Rossi (Hornsey and Wood Green): I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for his reference to the last report of the Select Committee on the Environment. Perhaps in his statement he has read into that report a little more than appears there. The Committee took the strong view that there was a case whereby the duty of policing pollution might be taken away from the water authorities because they are dischargers into water courses of matter that, perhaps, requires policing. That is one proposition and it could well be argued that a national water authority with a proper inspectorate could do that work far more impartially and could be seen to be impartial by industrialists who are often asked by water authorities to do things that the authorities themselves are not doing. That is quite different from saying that we should get rid of a policy of an integrated river basin management. If my right hon. Friend is saying that the National Rivers Authority would take over that function, he may find that the Select Committee will not agree with him.

Mr. Ridley: I agree with my hon. Friend on one aspect of the public regulatory function — the control of pollution. He will agree that there are other aspects that have to be regulated, including such matters as navigation, land drainage, angling and conservation. I ask my hon. Friends to await the proposals that we shall put forward as a result of the consultation. That consultation has been very full and very helpful. A large number of helpful responses have been made and there has been a large degree of support for our proposals. The difficulty is to find the exactly correct dividing line between the plcs and the NRA. If when they know what it is my hon. Friends think that we have got that wrong, they will have an opportunity to say so. I am acutely conscious of the concern and that is why we are taking so much trouble to find the right answer.

Sir John Farr (Harborough): Can my right hon. Friend tell the House whether this Bill actually brings into being the National Rivers Authority, because it does not have a clause setting up the NRA and it is not mentioned in the Bill, except in the explanatory memorandum? The sooner the NRA is set up, the better, but I should be grateful if my right hon. Friend would tell me whether it is set up by the Bill today or if it will be set up at another time?

Mr. Ridley: It is not in the Bill and we are not setting it up today. My hon. Friend is quite right to take me to task for talking about it when it is not in the Bill. On the other hand, I suspect that many of my hon. Friends have come to the House today to talk about it and I would have disappointed them if I had not mentioned it.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): I listened carefully to what my right hon. Friend said about the new National Rivers Authority. He told us that the new authority would be responsible for the licensing of the abstraction of water from rivers. As my right hon. Friend knows, at the present time the 10 water authorities give licences to abstract water from rivers. Why is it that in future, simply because the ownership of the water authorities has changed, they will no longer be able to do that which is essential for the carrying out of their functions, namely, themselves to decide whether to give licences for the abstraction of water?

Mr. Ridley: I must ask my hon. Friend to await our detailed proposals. The abstraction of water, like discharges into rivers, affects the whole river cycle and we have to find the exact balance so that the National Rivers Authority can regulate total flow in a river without removing the operational freedom of the water undertakers in the area.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): The right hon. Gentleman told us that he is responsible to the House for functions undertaken by water authorities in relation to land drainage and rivers. It is not just he who is responsible to the House for such matters, but also the Secretary of State for Wales. He will be aware of representations that he has received from the farming unions in Wales and from a host of other bodies, saying that there should be some continuation of river supervision and land drainage supervision in Wales, with those responsible answerable to the Welsh Office. Will that be part of his proposals?

Mr. Ridley: The point I made was that it is the Government, and it does not matter which Secretary of State, who are responsible to the House for the standards that water undertakers are required to provide. Those are standards of water and river cleanliness and the cleanliness of beaches. The hon. Gentleman is always asking questions about these matters and if we are to achieve those standards we must have a body capable of monitoring and enforcing the standards that the House lays down. I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales will take note of what the hon. Gentleman said about the Welsh water authority.

The successful reallocation of water authorities' current responsibilities to a National Rivers Authority and to 10 water services plcs can take place only after the ground has been prepared within the water authorities. That process must begin soon, and as soon as this Bill has received Royal Assent we shall be working with the water authorities to ensure that they make full use of the powers provided in it to take positive steps to pave the way for a smooth and rapid restructuring.

In our manifesto we also said that, following the success of gas privatisation, we would bring forward proposals for privatising the electricity supply industry, subject to proper regulation. Electricity is a large and important business with a turnover in England, Wales and Scotland of nearly £12 billion. Its privatisation will provide the

industry with the opportunity to develop commercially and to be truly accountable both to its customers and to its shareholders. Electricity privatisation will be a major undertaking. All the existing statutes governing the industry will have to be thoroughly reviewed. Decisions on the future structure of the privatised industry have yet to be taken, and we are at present engaged in a wide-ranging review of the options. Much preliminary work needs to be done both within Government and in the industry itself. This Bill will ensure that the industry can participate fully in that process.

Our proposals will be put before the House as soon as we have completed our studies of the issues involved. Our aim is to ensure that the privatised industry will be in a position to supply electricity in as reliable, competitive and economic a way as possible, and that the industry's record on safety, which is second to none, is maintained. Electricity is vital to every sector of our economy and every consumer will benefit from an efficient electricity industry freed from the constraints of public sector control and interference.

Mr. Prescott: I note that the Secretary of State emphasises the efficiency of the industry. Will he announce whether prices will increase as soon as the industry is privatised or in the run-up to privatisation?

Mr. Ridley: I am interested to hear the hon. Gentleman already raising difficulties about the Labour party's attitude to the privatisation of the industry. Is the Opposition Front Bench now split? Are some Opposition Front Bench spokesmen in favour of privatisation while the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East is not? I cannot think why else he asked the question unless he was trying to raise objections to privatisation. I cannot possibly answer the hon. Gentleman's question. My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy will answer the question when he replies later.

I now want to consider water metering. Clauses 2 to 7 and schedules 1 to 3 are almost entirely concerned with providing a special regime for trials in relation to compulsory water metering. They also clarify and update the existing law on metering. The possible extension of water metering to domestic consumers has been debated at great length both within the industry and outside for many years. In the last century, the local water undertakers in Malvern in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Energy, the hon. Member for Worcestershire, South (Mr. Spicer), decided that all properties in their area should be metered. Since then there have been numerous committees looking into the feasibility of more widespread metering. In 1985, a joint water industry-DOE study recommended that the Government and the water industry begin to work on the presumption that an extension of water metering might be worth while from an economic point of view in that it should reduce demand and the need for future investment on expensive infrastructure. It also suggested that the water undertakers be asked to propose a number of controlled comprehensive trials and recommended a number of changes to legislation. These were to clarify undertakers' powers to carry out trials and to facilitate water metering generally. Most of these recommendations have been incorporated in this Bill.

Since the group reported we have announced that domestic rateable values are to be abolished at the latest by 1994. This brings added urgency to look for other means of charging for water, of which metering is the most obvious, but not by any means the only option. Other suggestions include a flat rate charge and ones based upon floor space, household size and even on the number of taps and water appliances in a household. The water authorities are currently considering the possibilities. Ultimately it will be for each water authority to decide how it wishes to charge. However, whatever method is chosen will have to comply with the principles set out in section 30 of the Water Act 1973, repeated in the Bill, that charges must have regard to costs and not unduly discriminate against any classes of person. The water authorities do not at present favour a charge per head.

Although, as I have said, metering is the most obvious method of charging, we do not propose to go to widespread domestic metering at once. It would present a number of technical and logistic problems which need to be properly assessed to enable water undertakers to take a judgment on whether widespread metering is worth while and, if so, how best to introduce it with the minimum inconvenience to customers.

Metering is not new. In the non-domestic sector metering is widespread. Roughly 30 per cent. of water supply in England and Wales is now metered. Since 1981 a scheme has been available whereby domestic consumers can opt to pay for the installation of a meter. Fewer than 100,000 customers out of over 18·5 million in England and Wales have taken up the offer.

This is not the time to go into the manifest inequities in the present rating system, but it is unsound as a basis of charging for domestic water supply, just as it is for the provision of local services. The complaints from single people living next door to a family consisting of three or four people that they pay exactly the same in rates equally apply to water rates. The prospect of more widespread metering will be welcomed by such people. However, those people who use significant amounts of water or are simply wasteful with it—for example, excessive garden watering and simply not bothering to repair leaks—will probably, and rightly, end up paying more. This must be right.

The water industry recently announced the sites that the industry would like to include in the trials. This will enable the industry to get on with the all-important task of consulting the people likely to be affected, well in advance of my formal consideration of each scheme, required under clause 4.

Clause 2 confers charging powers on statutory water companies similar to those of water authorities under section 30 of the Water Act 1973. The power will be additional to, rather than a replacement for, their existing charging powers which are mostly in local Acts. It will make it easier for them to participate in the metering trials and also to introduce other alternative charging systems which may be required once domestic rateable values are abolished.

Clause 3 re-enacts certain provisions of section 30 of the Water Act 1973 which regulate water authority charges. It extends these provisions to water companies. Under these provisions water undertakers will be able to adopt any charging system that they consider appropriate. This freedom is, however, limited by two important constraints. First, undertakers must, in fixing their charges, have regard to the cost of providing their services. Secondly, their charges must not show undue preference to, or discriminate against, any class of consumer. I must stress

[Mr. Ridley]

that this limitation on undertakers to fix their charges is carried over from section 30 of the 1973 Act. There is nothing new and these very important limitations will apply if universal metering is ever introduced. It is, however, necessary to have a special regime for charges made in connection with metering trails because no matter how carefully a water undertaker wishing to carry out a trial selects a trial area, those customers taking part could claim that they are being discriminated against compared to the rest of that authority's customers who are not subject to the trial. Some customers may even argue that they are being discriminated against because they are not being given the opportunity to take part in the trial. Furthermore, because of the experimental nature of some of the tariffs, it may not be possible for undertakers to ensure that they accurately reflect costs. Most importantly, I want to be sure that the interests of the customers likely to take part in the trials are properly taken into account. The special regime which is to be adopted for the trials is spelt out in clause 4. Clause 4 also requires each water authority or company wishing to carry out a trial to submit proposals to me, or, in the case of Wales, to the Secretary of State for Wales.

Clause 5 and schedule 1 contain provisions dealing with powers of entry; meter installation costs; offences of tampering with meters; information about meter readings required by undertakers; where water and sewerage services are provided by different undertakers; and arbitration in cases of disputes. The remainder of the Bill is largely of a technical nature and deals with consequential amendments, repeals and definitions.

Paragraph 5 of schedule 1 makes it clear that where a water undertaker's customers are compulsorily metered, the water undertaker, not the customer, will be required to meet the cost of installing the meter and any associated equipment.

Thus the Bill serves two distinct purposes. It paves the way for the changes that we propose for two of this country's major industries. We do not expect to introduce the principal legislation embodying these changes during the current Session, but with the powers in this Bill the water and electricity supply industries will be able to play their full part as we take our proposals forward. The metering provisions will make it possible for water undertakers to test whether the metering of domestic water supplies might serve as a suitable alternative method to the present system of charging that has grown out of the industry's past, but does not seem to fit with its future. I commend the Bill to the House.

6.29 pm

Dr. John Cunningham (Copeland): The House is asked to approve a Bill to prepare the way for the privatisation of the water and electricity supply industries. The Opposition are disappointed that we are not to hear from the Secretary of State for Energy today. Our suspicion is that he cannot afford another comment such as that which was made by Mr. Edward Pearce following his speech at the Tory party conference, who described it as one of "mind-erasing irrelevance."

My hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) will be dealing with most aspects of the Bill concerning the electricity industry, but many of the fundamental arguments against the Bill apply equally well to both water and electricity supply. We are being asked to agree to the selling off of more national assets at a discount.

The Bill is an enabling measure that is reminiscent of the notorious paving Bill that was introduced to rig the statute book before the main legislation to abolish the English metropolitan councils was enacted by Parliament. Now, as then, the House is asked to approve paving legislation, including important new central powers to Ministers, before the Government's real intentions and detailed proposals are known.

We in the Labour party are opposed to the proposal to sell off the nation's electricity and water industries to private control and perhaps major foreign influence, not least because we cannot accept any argument in favour of private monopoly control of two fundamental resources such as water and electricity which are vital to the social and economic health and well-being of the British people. [AN HON. MEMBER: "What about food?"] No matter how the Government twist and turn, and no matter how Ministers such as the Secretary of State perform their tortuous mental callisthenics, no one can avoid the conclusion that it is the Government's intention deliberately to create widespread private monopoly powers in two critical areas of the lives of every man, woman and child in our country. An hon. Member asked from a sedentary position, "What about food?" There is competition in the provision of food and there is not, cannot be and will not be any competition in the provision of water and electricity.

Mr. Gow: So that the tens of thousands of workers in the water and electricity supply industries who will be buying shares when denationalisation takes place may understand precisely the position of the Labour party, will the hon. Gentleman confirm that it is the Labour party's policy to renationalise that which is denationalised and which is the subject of the Bill?

Dr. Cunningham: I shall deal with that issue later in my speech. I promise the hon. Gentleman that I will give a straightforward answer to the question when I come to the part of my speech that deals with it.

Private monopoly is the inevitable outcome of the dogmatic track on which the Tory party has rushed to buy a one-way ticket. The British people are to be the victims of two more private monopolies with even more power and importance and even less competition than the disgracefully mismanaged British Telecom. With their howls of outrage still fresh in the minds of the British people and the Tory party camp followers in the media, Conservative Members are now obviously intent on voting this evening for more huge doses of the same thing. What price the interests of consumers now that the election is over?

We in the Labour party believe that these essential services should be public and in public ownership and control. The Prime Minister said:

> "The water authorities are natural monopolies . . . and we need to be particularly careful when considering replacing a public monopoly by a private one."—[*Official Report*, 31 January 1985; Vol. 72, c. 292.]

There we have it. There is a recognition that only private monopolies can and will result.

I warn Tory Members not to be misled by their leader, who talked recently of "irreversible shifts of power". Nothing is irreversible in a democracy and a Labour

Government would not hesitate to eliminate private monopolies to ensure that vital and fundamental services were controlled and managed in the best national interests, balancing the powers among consumers, employees, Ministers and Parliament. That is the best way to ensure that national interests are developed and that consumers have a real voice, real powers and effective protection against natural monopolies.

Mr. John Maples (Lewisham, West): The hon. Gentleman has made it clear that he is opposed fundamentally to the privatisation of public water authorities. Will he say whether he thinks that the 28 private water companies should be nationalised?

Dr. Cunningham: No. I think that that is a rather redundant question. The reality is that the 28 private water undertakings act as agents for the regional water authorities. In no sense are they truly private sector companies.

Mr. Ridley: I thank the hon. Gentleman for the extremely carefully drafted passage that he read to us. I hope that it had previously been agreed with all wings of his party. He said—I took down his words—that he was in favour of these monopolies being controlled and managed by the public sector. Is he in favour of them being owned by the public sector?

Dr. Cunningham: Yes. I have already said that, and I say it again categorically.

The Government's proposals are a mess and it is clear that they are born of expediency and dogma. They owe nothing to strengthening the position of water and electricity consumers. They are not aimed at improving the quality of drinking water, sewage treatment or environmental protection. If the House does not accept that, I shall quote from a letter from the Secretary of State dated 18 May 1987. It is addressed to Mr. Gordon Jones, the then chairman of the Water Authorities Association, and it sets out the Government's intentions and policies. It reads:

"I recognised that our revised proposals represent a significant departure from the principle of integrated river basin management which was instituted on the reorganisation of the water industry in 1974 and which was endorsed by last year's Government White Paper."

The letter continues:

"and as a Government committed to extending share ownership and narrowing the public sector, we have been led to conclude that these aims must have priority."

In other words, the aims of Tory dogma about narrowing the public sector and share ownership are to override judgment on the most efficient management of the water industry. That is why the Bill is before us. It has nothing to do with improving services or the position of the consumer.

In a scathing editorial the *Financial Times* describes the Government as

"lurching precipitately from one extreme to the other."

It describes the proposals as

"informed less by any firm principles than by short-term political expediency and the persuasive talents of special interest groups with privileged access to ministerial ears."

To whom has the Secretary of State been listening? It seems that he has not been listening to the National Consumer Council and certainly not to the chairmen of the regional water authorities, appointed to a man—not a woman among them — to support privatisation. It transpires that the Secretary of State has been most influenced by the National Farmers Union and that well known bastion of protection for ordinary people, the Country Landowners Association. It turns out that the right hon. Gentleman has been listening to big brother — Viscount Ridley, his elder brother, an office holder in the Country Landowners Association.

The best illustration of this political headstand is the comparison of today's proposals and the speech of the Secretary of State with the speech made to the House just over a year ago by the then Minister of State, Department of the Environment with responsibility for water policy, the hon. Member for Oxford, West and Abingdon (Mr. Patten), who is now Minister of State, Home Office. On 23 June 1986 the Minister said:

"Water services plcs will inherit all the statutory duties —and I stress this — which currently rest upon the water authorities."

Further on in the same speech, the Minister said:

"it is very important that we maintain and, if possible, improve the concept of integrated river board management, which means the total management of everything within the river basin."

He concluded by saying, on behalf of the Government:

"That is why it is so important to maintain the concept of integrated river basin management." —[*Official Report*, 23 June 1986; Vol. 100, c. 40-44.]

We are bound to ask what has changed since that speech was made by that Conservative Minister to the House 12 months ago. The change is, of course, that the Tory party has been warned off by its influential landowning and farming friends. Certainly it has taken no advice from the chairmen of the water authorities, who are almost entirely and implacably opposed to the proposals.

The water privatisation proposals were overwhelmingly condemned last year. Opposition was almost universal. Now, however, without any effective consultation or debate, a new approach is presented which has even alienated the regional water authority managers appointed by the Government to support and see through the privatisation. It is not surprising that they are alienated, because they were not consulted either.

The Government are clearly determined to sell off the assets at any price, whatever the cost to consumers, the environment or those employed in the industry. In Britain, uniquely in Europe, 99 per cent. of all households are connected to a public water supply, and 94 per cent. are connected to the public sewerage system. The Government intend to sell at a knockdown price the 10 regional water authorities in England and Wales controlling those services when assets valued at at least £27 billion will be sold for perhaps a quarter of that sum.

Mr. Ridley: I must not allow the hon. Gentleman to traduce the water authority chairmen. Mr. Gordon Jones, chairman of the Water Authorities Association, said on 13 October:

". . . there is a strong measure of agreement among all 10 water authorities how they see the future . . . we all agree in principle that such a regulatory body (as the NRA) is needed. We all agree that, with some development of the Government's proposals, it will be possible to produce an effective regulatory body and manageable and viable PLCs."

Dr. Cunningham: The reality is that, when we have talked to individual chairmen of water authorities, only one has expressed support for the Government's proposals in total. We can argue about the matter, but I suggest that hon. Members telephone them all tomorrow and ask them

[Dr. Cunningham]

individually whether they support the division of the industry and the ending of the concept of river basin management.

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman does not seem to know his stuff. I have here the responses from Severn-Trent Water, Southern Water, South-West Water, the Water Companies Association and the Institution of Water and Environmental Management. The hon. Gentleman is quite wrong. He must come up to date.

Dr. Cunningham: Representatives of the regional water authorities made the journey to Brighton for the Labour party conference and invited my hon. Friends and me to meet them for dinner so that they could tell us of their opposition to the Government's proposals. We did not have to ask them; they came voluntarily and told us, and the chairman of the Southern Water Authority was one of those present. Any serious examination of the Government's case demonstrates that, in terms of consumer interest, water management, environmental protection or better management of the industry, it is hopelessly flawed. The real reasons for the proposals are political.

For reasons of irrelevant Tory dogma, the public sector must be reduced. Income to the Chancellor must be maintained by regular sales of the family silver. Share ownership must be increased because it is a good thing. No one is surprised that people like buying shares at a discount. What could be more natural than people who are offered a bargain, as they are in all sorts of ways, wanting to take it up? However, that does not mean that the process will in itself be to the advantage of the industry concerned, and it is a hopelessly shallow argument to suggest that it will.

The proposed change of ownership cannot result in consumer choice, and everyone knows it. There will be no choice. The proposed sell-off will not expose the water or electricity industries to the forces of the market. There will be no market. The proposed removal of public monopoly will not result in competition. There will be no competition. The British people will not be customers of private monopolies; they will be locked-in consumers. Being a customer implies choice. The people will have no choice. No one will have two water meters or two electricity meters or two tariffs to choose between, as the Secretary of State for Energy has honestly and candidly made clear. People will not have a choice.

The Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Cecil Parkinson): May I clear up the first point? The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) does not seem to realise that this Bill does not privatise electricity authorities, and he will therefore make a speech of staggering irrelevance when he rises to speak at about 9 o'clock.

As for the point made by the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham), I said that distribution was a natural monopoly, and that therefore we must have regulation and customer rights. I also said that 80 per cent. of the costs of electricity come from generation, and that there is plenty of scope for competition—and there will be competition.

Dr. Cunningham: I think that that intervention was ill-advised. The Secretary of State for Energy seems to be laying the blame on, or advancing some criticism of, my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott). The right hon. Gentleman knows that we were advised that he would be replying to the debate, and that that is why my hon. Friend is on the Opposition Front Bench. The change is either because the right hon. Gentleman is being gagged, or because he has bottled out—to use today's common parlance.

Arguments about conservation are bogus, and the Secretary of State for the Environment trotted out another old canard this evening. Any domestic consumer can have a water meter installed now and pay by volume consumed. The oft-quoted but never identified small user who complains, so often paraded as unfairly treated, has a ready remedy available now at a relatively small cost for meter connection. Why do not water authorities campaign and advertise effectively on that now? The reality is that they want compulsory meters and unit charging for water for everyone, and they want it legislated for.

Mr. John Redwood (Wokingham): Will the hon. Gentleman confirm or deny that it is now Labour party policy to welcome competition in the large utilities, be they private or public? Is it now agreed that competition improves the service to the customer?

Dr. Cunningham: The hon. Gentleman cannot have been listening. There will be — there can be — no competition. That is the reality. Only dogma is preventing Conservative Members from recognising and accepting the plain facts of life.

The Department's joint study on metering which was published in August 1985, and to which the Secretary of State referred, points out:

"Although the option of a metered supply has been available to all domestic consumers since 1981 only about one customer in 1,000 has opted to do so."

That is hardly enough evidence to support the Secretary of State's cry from the heart about the poor, unfairly-treated single person paying too much for water. There is not much evidence in his own departmental study to support that rather thin argument, is there?

The reality is that about 18,000 domestic customers of statutory water companies also have metered supplies. In all, 74,000 out of 18·6 million households have metered supplies. It is also clear that additional investment cannot lead to an increased market share for water authorities. Investors can receive a return only through increased charges, or reduced expenditure, or both. That is why the Government's position, and that of their appointed industry managers, rests absolutely on the need to measure water, to quantify consumption and to increase the charges for it.

The Secretary of State clearly shares the view that we must have a price for the baby's bath or for the pensioner's tomb and that the gardener must pay more to grow his chrysanthemums or tomatoes. The Secretary of State even thought aloud about the prospect of a taps tax. That is the stupidity that this dogmatic Government are apparently willing to consider in an effort to legislate in this area. All the fundamental and wonderful advantages of living in a society where a plentiful supply of good, clean water is readily and cheaply available will be jeopardised by this Government.

What other purpose is served by an enforced move to unit pricing for water? At present, the average household spends just less than 1 per cent. of its expenditure on water

services. Long may it remain so. The policies that have led to that have been of incalculable value to the health and well-being of the British people. It is and will remain Labour policy to ensure that everyone can have as much water as is required at the lowest possible cost.

In people's homes, water is used overwhelmingly for reasons of health and hygiene: washing, bathing, toilet flushing, clothes washing and other domestic purposes. The Secretary of State argues that outdoor uses of water account for only 3 per cent. of domestic consumption. If the need to conserve water is the real priority and the overall national demand has barely changed since 1982—attention should be given to a quite different area: to increasing investment in the often antiquated distribution system. Overall, 40 per cent. of our water is consumed in our homes, 30 per cent. in non-domestic uses, and a staggering 30 per cent. just leaks away into the ground. Major investment is required to reduce that wholly unsatisfactory state of affairs. It is totally unacceptable to the Opposition that the Government should sneak off along the road of rationing water by price, when the system itself is so inefficient.

Water is relatively cheap to collect, but it is increasingly expensive to treat, purify and distribute. Given the nature of our climate, there should never be any water shortages in Britain, and any coherent, progressive Government policy should aim at creating a national water grid—not at fragmenting the industry, as privatisation will do.

Technology now exists more accurately and quickly to locate mains bursts, using leak noise correlation. The mains and sewerage system, much of which was laid down a century ago, is in urgent need of replacement and repair. Private monopolies are the least likely bodies to expand and sustain the level of capital investment that is required.

Select Committees of both Houses of Parliament, the Confederation of British Industry, the Trades Union Congress, the National Economic Development Office and many other industrial and professional bodies have drawn attention to the urgent need for increased investment in these areas. The Consumers Association has also drawn attention to these problems. It estimates that additional expenditure of at least £40 million a year is required just to keep the system going. The "Which?" report stresses that the Government's financial controls on the industry have made the situation worse and have resulted in an inferior service. It says that many of the country's 150,000 miles of sewers are in danger of collapse.

Ministers appear to be unconcerned that preparations for the sell-off and flotation will divert management time and huge financial resources away from those problems. Tory Members of Parliament appear to be unconcerned that the need to pay for metering and to pay dividends will take massive capital investment out of the industry and that what should be used to repair mains and sewers will be used in other ways. We are crying out for more investment so that our beaches can be clean and the quality of our bathing and drinking water improved.

Water metering and dividends to shareholders will do nothing to improve the quality of services to consumers. Tories appear to be unconcerned about the continuing decline in river water quality, which led to over 900 km of rivers in England and Wales deteriorating in quality between 1980 and 1985. Any Government who describe the raw sewage flooding of people's homes as an "economic externality" are not too concerned with public health and the service to the estimated 60,000 homes thus affected every year.

Nor is there any apparent concern among Conservative Members about the fact that 10·8 million people in Britain receive drinking water of a quality below that which is required by European Community standards. The present Government issue waivers from the standards required in the Community directive and seem to be content to go on doing so.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Michael Spicer): That is not true.

Dr. Cunningham: The hon. Gentleman says that that is not true. I have here the Department's answer to the parliamentary questions, and I am referring to Department of the Environment figures. If it is not true, as he says, the hon. Gentleman had better talk to his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State about the falsification of parliamentary answers.

After eight years in government, the Secretary of State has conveniently discovered problems about water quality. Why, we ask ourselves, did he brief the press about his sudden recognition of this issue? We wonder whether it had anything to do with the fact that on 10 June 1987 the European Commission decided to start infringement procedures under article 169 of the treaty against the United Kingdom Government. It did so in 22 cases. In 16 cases it decided to send a formal letter and in a number of other cases it decided to pursue the issue. That is the real reason why, after eight years of doing nothing about it, the Secretary of State has suddenly decided that water quality is an urgent priority. This country will be humiliated by action taken in the courts by the European Community.

I welcome the Secretary of State's proposal that there should be a National Rivers Authority. It is a very important proposal that deserves serious consideration and examination. The proposal fractures the whole concept of river basin management, so praised by Ministers just 12 months ago. A National Rivers Authority will deal with a wide range of crucial issues, not just regulatory powers on discharges and pollution. It will be responsible for water resource planning, abstraction, water quality, land drainage, flood protection, fisheries, conservation, recreation, navigation, research and sea defences. *[Interruption.]* I am sorry that the Secretary of State is so appallingly ignorant and ill-mannered that he does not want to listen to criticisms of his speech and his proposals. For a member of the Cabinet, his behaviour is beneath contempt.

The proposal for a National Rivers Authority is aimed at making the water authorities more attractive for the sell-off by removing from them the costs and responsibilities for non-profit expenditure. The public purse, presumably within the PSBR—here another one of the arguments for privatisation is blown away because the authority will remain within the PSBR—will still have to foot the bill, leaving the private monopolies to charge for water and sewage disposal as they think fit.

The Government document makes it clear that a nationalised rivers authority will seek maximum possible recovery of costs, with all that that implies for sport, recreation and leisure activities. Effectively, what the Government are proposing is that the taxpayer and water sports people will subsidise privatised water monopolies.

[Dr. Cunningham]

The Secretary of State has tried to disguise all these points today by saying that all these functions and duties can be effectively discharged nationwide by a handful of people and at little cost. On that basis a National Rivers Authority would be incompetent and unable to do an effective job.

Even the Government's own Inspector of Air, Water and Wastes at the newly formed pollution inspectorate is said to be bitterly opposed to Government policy and is quoted in the press as saying that a National Rivers Authority will undo the basic principles on which the inspectorate was created so recently by the Government.

We know that over the past few years Conservative policy has been to increase deliberately water charges above the rate of inflation. Since 1979 the retail price index has gone up by 87 per cent., while average domestic water bills have risen by 134 per cent., according, in case the Under-Secretary of State has any doubt, to Department of the Environment figures.

The Government ensured that the water authorities increased prices by deliberately reducing their borrowing powers and external financing limits. In effect, the Government have been taxing today's water consumers. In 1987-88 three authorities — Severn-Trent, Thames and Southern—have negative external financing limits. Their consumers are effectively being taxed by the Government on their water supplies.

Mr. Roy Watts described this policy thus:

"It seems as if we shall once again be asked to substantially increase our repayment of long term debt in the coming year . . . We shall be entirely debt-free within three years, which amounts to a very poor deal for today's customers."

The National Consumer Council has recently expressed concern about the increase in the number of homes having their water supply cut off because of financial difficulties with bills. Do we, as a civilised nation, want to pursue policies that are bound to increase that problem? We in the Labour party are in no doubt that we do not wish to do so. We want to know where Tory Members stand on this issue.

Privatisation will do nothing to restore the public's right to a say in how water services are run. Already the voice of consumers and local authorities has been stifled in preparation for the sell-off. Authorities meet in secret and the public interest is denied.

A further result of deliberate Government policy has been that semi-accountable authority memberships were dissolved to be replaced by much smaller executive boards appointed directly by the Secretary of State for the Environment. That move brought the new breed of business managers into the industry. Nine out of 10 of the new boards immediately elected to meet in secret.

No public service is as basic and universal as water supply. None is as fundamental to our very existence. Irreconcilable conflicts remain between the public health and well-being, the interests of shareholders and market forces. It was those conflicts and the crucial national issues of water purity, public health, coherent policies for pollution control and sewage disposal, strategic investment and security of water supplies that originally caused water to become a public utility and monopoly. We cannot accept that matters of individual and environmental health should become the plaything of the stock exchange. There remain overriding reasons for retaining our water industry in public ownership and control, and that is why we shall oppose this Bill tonight.

Several Hon. Members *rose*

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. I need hardly remind hon. Members that we have had a late start to this debate. I know that many hon. Members wish to speak, so I appeal to all hon. Members for brevity to help each other out.

7.7 pm

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): I beg to move, as a manuscript amendment to the motion, to leave out from "That" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

"this House declines to give a Second Reading to a Bill which links two essential utilities which are quite different in their organisation and, whilst increasing their powers in advance of privatisation, fails to guarantee that the private monopolies ultimately to be created will be sufficiently regulated to ensure that they are fully responsive to consumer needs, and which makes inadequate provision for promoting effective competition in electricity generation and transmission."

The Bill links two public utilities that provide vital public services that operate in quite different ways. It is typical of those that have been introduced by the Secretary of State in that it seeks sweeping powers, as specified in the first clause, to do anything of an ill-defined nature. The Bill is riddled with loopholes.

The issue before the House is not simply one of privatisation. We must recognise that privatisation has already gone so far that it cannot be quickly reversed. With the Government's majority and a full Parliament ahead, a future Government face the reality of all the major utilities in this country being run as private monopolies. Dealing with the consequences of that will inevitably be a task for a future Government who are concerned, as this Government are not, with reconciling the need for public service with the natural desires of shareholders to exploit their monopolies for maximum profit.

Some opponents of the Government may be smiling at the stock market roller coaster that we have all witnessed this week, with all its implications for future privatisation. I am not one of those who are smiling, for two reasons. First, I support the sale of the remaining BP shares and, secondly, and more important, the Government have offloaded all the shares on to guarantors. That means that a great deal of City cash will be tied up digesting that flotation; it will not be available for investment in other sectors to create wealth and jobs. That aspect of privatisation is constantly overlooked, especially by the Government. The billions of pounds that are involved are taken out of circulation. On a bull market this may be for only a short time, but on a long bear market it may be for very much longer, and that is something that the Government may have to contemplate.

The process of delivering essential utilities in the future by means of the powerful private monopolies that have been created by the Tories will increasingly come under scrutiny. In the past few months we have seen evidence of the down side of privatisation.

The way in which electricity currently operates cannot be defended. It uses its statutory requirement to keep the lights on as an excuse for wasteful investment and inefficiency. Despite the Department of Energy's aim of a

20 per cent. energy saving during National Energy Efficiency Year, electricity consumption increased. None of the targets for the electricity industry set by the Department of Energy has been achieved. The industry's response to rising demand has not been to promote energy conservation and efficiency but to build massive new power stations of questionable economic efficiency which are incompatible with the development of combined heat and power as the most efficient form of power generation. I do not defend the present structure and organisation of the electricity industry.

Industrial energy users will testify to the lack of any real competition in energy. The privatised gas industry bases its prices on the price of oil. I am told by industrialists in my constituency that whenever a tanker is torpedoed or shelled in the Gulf the phone rings and British Gas says, "You've heard the news, haven't you? We are increasing your tariff." There is no reference to the cost of producing gas or to the fact that if an industrialist was not using gas he would often be using coal, not oil.

We must not allow the Central Electricity Generating Board to hog-tie the Government the way that British Gas did. The Government should consider breaking up the electricity industry if they are to privatise it. This might be done in a number of ways. It could be broken up into generation, distribution and marketing or into regional corporations, possibly integrated on the model of the Scottish boards. However it is done, it is obvious that a substantial core monopoly will remain which will not be regulated effectively by competition or the operation of the market.

The industry must be strongly and effectively regulated by an agency with teeth — teeth to intervene on and control prices and to require that greater attention be paid to energy efficiency and choice. After four years more of this Government so many utilities will be in the private sector that it might be appropriate to draw the agencies together so that they can pool resources and learn from experience.

I spent time in the United States last year finding out how public utilities operate there. I was impressed by the way that public utilities commissions operate. Without exception, amazement was expressed, by Republicans as well as Democrats, that the British Government should privatise utilities as central monopolies without real competition or adequate regulation. I remain convinced that we shall have to put that right. We also need some kind of anti-trust powers so that monopolies can be examined and be broken up to enforce competition. Because of the Government's record and the sweeping terms of the Bill, we need more detail of Government thinking before the House can be expected to support the Bill.

An open-minded approach to the privatisation of electricity might yield useful answers to the problems that British Gas and British Telecom are now manifesting. We should improve the operation and accountability by the electricity industry, but water must be viewed in a different light. The case for privatising water has not been made by the Government on anything but ideological grounds. The requirements for centralisation are greater than ever.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): Does my hon. Friend agree that the pledge by the Government during the election campaign and ministerial statements since did not address this question? The opportunity was not taken to argue the case in detail and that is disgraceful.

Mr. Bruce: The situation is worse than that because the Government gave the impression that they accepted the case against the privatisation of water, but now that the election is out of the way they have decided to introduce a measure on which they would have been defeated.

My party led the original opposition to water privatisation proposals and had considerable support in the House. The proposals were eventually withdrawn. We are dealing with an ideological argument which does not stand up to close examination. We believe that there is no serious case for consideration.

The proposal involves the possible introduction of metering — which has not been required before — for which there is no demand, which is not developed and which is likely to prove costly. Such an investment would be better used to upgrade our sewerage systems.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: I helped to put the 1973 Act through the House when metering was debated at length. I was supported by the hon. Gentleman's party. Does he now wish to deny people the choice of metering?

Mr. Bruce: No. I am not suggesting that we should deny people the choice of metering but that the imposition of metering is not needed and there is no demand for it. There is merit in metering but it should not be imposed.

Mr. Allan Roberts (Bootle): The Government propose to deny choice. They want to introduce compulsory metering. The legislation introduces compulsory metering in 10 pilot areas, which have been named. If the Government believe that the schemes justify metering it will be applied throughout the country, and freedom of choice will again be destroyed by this Government.

Mr. Bruce: The metering issue has not been adequately resolved. The Bill states that water authorities will be able to impose whatever charge they think fit. It is not clear who will pay or whether the money could be better invested.

A National Rivers Authority has been proposed by the Minister as a sop to the environment lobby. If the Government insist on privatising the water industry such an authority is necessary. Whatever the increasing incidence of pollution, there is a need for a strong standards body, especially if we are to replace publicly accountable organisations with commercial corporations. The central reorganisation, in advance of privatisation, presents technical difficulties. The new system would have to be organisationally uniform and the existing private authorities would be swept away.

The Bill confines itself to England and Wales. In Scotland water authorities were reorganised with local authorities in 1974. The system there is deemed to work reasonably well. The problems of inadequate and polluted water supplies in rural areas — a big problem in Scotland — are being tackled, but rather slowly because of Government constraints on local authorities. Would private companies be interested in dealing with those problems? Would a privatised electricity industry be interested in taking on the social responsibilities of the North of Scotland hydro electric board for bringing power to the remote farms and glens? I know that the Government have not yet proposed privatisation of water

[Mr. Bruce]

in Scotland. There are valid reasons against such a move, and those reasons also apply to many parts of England and Wales.

The real tragedy of the privatisation exercises to date is that substantial sums have been diverted that would otherwise have been injected into the economy in the form of investment. However, the Government have dressed up the privatisation sales to attract customers. Until this week, the Government have misled many people into believing that share owning was a no-lose, no-risk venture. It is not surprising that so many people took up shares. However, it will be interesting to see how many people take up the offer of BP shares next week, given the more declining market.

A major innovation required for the effective privatisation of water is metering. The House must know who will pay the cost of installing meters. It is estimated that that operation will cost £100 per household. That represents substantially more than £1 billion. I believe that we have enough experience of the way in which the Government go about privatisation to guess who will pay —the taxpayer. If the Government get away with it the taxpayer will pay for the cost of the installation in advance of privatisation. In those circumstances, the shareholder will pick up a bargain as all the costs will be expended at the taxpayer's expense and across the board. It will represent a bonus to the private shareholder.

I believe that metering discriminates against those who need water most. That is not an argument against metering as such but it is a consideration against the imposition of metering right across the board. The people who would be most affected would be those with young families. I seriously suggest that if people start to think about the amount of water they use as a significant cost it will have health implications. It will discourage people, especially those on low incomes, from using water for essential purposes.

The gathering, delivering and treating of water is fairly expensive, but water in this country is freely available. Indeed, in the past 48 hours it has been more freely available than many people would wish. In an island where there is a general abundance of water, will the introduction of widespread metering lead to people being cut off for non-payment as has been the case with gas and electricity? They may be cut off from the supply of something that is vital to human survival.

Mr. Martin M. Brandon-Bravo (Nottingham, South) *rose*——

Mr. Bruce: I appreciate that I have been on my feet for a significant time, but there are a number of points that I wish to raise and I believe that I am moving an important amendment.

I suggest to the Minister that if the 13-year bull market is about to be replaced by a long-standing bear market or a stagnant market the inducements that the Government will require for further privatisations will mean that all taxpayers and users of public services will have to pay even more towards ensuring worthwhile premiums for shareholders. Those inducements represent sums that, frankly and disgracefully, the Government would not contemplate investing in research, industrial development, infrastructure, education, health and welfare, all of which are crying out for funds, but which the Government tell us are unavailable. However, those sums are available for massaging the accounts of proposed privatised industries in advance of flotation. That is a disgraceful misappropriation of public funds.

I believe that the proposals in this scrappy and inadequate Bill have been drafted in a typical fashion by the Secretary of State. He has asked for widespread powers without specifying in advance what he proposes to do and he is asking for a carte blanche from the House. We know from experience that what the Government are talking about is not the promotion of competition, accountability and the nice spirit of free enterprise. It is about creating another tranche of vital monopolies, inadequately regulated and not exposed to proper competition.

The Government's record on attacking monopoly and promoting competition is a national disgrace. That record betrays everything that the Conservative party once stood for. As the Conservatives will not fight monopoly and will not promote competition, I am glad to advise the House that my party most certainly will, and I urge the House to support our amendment.

7.24 pm

Sir Eldon Griffiths (Bury St. Edmunds): I will accede to your wish, Madam Deputy Speaker, that speakers should be brief so that as many people as possible can speak.

I declare an interest in this matter as the Minister responsible at the time for carrying the Water Act 1973 on to the statute book. At that time I became, I freely admit it, intensely interested in the water industry. It is a complex industry and a vital one. The Bill that the House is considering today is therefore of great importance. It is no more than a paving measure, but it is a necessary one for the privatisation that I hope to see on the statute book this Parliament.

There are three issues I wish to raise. First I raise that of water metering. The power for water meters to be provided was included in the 1973 Act against the opposition of the Labour party, but with the support of the then Liberal party. I could not make out from the speech of the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) whether he was for it or against it, but it is clear from the speech from the Labour Front Bench that the Labour party will continue to be opposed to the metering of water in this country.

Mr. Allan Roberts: The Labour party is not opposed to the metering of water in this country. We are in favour of people being able to choose whether they pay through the rating system, as at the moment, or by having a meter installed. What we are against is the compulsory imposition of water meters and the destruction of freedom of choice that is proposed in this legislation.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: The hon. Gentleman has succeeded in totally confusing the House. Everything that was said by his colleague on the Front Bench suggested that the Labour party was opposed to metering. Indeed, it registered that opposition in the Division Lobby in 1973 when metering was first proposed.

Mr. Roberts: We are opposed to compulsory water metering. We are not opposed to people having choice. That is what my hon. Friend the Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) said and that is what I repeat.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: Unfortunately, the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts) was not here when his party voted against metering in principle. Indeed, at the time the Labour party suggested that it was a tax on cleanliness.

I hope that metering will proceed. However, it is a complicated matter. Metering is complicated because, as yet, we have no foolproof meters. I have examined a whole series of possible meters. Some work, some do not. As yet, we have not got a satisfactory meter. Then there is the difficult problem of retrofitting meters in multi-occupation dwellings. That is exceedingly difficult in large cities. There is the problem of the cost of the survey before meters can be installed. People do not like paying for the cost of a survey. There is also the cost of installation. So far, that cost has been far too high.

The water authorities have dismally failed to market the advantages of metering to their consumers. Indeed, until a few years ago water authorities, for the most part, were rather hostile to metering based on the technical problems that I have described. One of the reasons why there has been such a small take-up of meters in this country is simply because water authorities have not promoted and marketed the advantages to consumers. I hope that metering will be introduced.

I also wish to deal with the National Rivers Authority. I must say to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State that I do not like it. I wish that he had stayed with his original proposals. Of course, I accept what my right hon. Friend has said about his change of heart and I do not dissent from that. However, I am bound to say that there is a wide impression that my right hon. Friend was got at. I would have preferred that my right hon. Friend had stayed with his original proposals.

If the 1973 Act has been a success—I believe it has—it is for two reasons. First, because the water cycle is managed as a whole. For the first time we were able to handle the clean water and the dirty water together. Ever since the hydrological cycle—I do not like the term, but it is the appropriate one—has been managed as a whole and that is the central reason for the success of our water authorities. Secondly, the success of the 1973 Act lies in the principle of integrated water basin management. This too has been central to the work of the authorities.

I fear that the NRA will damage both those concepts. It will intervene at the very least in the principle of the water cycle being managed as a whole and it could have implications for the multi-functional operations of our water authorities across river basins.

I wish that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State had not brought forward the proposal. However, we must wait for his paper and no doubt when it is produced we shall discover the exact details and parameters of the new authority. But I should like to leave this simple thought with him. Let him keep his new rivers authority, if he must have it, as a monitoring and supervising body and perhaps as a regulating body, but not as an executive body. Let it stay out of operations. Let it not create a large bureaucracy with executive functions. If that happens, it will create all sorts of demarcation disputes with the plcs. It will cost far more than necessary. It will confuse the central features of our water industry. Therefore, let the new body supervise and monitor. Let it not be an operational and executive body.

As and when privatisation comes about, for which the Bill opens the door, two further issues on water will need to be tackled, too. First, our water authorities still carry a great deal of debt. Thanks to improving management and improving economies, much of that debt has been met, but a great deal remains. Some is the ancient, historic debt that the authorities inherited from their local authority predecessors. Some of it is Public Works Loan Board debt, which is probably the largest single amount. A third portion is borrowed from the European Investment Bank. Those three types of debt will need to be dealt with. It will be important to those invited to buy shares in the new plcs to know how that debt is to be handled.

This of course will be a problem for the House. I should not be in favour of simply writing off the debt because ultimately that would be unfair to the taxpayer. It would be right, I think, to get rid of the historic debt inherited from the old local authorities at the time of the Water Act 1973. But it would also be right to insist that the new private companies shall carry the full burden of the debt that has been borrowed from Europe and, indeed, from the Public Works Loan Board.

Secondly, we shall need to deal with the pensions of the water authorities' staff.

Neither of those points is germane to the Bill before us but as we are paving the way, I have taken the liberty of mentioning them to my right hon. Friend because they will have to be dealt with.

I have no doubt that privatisation is not only right but will be popular. It will ensure that we have a better, not a worse, water industry. But it is essential that in proceeding towards privatisation we do not destroy the basic pillars on which the 1973 Act was constructed—that is, multi-function management of the entire water cycle and authorities that are based on a total river basin management system.

7.35 pm

Mr. David Hinchliffe (Wakefield): This is the first opportunity that I have had to make a contribution on the Floor of the House. I hope, Madam Deputy Speaker, that you will allow me to preface my remarks on today's business with a brief reference to one or two wider issues relating to my constituency.

As some hon. Members may be aware, I had an unfortunate start to my period in the House in that I developed chicken pox during the weekend following the Queen's Speech and was confined to my home for the subsequent three weeks. I was fortunate in being able to call upon my predecessor, Walter Harrison, to cover my surgeries and assist with constituency work during my illness. The local paper in Wakefield reported his comments that his retirement had been "a little shorter than expected", but he was happy to help out.

I have mentioned that one incident because it is typical of the help that Walter has given me since my selection as his successor, during the general election campaign and since my election to Parliament. It is a pleasure to be able to pay tribute to a man who is so widely respected on both sides of the House.

While Walter will be remembered for his undoubted skills in the Whips' Office, he was also very much a constituency Member. Wakefield was his home and he gave much to his constituency during the 23 years that he represented it. I know that Walter would be the first to admit that he could have achieved little in politics without the excellent support of his wife Enid. Unfortunately, in recent years, as some hon. Members may be aware, she has

[Mr. David Hinchliffe]

not enjoyed the best of health and I am sure that the whole House will wish to join me in expressing the hope that she has better fortunes in future and that they can both enjoy the long and happy retirement that they so richly deserve.

I have a hard act to follow. One of Walter's major regrets on his retirement concerned the enormous increase in unemployment in Wakefield in recent years. Nearly 5,000 people are officially unemployed in the constituency. The real figure is much higher and would include, for example, men below 60 who have been instructed not to sign on but still receive unemployment benefit. Like many areas in the north, Wakefield has been hit by the rundown of its basic industries and the knock-on effect in other types of employment. Since 1979 six coal mines have been shut in the constituency and many others providing employment for Wakefield people in adjoining constituencies have also been closed. Since the present Government came to power, some 10,000 mining jobs have been lost in the Wakefield district and precious little has been done at national level to create new prospects for those leaving school and coming on to the employment market.

In the past few days we have had in Wakefield the appalling news, which was referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay), that British Coal proposes to close Woolley colliery in my constituency, along with the nearby Redbrook pit in the Barnsley area. The total of job losses will be over 1,300 if British Coal carries through its present proposals. I can promise it and the Government that their plans will meet with the strongest opposition from the communities in the Wakefield and Barnsley areas that are directly affected, from the trades union movement and from hon. Members whose constituencies are involved.

What seems to me to be so irrational about the present Government policy is that the profitability of an individual pit is judged in complete isolation from the wider implications of a pit closure on other local industries, the local service sector and employment prospects. Figures are given detailing the cost of keeping a so-called loss-making pit open, but we never see the real figures of a closure in cash terms. It has been estimated by the local authority in my area that the annual public cost of keeping someone unemployed in Wakefield is £8,300. The average annual wage is only £300 more than that figure and it would make more sense to invest public money in job creation than in job destruction.

To turn now to the Bill, having mentioned Walter Harrison, I should like to mention another predecessor, Mr. Thomas K. Sanderson, who was Tory Member of Parliament for Wakefield in 1876 when water supplies were taken into public ownership. He summed up the quality of private water in Wakefield at the time as being "pretty near equal to sewage". His comments were evidence of the political consensus over a century ago on the need for water to be taken into public ownership. It is worth noting that it cost the people of Wakefield £164,904 for the privilege of owning their own water as well as paying off the debts and court costs of the previous owners. The costs had to be met as part of the battle against cholera and other diseases that were prevalent at the time.

It is also interesting to note that the philosophy behind the proposed legislation that we are discussing today was rejected even by political cavemen of the Tory Right in Victorian times, yet the present Government are rummaging around in the dustbin of history to turn the clock back on yet another issue.

Like most other hon. Members, I have received vast amounts of correspondence from individuals and organisations that are opposed to the Government's proposals for the water industry. It is interesting that much of the opposition comes from the private business sector, which normally might be expected to favour such a strategy. Within the past week or so I have received two letters about this matter which are worthy of mention. The Kirklees and Wakefield chamber of commerce and industry wrote to me on 8 October stating that Government thinking on water privatisation appears "somewhat nebulous". In its view,

"water, of all the essential services, needs to be properly handled but unfortunately the proposals lack clarity and would do little to encourage an efficient and responsible service".

The Confederation of British Wool Textiles wrote to me on 12 October and said:

"as a matter of principle we do not believe that any public utility, providing services so fundamental and where customers have no choice in using its services should be allowed to pass into private hands."

While there is now some doubt as to whether those organisations have written to the correct Member of Parliament, according to a letter I have received from the Department of the Environment, my constituents have been selected, without their consent, my consent or that of the local district council or health authority, to act as guinea pigs in a pilot scheme designed to pave the way for the wholesale introduction of domestic water meters and water privatisation. They are to be conscripted into a scheme designed to get the Government out of the unholy mess they are in regarding post poll tax water charges. It is a scheme to satisfy those backers of the Tory party who are lusting after the huge profits to be made out of the fact that people cannot avoid using such a basic essential as water.

If it is true that Wakefield is to be included in those trials, I resent strongly the fact that my constituency is being pushed into the front line of a policy that will bring a financal penalty on personal sanitation and hygiene. Low-income families—there are many of them in my constituency—will find themselves having to cut down on flushing the toilet and washing themselves and their children on a regular basis in order to save money. The implications of that for the health of the nation must be obvious, even to the Government.

Without doubt, the proposals to sell off these public utilities and to meter the domestic use of water are evidence of the fact that the Government have stooped to new depths in their attempts to raise further revenue for tax cuts. The events of the past few days have illustrated beyond doubt the possible implications of throwing vital services such as water and electricity to the mercy of stock markets. I hope, even at this late stage, that the Government will recognise the extent of public opposition to this issue, see sense and withdraw the proposals.

7.41 pm

Sir Giles Shaw (Pudsey): I congratulate the hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe) on his maiden speech. It was delivered with the punch and pugilism we have come to expect from the Member who sits for Wakefield and, knowing as we do the illustrious way in

which his predecessor operated in the House, I cannot help but feel that he has made a worthy start to his career here. I have to take good note of the fact that his marginal seat improved somewhat at the election so it may be right that we should offer him good fortune in the times ahead.

I should begin by declaring an interest in that I am a consultant to a company which numbers among its clients the Water Authorities Association. However, my interest in the water industry precedes that. Like my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths), I have had two years ministerial involvement with the water industry.

The comments that have been made about the proposals for privatisation both within the industry and outside are somewhat sensitive to the proposals the Government have now put before the House. This is a paving measure, but it is perfectly right that we should look at this measure as if it begins to encapsulate the proposals in the Green Paper currently under discussion. If I understand it correctly, in clause 1(6) there is provision for the existence of a body which has not yet been created. It sounds as if it will be the National Rivers Authority. It states:

"References in this section to a body corporate shall include references to a body corporate which has not been established or formed but which may be established or formed in pursuance of a proposal of the Secretary of State."

I suspect that that is the legal definition for the forthcoming National Rivers Authority.

I should like to make two observations which I hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will take seriously. If we are to proceed down the route of privatisation, which I believe firmly that we should, it will be in the Government's interest to ensure that privatisation is well received within the industry, is properly explained and understood and, above all, properly sold within the regions in which it will operate. This is about the only proposition I can think of that is a truly regional prospect for privatisation. The 10 water authorities, stemming as they did from the Water Act 1973, have well established themselves. They have created a substantial record of improvement in water supply, quality and amenity and, as far as I am concerned, have provided an increased and better service and met most of the demands laid upon them whether for improved flood control and prevention, improved supply and quality or genuinely fresh access to many of their important public amenities.

We must not consider privatisation as a measure seeking to remove an industry that has failed. Far from it. We are considering privatisation as a further step along a natural way to improve the quality of water supply in this country. The water industry is a major technical industry. It is high in capital assets, relatively low in manpower, high in technology, has many of the aspects of high-tech industry, and we must treat it as such. Its biggest single restraint in recent years has undoubtedly been the restraint of capital and, as hon. Members have already observed, it is the restraint of being part of the PSBR or the national loans fund that has prevented many of the major schemes from moving faster or as fast as the authorities would have wished. Therefore, if the water authorities are to become public limited companies, as I trust they will, we must look to them to be able to raise capital, manage their assets efficiently and be able to produce an adequate return for shareholders and investors.

My hon. Friends have rightly drawn attention to the fact that the idea of a National Rivers Authority is not only a reversal of a previous proposal but it would appear to be different from the concept of the river basin management around which the 1973 Act was framed. I believe that that is reconcilable and I hope that when my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State looks in more detail at the responses to his Green Paper he will consider how far the National Rivers Authority can be rooted in the regions it will supervise. It should be a regionally based authority, not a national authority. The control of the water catchment within its region should be its major contribution. I note that it is to be charged with resource planning. If there is to be a dichotomy between operational planning and resource planning, one is in for trouble. Therefore, it is vital that, if my right hon. Friend proceeds with the National Rivers Authority, he should make it sensitive to operators as well as planning for the overriding controls for pollution, abstraction and discharging. That would be a perfectly sensible thing to do.

If the public limited companies are to be established correctly they need real clarity of distinction between the role of the rivers authority in their region and the role of the privatised plc. I trust that my right hon. Friend will use the time available to him to lay out clearly the role of the rivers authority and, I hope, to persuade the water authorities that they can accept a National Rivers Authority, not as an interference with operational management but as a contribution to maintaining the regional catchment, dealing with the conservation, amenity and pollution control aspects and allowing the plc to manage the resource properly from the start to the finish.

If my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State wished to centralise the National Rivers Authority and make it large in staff he would be creating a vehicle through which a Labour Government, should they ever be returned, would find it extremely easy to return the water industry to public ownership. That is what the Labour party wants to do. The hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) set that out as his objective. Therefore, it is vital that the National Rivers Authority should not be a vehicle that can be a quick bypass to public ownership of the water industry again. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds would agree that we cannot afford to have the water industry uprooted time and again as it seeks to fulfil its prime duty, the supply of water to the country. It is a duty it has discharged admirably over the past 14 years and I trust that it will discharge that duty in the private sector not only with extreme care, quality and efficiency but with profit.

7.50 pm

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): I wish to add my congratulations to the hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe) on his maiden speech. Coming to this place takes us all in different ways, but this is the first time that I have heard of chicken pox breaking out, and I offer my sympathy on that. We all had great respect for his predecessor, Walter Harrison. Members on these Benches could write a book about our relationship with him when he was in the Labour Whips' office, but that must wait until another time.

I wish to respond to the hon. Gentleman's comments about the need for strong regional logic in the proposed changes. That theme has run through many of the

[Mr. Dafydd Wigley]

representations that I have received from Wales. I recognise that similar arguments apply to Yorkshire and elsewhere. We appear to be facing the impending privatisation of two of our most important fundamental industries—water and electricity. On behalf of the joint Plaid Cymru and Scottish National party parliamentary group, I wish to put firmly on the record that we are fundamentally opposed to the privatisation of the water industry in Wales—this Bill does not apply to Scotland — and the electricity industry in both Wales and Scotland. We shall continue to hold that fundamental position as the greater detail of the legislation comes before us in later stages.

As hon. Members have said, the Bill is a bit of a mess because it refers to bodies that have not come into existence, such as the National Rivers Authority. In the memorandum, it is referred to tangentially, but is not named in the body of the Bill, and nowhere is it defined. That is very unsatisfactory. Does "National" mean an English national authority? Will there also be a Welsh rivers authority? Will there be a British national authority, in the way that the House usually uses that term, or will we have a new nation called England and Wales? At the very least, the term is unsatisfactory, but even more so is the lack of clarity about the Government's intentions, whatever terminology is used.

We are strongly opposed to the concept of a centralised rivers authority, and that point has also been made in representations about the Bill. The Welsh water authority, in its reaction to the proposals, stated:

"In Wales there are political and organisational considerations which will need to be met by a further degree of regional devolution, whatever structure is established for the English regions . . . The special sensitivity of water-related issues in Wales is acknowledged in the current arrangements . . . The six functions which it is proposed to transfer to the NRA have a very high public profile in Wales. The NRA will be responsible for the most visible and attractive features of the water environment in Wales, i.e. rivers, estuaries and coastal waters, as well as for some of the most controversial functions such as pollution control and land drainage. These cannot be run from England."

In referring to the need for clear policies, it stated:

"but the sensitive and sensible implementation of those policies within Wales must be tackled by a semi-autonomous body which retains close links with the Welsh Office and with the other Government Departments which take lead responsibility for discrete functional areas of NRA business."

It is important that that reponse is written into the record because that body has been responsible for water in Wales since the implementation of the 1973 Act.

There have also been representations from farmers unions. The Farmers Union of Wales said:

"Wales should have its own water supervisory body responsible to the Secretary of State for Wales . . . a separate Welsh National Rivers Authority responsible for the area covered by the Welsh Water Authority should be established and be made responsible to the Secretary of State for Wales. All water catchment, storage and the regulatory assets should also come under the WNRA."

That is an important consideration because of the distinct geography of Wales. Indeed, we have seen the effects of floods during recent days. Land drainage and other such aspects are integrally related to agriculture in Wales, which of course comes under the Welsh Office.

I was, therefore, pleased when I received a reply, dated 23 September, to an inquiry that I sent to the Secretary of State for Wales, stating:

"You are concerned that the proposals do not provide for a separate Rivers Authority for Wales. Let me therefore begin in stating that I personally have not totally ruled out this possibility".

I hope that that is the Government's current position and that the options are open and will be given full consideration.

As the Welsh water authority suggested, water is a highly emotive subject in Wales. We have to think only of the drowning of the Tryweryn valley 30 years ago to provide water resources for Liverpool, which caused enormous tensions. One of the good things that came out of it was the creation of the Welsh water authority, so that we had a body and a forum that was able to develop a strategic approach to water resources in a way that respected the wishes of local communities. If there is a centralised rivers authority without sensitivity to that dimension in Wales, the great danger is that once again will emerge the tensions and the exasperation that we suffered because of the Tryweryn drowning in the 1950s and early 1960s and, to a lesser extent, with the Clywedog reservoir in the late 1960s. That needs to be avoided and must be thought about at this stage — it is no use regretting it later.

There is a close link between the control of water resources and agriculture, environmental policy, sport and tourism in Wales—all of which come under the Welsh Office. Wales has problems in upgrading its sewerage operations and there is a vexed question about the standard of beaches in Wales in view of the comments from the EEC about them, both of which underline the need for a coherent approach to public policy in that area. If one body takes away the powers over rivers and water storage from the Welsh Office, it will be difficult to achieve a coherent approach. Therefore, tonight I am looking for an assurance that the Government still have an open mind on setting up a separate Welsh national rivers authority in line with the comments in the Secretary of State's letter.

I come now to the privatisation of water distribution, and in passing note that the experiment with metering will not take place in Wales. Of course, there is some metering in Wales and there is scope for further metering. However, as other hon. Members have said, it should be voluntary rather than compulsory. There are great fears for public health policy if charges are made on the basis of usage. Poor families have the greatest need for water, and such a policy might encourage them not to use the water that they need.

The level of water charges in Wales has been a matter of consternation for many years. There are various reasons, some related to geography and some to history, for the level of charges being high. If the privatisation of the Welsh water industry is to be of any interest to any commercial concern, if an asset base of £1,600 million is to give a return sufficient to justify private investment, there will have to be either an enormous increase in the charge for water or a write-off of an enormous part of the asset base of the existing historic debt. A case can be made for writing off that debt — as was made by the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths)—but that could be done now. If that historic debt were written off now, the level of water charges in Wales could come down to below the average in England and Wales. Therefore, if we are happy to go down that road, let us do so immediately. Let us write off the historic debt and have reasonable water charges in Wales. What is not acceptable

is that those historic debts should be written off, at public expense, to enable people to make private profit out of water. Certainly it is not acceptable that the level of charges for water in Wales should be even higher than they are now simply to fund private profits out of this most essential of provisions.

Mr. Richard Livsey (Brecon and Radnor): Will the Minister give us an assurance that, should water be privatised, water charges——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is intervening in the speech of the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley).

Mr. Livsey: I apologise, Madam Deputy Speaker. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that water charges in Wales should be equalised with those in England and that, should water be privatised, we should extract promises to that effect from Ministers?

Mr. Wigley: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for addressing me as the Minister. I have not quite taken over that role yet, and I am not sure whether, with this hot potato, I would wish to.

It will certainly be unacceptable to have the worst of both worlds. Either we have a structure that does away with historic debts and allows us to work on a reasonable commercial basis, without the millstone that leads to the present high charges, or we should have an even charging system. The worst of both would leave us with high charges and no ability to do anything about it.

I want an assurance from the Government that the powers given by the Bill in relation to the privatisation of water distribution may be used by the Welsh water authority to investigate the possibility of having in Wales a variation on the concept of a purely private company, which is being considered in regions of England — the possibility of having a national consumer co-operative in Wales. The matter has been considered by members of the Welsh water authority and has some attractions, given the interest that has been expressed in such bodies in Wales. It might bring some of the benefits which the Government are seeking from independent, free-standing commercial bodies, with answerability to all the people of Wales who, as consumers, would be members of that co-operative.

Is it possible to investigate going down the road that has been taken in Scotland? No changes will be made to the water structure in Scotland, and I should be interested to know whether the Government have closed their mind completely to the possibility, given the different historic and geographic position, of municipal water supply in Wales. I realise that that goes beyond this Bill, which relates purely to privatisation, but I would like to think that the option has not been closed completely.

Electricity has a major significance in Wales and Scotland. It is significant in Wales because of the production of electricity from coal, hydro-electricity, nuclear power stations — of which there are two in my county — pump storage schemes and the possibility of the Severn and other barrages. It is an important dimension of our economic and employment policies, as well as our energy distribution. The CEGB has a very good record of efficiency. That came home to us last week, when there was such a crisis when electricity was lost for a few hours. It showed how much we take electricity for granted. Unfortunately, in Wales, we lose electricity supply more frequently and perhaps we value it more as a result, but there is a good track record in the production and distribution of electricity. I cannot see how the privatisation of electricity will make anything more than a nonsense of a coherent energy policy. The mind boggles at the thought of going to the extreme — nothing in the Bill would prevent it — of privatising nuclear power stations. What will be the cost of decommissioning power stations? More importantly, what are the implications for the safety of employees and the communities in which those stations are located?

Those questions have not been answered and were not aired in the general election campaign. The Government do not have a mandate to privatise such basic industries, and if the people were asked in a referendum I am sure that they would reject the idea. There is scope for small-scale alternative local production of electricity, but that is different from the privatisation of the backbone of electricity production and distribution. The House should consider it deeply before going down that road. As the Bill prepares the way for that road, the SNP and Plaid Cymru will vote against it.

8.4 pm

Mr. Charles Morrison (Devizes): As time is short, I shall limit myself to a few thoughts on the future structure for the electricity industry and for water. There is a distinction between the two subjects.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy has a range of possibilities to consider, but I am glad that he has already given an assurance that the electricity industry will not be sold as a monolithic corporation. That is a good starting point, but he has gone further and said that there is no natural monopoly in generation and no justification for monopolistic practices in transmission. That may be so, but if Central Electricity Generating plc — as I imagine it will be called — is not to have a monopoly, there must be safeguards. If it does not, its incentive to make the hugely expensive and long-term investment, with a slow return, in nuclear power stations, which I believe are necessary, and to a lesser extent in other power stations, will be seriously affected. In this context also I take note of the comments of the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) about the cost of decommissioning nuclear power stations.

If area electricity plcs, succeeding area boards, are to be allowed to generate at least part of their energy requirements — I do not know whether they will, but it has been suggested that they might — and if therefore they are allowed to become producer retailers, in equity Central Electricity Generating plc should also be allowed to become a producer retailer. In general, it might not wish to be so, but for some large customers it might.

It is worth remembering that the present structure of electricity boards stems from 1948. It would be a miracle if the structure that was established in 1948 was the best structure for 1987. Thus, I thought that there was a case for restructuring electricity supply before privatisation, but on second thoughts the existing structure and boards are well known and it may be wise to privatise them on their present basis and thereafter leave it to the public limited companies and the market to devise new structures when or if necessary.

The Secretary of State properly emphasised the importance of customer rights. Therefore, I presume that he intends to keep, in some form, the area electricity

[Mr. Charles Morrison]

consultative councils. But I doubt whether it is necessary to retain the national Electricity Consumers Council. The combination of the area councils and the market should ensure a good service at competitive prices without extra intervention. In one sense, competition already exists. The area boards and the Electricity Council publish annually a huge range of comparative performance indicators, as does the CEGB. Those indicators have been a salutary check for each board, and there is no doubt that boards take careful note of the performance of other boards.

Traditionally, the Conservative party has conserved what is best while reforming where appropriate and necessary. There is no doubt that the best aspect of water is the integrated river basin system. It is the envy of and the pattern and blueprint for many other countries and it should be retained. That means that the Government's first thoughts on privatisation in their White Paper were better than their second thoughts. I understand why the Government changed their mind. They were bowing to the concerns expressed about the responsibility for regulatory and river management functions being held by public limited companies.

It is refreshing to note that the Government are prepared to take note of what people say about White Papers and other consultative papers. However, now we are faced with the proposal that plcs should be responsible for the water supply, sewerage and sewage disposal, making up 90 per cent. of existing water authority business; but the remaining 10 per cent., as well as the river management and regulatory functions, should remain in the public sector under the proposed National Rivers Authority. In other words, the river basin management system is to be disintegrated.

I fully accept the concern of the National Farmers Union and the Country Landowners Association. I am a member of both bodies, although on this occasion I happen to disagree to a considerable extent with some of their concerns. However, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment said in his speech today that it is not ownership that matters, but the regulatory system. So the argument should be about where the dividing line between public and plc responsibility should lie. I am glad to see my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) nodding his head in agreement. The Government have opted for what appears to be a simple division, but it is destructive of the river basin management system that some of us believe is of great importance. Thus, in my view, the plcs could be given more responsibilities and statutory duties, and a small NRA could be established with certain regulatory powers to be used if the plcs did not live up to their statutory duties.

My hon. Friend the Member for Pudsey (Sir G. Shaw) has made the interesting suggestion that there should be regional, rather than national, river authorities. Obviously, there is a great deal to be said for that. It would be in line with the reaction of the National Anglers Council, of which I have the honour to be president. We should never forget how important the fishermen are. If that idea was pursued, if the plcs were given more functions than is currently proposed and if they were shadowed in a regulatory manner by regional river authorities, almost all the existing operational and managerial functions would remain together.

In this context, we should not forget the existence of Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution, which already has responsibility for pollution. That being so, why is it necessary to duplicate its functions, as I understand is being proposed, in the powers of the National Rivers Authority?

The sketch that I have outlined would lead to the retention of more of the best that we have in the world of water. There would be a number of small regulatory river authorities—smaller than what is currently proposed—and therefore a much less expensive system of quangos, and a better service for the whole community.

8.13 pm

Ms. Joan Walley (Stoke-on-Trent, North): I shall confine my remarks to the water industry. The Secretary of State was right when he anticipated that the opposition from our side would be stated in terms of safety and public health, and those are the issues about which I wish to speak.

We have already seen how nervous the Government are about the proposals they have come up with. They have every right to be nervous, as we have just heard from the contribution made by the hon. Member for Devizes (Mr. Morrison). Certainly, when I look around at the large number of organisations, at national and local level, which are concerned to oppose the proposals, and when I hear of people, not least Members of the House of Lords, who similarly oppose them, I believe that the Government have every right to be nervous about them.

It has been said that it was Labour's intention to reverse the proposals, and that was why we wanted some degree of regional control. We do not want to reverse the proposals—we want to stop them getting on the statute book in the first place. We want to safeguard every aspect of health.

I do not believe that the proposals for the privatisation of the water industry will be popular. They will certainly not be popular when members of the public understand that they will no longer be able to take a safe and healthy water supply for granted. Women will also begin to realise what the proposals mean when the large charges for water become evident. I am not suggesting for a moment that water is now up to the standards that it should be. It is ironic that when the Government's proposals for the privatisation of the industry were first mooted we were told that one of the reasons for privatisation was to remove all spending from the public sector borrowing requirement and to put it into private hands so that, suddenly, all the improvements that some of us had wanted for a long time could be achieved. I well remember the time when I was a councillor and wanted more improvements in sewage pipes, as well as in all kinds of different areas. The money for that type of improvement should have been available. However, during the past seven years, under this Government, those improvements and that money have not been made available, and, what is more, they will not be made available as a result of these proposals.

There is no doubt that the water in one in four households is not up to the standard that it should be. As soon as the public realise that, they will oppose privatisation, not because they have economic reasons for wanting to invest in the water industry but because they

are afraid of landing up in the European courts. That is why they will not want to buy shares in the industry, when they are finally floated.

We shall do all that we can to alert the public to what is in store. That may mean swimming in the sea in Brighton to show everyone that the sea there is safe, because of the investment that has been made in that area in relocating the sewers and in the current research that is being carried out by the excellent members of the Labour-controlled borough of Brighton. I represent a constituency in the Severn-Trent area and, contrary to what we heard earlier, I maintain that the chairman—John Bellak—of Severn-Trent was the only one to welcome wholeheartedly the Government's proposals. I want to alert everyone to the fact that Severn-Trent will probably be the first water authority to be sold off. That is why hon. Members representing constituencies in the west midlands will be having regular meetings with all sorts of consumer and environmental groups and trade unions in that area. We can build up their support. We should be telling people that the Government are paving the way towards water privatisation that will amount to privatisation without compensation of the whole water industry. I have visited every utility that provides the water for my constituency. I have visited the reservoirs, the pumping stations and the bore holes, and I know exactly how much money was spent by the water companies, by the Potteries water board and by the authorities on purchasing and making those investments. It is criminal that that amount of investment of public money should now be sold off to private individuals who have no concern for public health. All they think about is the narrow aspect of their own profits.

We should also be aware that some water authorities, including Severn-Trent, have already spent considerable sums on preparing the ground for privatisation. Whether or not that expenditure was legal, it will presumably be made legal when the Bill goes through. It is ironic that local authorities, particularly Labour authorities, are not being allowed to publicise their work, yet vast sums are being spent to prepare for privatisation.

I get angry when I hear of how the charging of the Severn-Trent water authority is being geared up. We could have had enormous additional investment over the past four years, but that has not been made because the authority has been repaying debts so that it will be profitable for people to buy shares when the industry is privatised. We have been paying the price of the lack of investment in recent years.

As for the proposal to introduce water meters, I remember a firm not far from Westminster that was not prepared to pay for the water that was necessary to clean the wheels of its heavy lorries; the water cost too much.

As soon as water meters become compulsory, families throughout the country will use less water—not because they are mean, but because they will not be able to afford to use the amount of water that is necessary to bath children, operate washing machines and provide other basic essential services.

Changes in water charges over the past three years have made many people think that they are paying too much for water. When there is compulsory metering and the expenditure of the National Rivers Authority is charged to the consumer, few people will be able to afford to pay for the amount of water that is necessary in a civilised society.

We are told that meters are necessary to safeguard our water supply, but there are about 2·75 million households in the Severn-Trent area and if it costs £150 to put a meter in each home, the total cost will be £417 million—about half of the entire capital works programme of the Severn-Trent authority for the next five years on mains, sewers, leakage, environmental work and river quality. I do not see how such expenditure can be justified when more crucial investment is needed and has not gone ahead.

Some Labour colleagues and I visited the open days recently organised by the Severn-Trent authority—a good public relations exercise in anticipation of privatisation—and I saw that £4 million is needed for my constituency alone, but I was told that only £1·5 million of the work is likely to go ahead. That gives us some idea of the cost in public health terms that we shall have to pay in the coming months.

We shall do whatever we can to harness all the opposition to the Bill. We shall work with trade unions, consumer groups and environmental groups. In the next 18 months, we shall get the message across loud and clear. The campaign has already started.

8.23 pm

Sir John Farr (Harborough): I welcome the Bill and particularly the establishment of the National Rivers Authority. I see from the long title that the Bill is an embracing measure and I hope that it will be amended to include privatisation of the national weather centre. I am sure that Ministers would look favourably on such amendments.

The National Rivers Authority is in the Bill and it is not in the Bill. As the Secretary of State said, it is mentioned in the explanatory memorandum, but there is no provision for its establishment. Many Conservative Members welcome the idea of a national authority because it would be a big improvement on the existing set-up which is not altogether satisfactory. I am glad that the Government have listened to public opinion and many of us would like the NRA to be set up as soon as possible.

I do not feel that the regional water authorities have failed us. Generally, they have done as good a job in difficult circumstances as they have been able to do, but there is no doubt that, especially in recent years, the failure of some authorities to maintain pollution-free rivers and, in particular, pollution-free coasts has caused serious problems.

The NRA will be responsible for supervising and monitoring rivers, the water supply and river estuaries. I am pleased to see that its duties will extend to what the recent Green Paper called "coastal waters generally". I think that many people agree with me that the condition of some of our coastal waters is an utter disgrace. Successive Governments have tolerated for too long the disgraceful condition of our beaches and coastal waters; I do not mean the estuarial waters.

The regional authorities are culprits, because they are disposing of raw sewage around our coastline, adjacent to beaches, which I will not name, although there are hundreds of them throughout the country. Our pollution record is the worst in Europe and one of the worst in the world. Transferring administration of the discharge of sewage from the regional water authorities to the NRA, in association with the new pollution executive, could only improve matters.

[Sir John Farr]

I welcome the Government's intention to introduce water meters. They have been talking about it for a long time. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State referred to the little old lady who pays as much for her water supply as do the three or four people living in the house next door. I have always advised such little old ladies to get a meter, but I know that it can be a costly project.

Mr. Allan Roberts: If we have compulsory metering, who will pay for the old lady's meter?

Sir John Farr: A scheme involving some form of subsidy or something of that nature should be considered. No doubt that will be considered in Committee. Many old ladies feel that the cost of a private meter, which can be up to £100, is not worth paying.

My final point relates to anglers and water politics. My hon. Friend the Member for Devizes (Mr. Morrison) said that he is associated with an anglers' association. I had a letter today from the Leicestershire Angling Federation. One of the reasons why I welcome the shift from the regional water authorities to the National Rivers Authority and the privatisation of the distribution of water to houses is that in recent years regional water authorities have fallen down in preventing river pollution. In its letter the Leicestershire Angling Federation says that in the Severn-Trent area from 1981-82 to 1985-86 the number of pollution incidents has almost doubled, but that during the same period the number of prosecutions has been minimal. The number of incidents has doubled from 2,401 in 1981-82 to 4,500 in 1985-86. I hope that with the setting up of a National Rivers Authority there will be a change in the quality of river water. I give a qualified welcome to the Bill.

8.31 pm

Mr. Tom Pendry (Stalybridge and Hyde): I wish to direct my remarks specifically to the problems that the Bill poses for the water industry. At the outset I have to declare my interest. First, I chair the National Union of Public Employees group of hon. Members and many hundreds of NUPE members will be affected by water privatisation. Secondly, I represent a constituency in the north-west and many hundreds of thousands of north-westerners will certainly be adversely affected by this legislation. I recognise, of course, that one does not have to be a member of NUPE or live in the north-west to oppose this legislation.

One of the most obvious objections has already been stated a number of times. It is the proposed introduction of water metering. Why is it necessary to have compulsory trials in 10 or 11 areas when we know from the Yorkshire water authority experiment that the nett effect of metering is an enormous initial outlay of cost and alarming increases in the cost to families? That experiment showed that a family of two adults and two children — most hon. Members have many such families in their constituencies—would have to pay up to two and a half times what they currently pay should metering become operative.

We know that the National Consumer Council has already said that it is concerned about the effect of metering on low-income families who for genuine reasons cannot easily economise on water. Many low income families in my constituency have enough headaches without having to pay extra for necessities like washing and drinking water, to say nothing of the water used in flushing toilets and the like. These are not families who waste water by washing their second or third car or who hose down their gardens. They would love to have those opportunities.

This legislation will hit the inner city areas, in which we know the Government are supposed to be interested. Only yesterday we heard about the possibility of the Government introducing a second poll tax for all adult water users until meters are introduced. Such nonsense from the Government is due to the fact that they have not thought through their proposals. They are producing mess after mess, and it is no wonder that those of us who admire the paintings of the Secretary of State for the Environment would like him to stick to that and keep his artistic mind off essential issues like water supply and rates reform. I say that with some feeling because I have bought two of his paintings and they hang on my wall. *[Interruption.]* I got them cheap.

My union is naturally concerned about the number of job losses that privatisation of the water industry will bring about. Indeed, the Government have clearly said that there will be redundancies. The common services between authorities, such as legal services and laboratories, will be the first to go. It is clear that the new water companies will try to reduce costs in order to hit profit targets. The Anglian water authority has already estimated that there will be up to 20 per cent. job losses in sewerage alone. Before the Secretary of State or anyone else on the Government Front Bench argues that this is an overstaffed industry, I would refer once more to the Severn-Trent water authority which has lost 2,000 jobs since 1980. Since then it has brought in temporary staff to cover the jobs that were initially shed. This goes to show that this is no way to run a crucial industry.

Local authorities will also lose staff. In my area of Tameside 99 per cent. of all sewer repairs are undertaken by that authority and it is estimated that up to 23,000 jobs in local authorities could be at risk because of this proposed legislation. This week one of my constituents who works in the water industry wrote to me on this issue. He said:

> "If water authorities shift as they are planning so to do from the current practice of preventive maintenance to breakdown maintenance it may show a paper profit in the short term but standards will fall and consumer dissatisfaction will begin to manifest itself."

On top of this it will mean an increase in injuries at work.

When the Minister replies to the debate I should like him to give an undertaking on safety standards. That matter has already been referred to by one of my members. As the Minister knows, the water authority forum has been in existence since 1983 and has brought both employers and unions together to discuss health and safety issues. Will the Minister state clearly that this forum and its previous good work will not be swept aside with the passing of this legislation?

Many people in the north-west and indeed throughout the country feel deeply about these issues. I know that my local authority has a massive debt as a result of necessary investment in sewers and mains. Many are crumbling, but that is hardly surprising because some of them were built as long ago as 1840. Whatever massaged figures the Government come up with, the truth is that the real balance sheet deficit in the north-west alone is close to £1

billion. In order to make privatisation more attractive, we have seen a cut of 40 per cent. this year in sewer replacements in the north-west. This is asset-stripping at its worst. It is underground and unseen, but is immensely dangerous to public health.

I now turn to an issue close to my heart, the threat posed to recreational and sporting pursuits by this legislation. A wide range of sporting and recreational groups will suffer. Those who sail or fish or watch birds or ramble and many other sporting groups will pay dearly if this Bill is passed. Already one Thames angler has won a court case over the state of the water in this area, and corners are certainly being cut. In my region the water authority has a continuous recreational capital programme. The pursuits range from walking to Vale House in Langdale to many other recreational schemes in my constituency. The Government will face concerted opposition from the recreation lobby.

In answer to my parliamentary question earlier this year the Minister with responsibility for sport said that over 2 million people use the water environment for recreation each year. That is an understatement. There are 3·4 million anglers in Britain and if they are taken together with all the other groups a formidable lobby will be ranged against this Bill. The hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) must regret the day he agreed to take on a sports portfolio with water attached to it. This legislation cuts across his sporting brief and will do immense damage in the area that he is trying to promote while wearing his other hat. The fine start that he has made on sport is threatened by this Bill.

I have highlighted a number of issues and of course there are many other things that I would like to say. As one hon. Member said, we are beginning the fight today to ensure that the Bill does not see the light of day.

8.38 pm

Mr. Martin M. Brandon-Bravo (Nottingham, South): This enabling Bill is the first stage of the denationalisation of much of our water and electricity supply industries. On that account its broad principles are to be welcomed. It was said earlier in the debate that the authorities have not welcomed it. It is perfectly true that the authorities have not used the word "welcome". However, it should be firmly placed on the record that the water association's public briefing clearly states:

"the authorities support the intentions of the Bill."

I would have thought that that was clear enough.

I welcome this as I have welcomed other denationalisation plans. The Bill enables this place to fulfil its proper function as guardian of the public interest. I believe that that function is best performed when Parliament in general and the Government in particular are not judge and jury as well as sometimes the accused or when they seek to exercise powers to deal with the conduct of major industries which this place and, regrettably, most hon. Members are patently unqualified to discharge.

Midland JAWS — the joint union action against denationalisation — complained that privatisation is against the interests of consumers and employees. I cannot see how either consumers or employees can benefit any longer from the old worn-out, nationalised, industrial in-house concept of "what is good for us comes first and the customer or taxpayer picks up the difference."

The joint union group has published a booklet which complains that the Government propose cash limits. That is precisely what we are seeking finally to eradicate. In the past there has been Government interference in the long-term corporate plans of what ought to be commercial supply organisations. Hopefully, we will correct that in the future Bill. The joint group also complained about the setting of financial targets and performance aims. I know of no successful undertaking that could continue or survive without such a corporate strategy, and that concept is typical of the old style unions within the nationalised industry sector which still believe that industries can run without such a framework.

The union grouping in that pamphlet also complains about the lack of investment and sets out a chart to prove its case. Unintentionally it demonstrates that the biggest culprit in the lack of investment plan was the previous Labour Government who first wanted money for other things, which meant that the water industry received less, and then ran out of cash altogether. Indeed, Health Service investment went down the pan as well.

The House should read the booklet produced by the joint union group. It clearly shows that during the lifetime of the previous Labour Government the Severn-Trent water authority invested less in cash terms in the period to 1979 when the Labour Government were in power. My colleagues on both sides of the House will be aware of the level of inflation during that period and that lack of investment is therefore even more stark.

Clause 3 deals with charging. Amongst other things the clause states that it should

"have regard to the cost of performing those services . . ."

that the new authorities will have to carry out. I believe that the Secretary of State used the phrase "to have regard" and claimed that that came from an earlier Bill. That is a nice phrase which sounds quite clear. However, if the House in the exercise of its duties in the public interest in future lays down higher water quality standards in a whole range of areas controlled by the water companies, it cannot duck the responsibility of ensuring how the costs that we impose can be passed on. It would be dishonest of us to try to imagine that we can have higher water standards and investment and then duck the issue of how that can be provided. I therefore hope that when the main privatisation Bill comes before the House we will carefully consider the phrase

"to have regard to the cost"

and ensure that the new companies can deal with that matter.

Clause 5 deals with a point that has been raised several times today, the possibility of the installation of meters. During today's debate and particularly during the comments made by the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) representing the alliance — if that is the right phrase to use these days — I was puzzled by the fact that no one is facing the issue that no party today wants to continue with the old rateable values. The Labour party is split between capital values, local income tax and all the various options that have been discussed for the future of raising money for local government. All of the changes demand that the water industry has a mechanism for charging for the services that it provides. It would be dishonest for us to dismiss the possibility of water metering, as one Opposition Member did in Nottingham recently, on the ground that it is a tax on bath water. I hope that the debate on this issue can reach a slightly higher level than that.

[Mr. Martin M. Brandon-Bravo]

Earlier reference was made to metering in blocks of flats. In my constituency joint supply is a great problem. I hope that when we tackle the problem of meters we will also tackle the problem of dealing with the enormous costs of removing joint supply which causes no end of trouble. As we are moving in that direction, even if we cannot enforce it in law, I hope very much that we at least advise and provide guidance to the present water authorities and builders to install meters in all new property. We are building well in excess of 200,000 houses a year and that figure does not take into account the enormous industrial and commercial developments. It would be sensible if meters were installed from the start.

I am also concerned about the problem of reading meters and the right of entry referred to in schedule 1. I am extremely worried because in schedule 1(5)*(b)* entry is referred to where the householder is not present yet that is not directly linked with paragraph 2 of schedule 1 where entry can only be exercised following the execution of a warrant.

It is no secret that the criminal classes in this country are becoming ever more sophisticated, and the vast majority of people are concerned about the problem of right of entry. If we are moving towards the installation of meters — we have the technology to enable remote reading to take place, but in practical terms that is a long way off — I hope that strong advice is given that the meters are positioned outside properties so that right of entry will not be a problem.

The union grouping to which I have referred, which is opposing privatisation, complains of

"the corrosive effect of the Government policies on levels of capital spending."

That is the one argument of the grouping with which I agree. The solution is to stop the meddling and allow the water and electricity supply industries to get on with the job that they know best, which will be achieved when they are in the private sector. When that position is reached, the House will be able to fulfil its proper role in ensuring that public demand is met as expressed through this place.

8.51 pm

Mr. Doug Henderson (Newcastle upon Tyne, North): Having listened to the Secretary of State for the Environment, I am not convinced that the Government know what they want to do with the water industry, even if the House approves this enabling measure. I am not convinced that they understand the working of the industry. They know, of course, that they need to raise billions of pounds by selling the nation's assets to cover up their mismanagement of the economy. Probably every hon. Member is aware, however, that the events of last week will make it more difficult for them to raise the necessary moneys. They know also, or they should do, that privatisation will do nothing to attract the investment that the industry requires, contrary to what the hon. Member for Nottingham, South (Mr. Brandon-Bravo) has suggested. Privatisation cannot guarantee a future supply of water, it cannot attack the problem of pollution in our rivers and it cannot maintain the task of modernising our sewerage system.

The Government know that disrupting the work of the industry with their restructuring will cost a great deal of money and waste the energies of the good people who work in it. They know as well that they have deliberately increased the price of water to try to make their sale more attractive. We can expect that if the House approves the Bill the Government will eventually offer the purchaser a knock-down price to attract investors to the industry. The Water Authorities Association claims that the industry — the Secretary of State has said that no one knows better how to run the industry than the water authorities — estimates that its assets amount to £27 billion. The best estimate that City valuers can give is that the industry will sell for £7 billion. These valuations were made before the events of the past week. If a sale takes place at £7 billion or a lower sum, which is more likely, it will be nothing short of a national scandal.

The quest for speed has resulted in a complete lack of cogency in the Government's proposals. If the Secretary of State had submitted his muddled thinking to my mathematics teacher, I have no doubt that he would have said, "Not even a good try, Secretary of State."

The major problem that the Government face is what to do with the management of the water system. My hon. Friend the Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) referred to the position adopted by the hon. Member for Oxford, West and Abingdon (Mr. Patten) when he had ministerial responsibilities for water policy prior to becoming Minister of State, Home Office. On 23 June 1986 he said that the Government had made it clear that a unified river basin management would continue. In lay terms that means there is one authority that is responsible for the provision of clean water for water supply and for the disposal of dirty water, sewage and other pollutants.

The Government face a dilemma and I do not believe that they have begun to resolve it. If they privatise the industry and retain one authority—some hon. Members have said that this is the position that they would prefer — it is tantamount to handing over public health regulation to the City investor. If that were to happen, the private sector would be responsible for both clean water and dirty water. The City investor in ICI at Billingham could be the same investor who invests in the Northumbrian water authority, which would have control of pollution in the Tees. This is clearly unacceptable and in no sense provides for public accountability.

The Secretary of State must be aware that the Green Paper produced on these issues is openly ridiculed by the industry. The proposed division of responsibility between the proposed National Rivers Authority and private companies has no support. It is rejected on the ground of management inefficiency. Roy Watts, the chairman of the Thames water authority, has said that the proposals are

"misconceived and a recipe for inefficiency and conflict."

Eight out of 10 of the water authority chairmen appointed by the Government have endorsed that position. They cite the example of the Thames water authority, where the National Rivers Authority would be responsible for surface water pipes, and private companies, established under the suggested proposals, would be responsible for the sewers. In the Thames area both systems are connected in one piping system that is known as flood sewers. These sewers are connected in turn to the storm overflows. After flooding in 1985 there was a major problem with the flood sewers and 33 of the storm overflows were recognised by the Thames water authority as needing major repair. I have no doubt that after the weather of the past week in the south similar problems will have recurred.

Under the Secretary of State's proposals, who would decide what to do? Would the NRA decide that something had to be done about the pipes or would a private company decide that something had to be done about the drains? Even if they could agree that something had to be done, would they be able to agree on who should do the work? If they could agree about that, how could they agree on who would pay for the work and in what proportion?

The Government's proposals have been opposed also on the ground of cost. Sir Michael Straker, the chairman of the Northumbrian water authority, made a statement on 13 October in which he said:

"It seems so wrong that the cost-efficiency of the organisation should be broken."

Water sell-off, he says, "will raise costs." Sir Michael Straker is well qualified to make comment. In the last year, the increase in water charges in the Northumbrian area was the lowest in the country, and actual water charges in Northumbria are the second lowest in England and Wales. They are £36 per year per household lower then they are in the Anglian water authority area. But there is a great risk to people in Northumberland that, under privatisation, the cost of water there will be put up to the same price as that in the Anglian area.

Let me speak briefly on behalf of those working in the industry. I am sponsored by the General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union, which is the largest manual workers' trade union in the industry, representing some 17,000 people out of a work force of 50,000. They know the job on the ground, and they know that the Government's proposals will lead to confusion and disruption. They also point out that the National Rivers Authority, as proposed, lacks teeth. They have told me that employers in one of the large water authority areas have told them that, if the National Rivers Authority is to do anything to control the industry, it will need not 2,000 employees, as has been suggested in the Government's Green Paper, but 20,000. Those are water authority figures.

With all that weight of opinion, the Secretary of State must be in no doubt that public accountability and privatisation are incompatible. If he does not withdraw his proposals on those grounds alone, he must be condemned for his blind obduracy. Surely what should concern the House is this: what does the industry need to provide the public with a safe and secure water supply? Any independent person would surely come to the same conclusion as I have. The water authority chairmen have; the trade unions and the workers in the industry have.

The industry needs investment to modernise. It needs public accountability and control to secure clean supply of water, and to dispose of our domestic and industrial pollution. If the House demands that as well, it will reject the Second Reading of the Bill.

9.1 pm

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): When the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) opened his speech, he attributed remarks to the chairman of the Southern water authority suggesting that he was not in favour of privatisation. I have here a letter dated 19 October, signed by the secretary of the board of Southern water, enclosing its response to the Government's proposals. I shall read from the last paragraph:

"The board would, therefore, hope that Southern Water is the first water authority to be 'floated' once the Privatisation Legislation is in place."

The Isle of Wight is the largest area to be chosen for the introduction of water meter trials. In February 1985, in September 1986 and in October 1987, the Isle of Wight consumer committee voted in favour of water metering in the Isle of Wight. There are 51,117 hereditaments in the island. I should like to know whether there will be a uniform tariff throughout the Isle of Wight, and whether there will be consultation on the introduction of water metering—perhaps even shadow or dummy bills so that householders can get used to them. Is there any intention of raising additional revenue as a result of experimental water metering? The Isle of Wight is a tourist area, and we sincerely hope that any reinstatement from the introduction of water meters will be to a high standard.

We are also interested to learn how the sewerage charge will be calculated once water metering is in place, and we should particularly like an assurance that large families in low-rated properties will not be penalised as a result of taking part in the experiment.

I welcome the introduction of the National Rivers Authority, and I hope that, when sea defence is considered, we shall take the opportunity of clearing up the large number of anomalies in the current legislation.

9.3 pm

Mr. Eric Martlew (Carlisle): My interest in the water industry goes back to 1972. Unlike other hon. Members in the Chamber tonight, I am a member of a water committee which, strange as it may seem, supplies water to the Secretary of State's house. I did not buy any of his paintings, but I take the credit for giving him an excellent supply of Cumbrian water! I want to make only two points, as I realise that time is pressing.

There has been a lot of talk about water metering. The hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) said that the meters are inaccurate. My working life was spent in the dairy industry. Throughout the country there are very complicated milk measuring meters that are standing idle and gathering dust. They cost many thousands of pounds. They are standing idle and gathering dust because they are inaccurate. The Department of Trade and Industry has given instructions that no regard should be paid to the readings that are obtained from meters. How can we say to people that they are to be charged for water by meters that are completely inaccurate? The people who live in the trial areas should query their bills. Many of them will be wrong because meters are inaccurate.

My hon. Friend the Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe) said that over a century ago the forefathers of his authority bought out the water authority. Government money was not used to buy it out, so it is not Government property. In 1974, there were water authority assets in Carlisle of £8 million and debts of £3 million. That meant that the people of Carlisle had assets worth £5 million. This Government are privatising without paying compensation. That money is not theirs to give to speculators and spivs on the international stock exchanges; it belongs to my constituents. It will do the people of this country no service if the water authorities are sold off cheap. Water is a national resource and it should be kept in the public domain.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. John Prescott.

Mr. Prescott: The understanding has obviously broken down, Mr Speaker. Perhaps I could give way to my hon. Friend the Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney).

Mr. Speaker: That would be very kind.

9.6 pm

Mr. Ian McCartney (Makerfield): That is the second time, in a matter of weeks, that my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) has been very kind to me in this House.

As a former member of the Greater Manchester fire and civil defence authority, I am concerned about the relationship between the newly privatised water companies and the emergency services such as the fire authorities. I am concerned in particular about the provision and maintenance of fire hydrants, the placing of mains and new developments. Who will pay for the water that is used for fire-fighting purposes?

I ask these questions because my fire authority has incurred substantial costs in this financial year for services that, prior to privatisation, were provided free by British Telecom. It has had to pay £32,000 for the 24-hour service that connects its 999 land lines with the rest of the communications system. Before privatisation, the service was provided free of charge.

Because of the privatisation of British Telecom, the Government are increasing by 8,000 per cent. the cost of the telegraph and wireless licences of the police and fire authorities. I fear that this is what will happen to fire authorities when the water authorities are privatised.

9.8 pm

Mr. John Prescott (Kingston upon Hull, East): It falls to me to make two points before I address the substance of the Bill. The first is pleasurable. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe) on a most powerful maiden speech, despite the delay that the House suffered on account of his having been ill with chicken pox. I knew the hon. Member in my previous job as a spokesman on employment. He developed very good employment plans when he was chairman of Wakefield council's economic development committee. My hon. Friend made a forceful speech that fully reflected the concern for his constituents of his well-liked predecessor. I particularly welcome his opposition to the present legislation before the House. He referred to the closure of the Redbrook colliery complex. Many more pits will face closure if the Bill is enacted.

My second point is a less happy one. It concerns an intervention that the Secretary of State for Energy made during the contribution of my hon. Friend the Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham). The issue concerned who was to wind up the debate. The Secretary of State struck a rather sour note when he suggested that my contribution would concern the privatisation of the electricity industry and that whatever contribution I made would be largely irrelevant because it would not concern the Bill.

The Secretary of State and I met behind the Chair earlier to discuss this point and I knew only at the beginning of this debate that he was not to wind it up. The Shadow Cabinet had been informed that he was to wind up the debate. I have since sought information on this point and I have the Government's Whips' report that was give to us at a Shadow Cabinet meeting on 5 October; it clearly names him as the speaker to wind up the debate. I accepted behind the Chair that there had been some breakdown in communications, but I could not accept his sour intervention. The Secretary of State fully understood that I would have to address my remarks primarily to the privatisation of the electricity industry. One assumes that when two Secretaries of State are present in the House during a debate concerning the privatisation of the water and electricity industries, that is what the debate would be about. I strongly resent the inference that any contribution that I would make, primarily about the privatisation of the electricity industry, would be considered irrelevant.

Mr. Parkinson: May I clear up this misunderstanding? I am happy to confirm what I told the hon. Gentleman behind the Chair. It was never intended that I should take part in this discussion; I do not know how that confusion occurred. We feel that electricity is almost incidental to the Bill because, as the hon. Gentleman realises, it is mentioned in only one part of one clause that gives authorities the power to incur certain expenditure. I assure the hon. Gentleman that he and I will debate the privatisation of the electricity industry in the House on a number of occasions and I look forward to it.

Mr. Prescott: I accept what the Secretary of State has confirmed, but he will appreciate that the nature of the circumstances are such that I must address myself, as have others, to the principle of the privatisation of the electricity industry. It is not that the Secretary of State has not been making statements about what will happen to the electricity industry, either at conferences, in press statements or on television programmes on which we have both appeared such as "Question Time", to which I shall refer in a moment. He has made statements about his views on the privatisation of the electricity industry. However, I would have thought that this opportunity to address the House on his preliminary thoughts on the privatisation of the electricity industry would have been taken. Why should we have to rely on press statements, television and current affairs debates when the Bill provides an ample opportunity to discuss the major issue of the privatisation of the electricity industry?

I have complained to the right hon. Gentleman previously about the problem for Opposition spokesmen of finding out what is in the Secretary of State's mind. It is not improved by people such as the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board, Lord Marshall. He has made it clear that he will not meet the Opposition spokesman to discuss the privatisation of the electricity industry. The chairman of the Electricity Council has been kind enough to say that he will receive me, but we know from press reports and statements that the Secretary of State has made it clear that he does not want them in a public debate on these issues while he is making up his mind. The Secretary of State knows that that point is confirmed in the case of Lord Marshall. It is quite unacceptable for people such as Lord Marshall to say that he will not speak to those who are democratically elected and who are attempting to give their views and analyses on a major issue. I hope that that point is picked up by Lord Marshall, who, they tell me, is a bit of an awkward character at the best of times.

This is a rather appropriate day to be discussing these large privatisation measures. They are large because the assets of the electricity supply industry alone are twice as great as the privatisation programmes that the Government have already undertaken. Undoubtedly the electorate is becoming a little more critical of the privatisation programme.

There are obvious beneficiaries from the privatisation programme. The Government have earned £20 billion

from selling off the silver. The City has earned about £1 billion in handling the sales and a number of shareholders have made a lot of money by getting out quickly and making a killing. As the stock market shows, being in the City is a gamble. The last two days have reminded even the professionals of that.

The consumer benefits are less obvious. Reference has been made to British Telecom. Certainly, bills now arrive faster than they did, but charges are being imposed upon hospitals for the provision of telephones. Charges are to be made for the maintenance of 999 lines and there is a possibility of a charge for the use of the inquiry service. Fewer public telephone boxes now work. Consumer benefits are less obvious.

We have yet to see what will happen in the gas industry. However, already there has been an increase of 40 per cent. in cut-offs for people unable to pay their bills. That is unprecedented and does not exist on such a scale in any other energy supply industry.

There were 4·5 million British Gas shareholders. Now there are only 3 million and 406 shareholders own 1 million of the shares. The great democratic, shareholding class is declining rapidly in the gas industry and it represents only about 15 per cent. of gas consumers.

The Secretary of State spoke at the party conference about power to the people. He was referring to the limited number of people who will benefit from shares which are paid for by consumers who use the public utilities.

The real motive for the Government's privatisation programme has nothing to do with the consumer or efficiency. There are two major reasons for privatisation. First, it is for Treasury revenue. The Government wanted £20 billion and that has without doubt reformed public finance. The Government now have the money to fund their tax programmes. The second reason is based on ideology. The Government want to roll back the frontiers of socialism, as they see it, by taking away from the public sector and giving to the private sector. Apparently by increasing private ownership, we increase democracy in our community. That is a controversial proposition which divides the parties.

The heart of the philosophy is wider share ownership and the operation of the market. Ministers say that decisions are better left to the greater decision-making market than by Government. What has happened in the last couple of days in that great market is hardly the best advertisement for the way that our finance is run or for providing investment to meet the strategic necessities in our publicly owned industries. I watched with amazement how panic spread via television monitors from Wall street to London and Tokyo.

What is meant by the market? Is it Tokyo, Wall street or the City? With the advent of technology, panic has spread faster round the world. The removal of the obstacles to the operation of the free world market in shares and money has led to mass panic on an unprecedented scale.

We heard that technology would make it easier. The arch priests of our economy who operate the market—those who have Porsches, the million pound earners who talk about a champagne index—were in utter panic and fear. What happened? They were advised not to use the technology. They refused to answer the telephones to complete a market. In Wall street they were told to pull out the plugs because computers were automatically trading and disgorging shares on to the market. All of a sudden these present-day Luddites in technology have run away from the market.

What has brought stability to the market? It is certainly not the intervention by our Chancellor who was wheeled into the television studio to tell us to stay calm. I thought that the report in *The Guardian* in which the Chancellor was telling small investors to stay calm was countered by a report on the other side of the page that said:

"an accountant with the Treasury who asked not to be named came in to sell 1,000 TSB and 600 British Gas shares. 'I've no great faith in all this, really. I've no other shares, and I think I'm better off out of it'".

Two contrasting views from the Treasury.

What stabilised the market? The intervention by the Federal Bank to increase liquidity in the American system; the intervention by Government to protect the market from itself. The market totally failed to get itself out of the problem and thank God there was a Government prepared to say, "We must intervene because we do not want to see another 1929." That is the reality of the market and that is the market to which the Government want to introduce our public utilities. Apparently that is the way we are to abrogate our decision-making — to the force of the market and not to the rational decision-making that Governments must make in such strategic areas.

The Secretary of State for Energy has said that there are only one or two lines in the Bill relating to the privatisation of electricity. It is true it is an enabling Bill to begin presumably to package up the electricity industry for whatever design the Secretary of State has in mind. It is clear that the Secretary of State does not know what he has in mind, as he has said that. It is clear that the Secretary of State wants the money, but he does not know how to get it. The only statement that we have from the Secretary of State is that he wants to privatise the electricity industry. However, he does not know how to do it. If one watches him on television all he talks about is "Lord Marshall and I. Lord Marshall and I." We shall wait to see what solution comes out of "Lord Marshall and I".

It is clear that there are difficulties in the timetable and that is why the clause is in the Bill — to enable the Government to get the package ready. For the legislation and the prospectus to be ready for the next parliamentary Session means that it will be 1990 before we have the Bill. Therefore, one can only assume that the electorate may have a chance to decide on what decisions are made by the Secretary of State because 1990 will be too early to launch that privatisation on the market. Perhaps the experience of the past two days and the BP experience will mean that no one will want to go on the market for a year or two to offer a privatisation sale of this scale.

The Select Committee on Energy asked the Secretary of State to consider producing a White Paper before he privatises any other public utility within the energy industry. In his reply to the Select Committee the Secretary of State said:

"The Government will bear in mind the Committee's recommendation that it should publish a White or Green Paper in advance of any further proposals for the energy utility privatisation."

Does the Secretary of State intend to observe that statement given to the Select Committee? Before the privatisation of electricity, will the Government produce a White Paper so we can understand the Government's thinking—presumably before the Bill comes before the

[Mr. Prescott]

House? When the junior Minister comes to reply perhaps the Secretary of State will advise him to give the House some understanding on that.

In the meantime, for this debate we must rely on television and press statements and the conference statements that have been made by the Secretary of State. Indeed, I watched him make his speech. Clearly it was rhetoric, but what else do we expect from the conference?

"Privatisation is about power to the people . . . the customer will be the top priority . . . I am currently examining radical new ideas"—

such as—

"rebates and vouchers for customers . . . competition in electricity"

That speech got the Secretary of State a standing ovation, but Tory party conferences are not interested in policy. The delegates are told to stand up and are timed for how long they stand and the Secretary of State got his due—

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): They get up if she gets up.

Mr. Prescott: My hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) is correct. It all depends on whether the Prime Minister leads the standing ovation.

Mr. Parkinson: The Prime Minister was not on the platform for my speech.

Mr. Prescott: At this stage we will not go into why she made that decision. I believe that the Secretary of State may be chancing his arm a little there.

Unfortunately, for information we have to rely on television appearances. Indeed, I had a debate with the Secretary of State on "Question Time" and he appeared to get rather rattled. He did make some statements. For example, he has made it clear that he does not want to transfer a public monopoly to a private monopoly. Presumably the gas experience has seared him for ever. He wants no more of the previous privatisation measure. Even by his own comments the Secretary of State has not appeared favourable to a private monopoly in gas. He said that workers will have shares. There must be a tremendous discount. No doubt they will buy them, sell them and make their killing, and good luck to them.

The most emphatic decision so far is that there will not be two switches on the wall. We are all glad to hear that. However, for many people with one switch on the wall the price is too high for the heat that they have now. Some 20 per cent. more old people die of hypothermia in winter than in summer, but in the Scandinavian countries there is no difference between winter and summer for the deaths of old people. The reason is the charges that are made for heat. Whether the industry has been nationalised or private, the charges have been too high, particularly in the past few years.

The Secretary of State made it clear that he would hate a monopoly because a monopoly exploits its position. It is more inefficient, takes more profit and exploits by charging higher prices. That is the theory of a monopoly, and I understand the point that is made.

The present electricity supply industry is not free from criticism. No industry, public or private, is free from criticism. I have several criticisms of the electricity supply industry. One is the way in which it has dealt with environmental issues such as acid rain and nuclear waste. The Secretary of State may know that I swam down the Thames to make my protest against the dumping of nuclear waste. I felt strongly about that. There are problems with technology, diversity and the power plants. Little attention is paid to power and heat facilities. Those are all areas of legitimate criticism. The concentration of power in one huge corporation is a questionable aspect.

One criticism of the industry is that it buys British—it buys British coal and British plant. Why should that be a criticism? The industry is seeking to maintain its manufacturing base, which is an important strategic commitment.

The industry is also not consumer-sensitive. Many performance indicators need to be improved, without a shadow of doubt. Anyone considering that knows it to be a fair criticism. With regard to organisation, I am a great decentraliser. I have been writing for four or five years about devolution and the regions. That is not new. I have held that view for a long time.

The Plowden commission, set up by the Labour Government, made it clear that it did not like the idea of one body being in charge of generation and transmission, which the Labour Government accepted. The commission said that it was too powerful and wanted to increase the power of the distribution boards. Thus there were countervailing powers for the bulk supply tariff. The commission even saw the possibility of a regionalised aspect of development. Those legitimate areas of concern were accepted by the Labour Government. There have been criticisms of present structures of public sector industries, as of the private sector. No industry is free of such criticism. Anybody looking at the private or public sector industries that provide electricity in Europe and America can see that criticisms are made irrespective of whether they are private or public. It is not ownership that transforms an industry from a lousy industry to a better industry. The evidence is clear for us to see if we are fair about it.

Let us look at the performance of the public sector industry. I call in aid a statement made in "Privatising Electricity", produced by the Electricity Consumers Council, which is an impartial body. It is critical in many ways. It says that in 1986-87 the electricity supply industry made profits that were 22 per cent. higher than in the previous year and

"is well on its way to meeting its Financial Target of 2·75 per cent. on net assets . . . Sales of electricity were also at record levels . . . prices were 0·2 per cent. lower on average than in 1985-86. Assessed on this basis, the Industry's performance has been impressive."

By the criteria set by the House, the industry's performance has been impressive.

Let us look beyond what the consumers council has said. The Monopolies and Mergers Commission looked at the electricity supply industry in 1981. It found that most areas were not against the public interest, but one which was was the inefficient assessment of the nuclear industry and the construction of power plant. That was its legitimate criticism. There are unique circumstances involved in investment in construction. Anybody watching the two television programmes examining the reason why Governments of all persuasions entered the area of nuclear energy will understand that it was primarily because we needed to meet the strategic requirement for plutonium for

military purposes, but all our military reasons were based in America. It is perfectly clear why we entered the massive nuclear programme.

The second stage of AGR development has been criticised for the high cost put on the industry. Indeed, in "Question Time" the Secretary of State said — I shall quote so that I get it right:

"At this moment the CEGB has about £8-9 billion of your money invested in nuclear power stations of a kind which Mr. Benn imposed on the industry and which don't work."

He implied that the AGR programme was imposed by a Labour Government against the will of the industry. I have looked up the facts. When my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) made a statement on thermal reactor policy he said:

"The Government agree with the electricity supply boards that two early nuclear orders are needed and that these must be advanced gas-cooled reactors... This view is also supported by the electricity supply industry".

I wondered about the view of the official Opposition. The right hon. Member for Bridgwater (Mr. King) replied on behalf of the Opposition and he said:

"Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that we welcome this long delayed but extremely important statement? Is he further aware that we believe that it was right not to abandon the AGR at this stage of its development, and we hope that will prove to be successful?" — [*Official Report*, 25 January 1978; Vol 952, c.1392-93.]

If there is a difference of opinion about the AGR programme now, there was certainly no difference when the decision was made by a Labour Government. It was welcomed by the Opposition and was endorsed and supported by the industry. Therefore, I hope that the Secretary of State will not repeat those remarks. They are totally wrong. Does the right hon. Gentleman wish to withdraw his remarks?

Mr. Parkinson: I have discussed this matter with many people in the industry already. The AGR does not have a friend. The AGRs are working extremely badly. The feeling is that the industry would never have bought them if the politicians had not insisted that it did. That was the point I was making and it is still true.

Mr. Prescott: The industry made it clear — the records can be checked—that it supported the statement as did the Opposition.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): In its evidence to the Layfield inquiry the South of Scotland Electricity Board set out a full, well argued and technical case for the AGR.

Mr. Prescott: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. In fact, the AGR programme in Scotland is more successful than those in the English regions. There are reasons for that, but the point is well made.

There is a reason for the smokescreen erected by the Secretary of State. He is beginning to argue that one has to put up the price of electricity before it is privatised in order to pay for the massive investment programme of £42 billion to which he refers. I assume that he is referring to the actual cost of £20 billion but is suggesting what the final cost may be. He is preparing to put up the prices of the industry while it is still nationalised to fatten it up for privatisation.

The Government's non-statutory financial regulatory framework was mentioned earlier. If one looks at the framework of the industry, one finds that the external financing limits and monetary targets have contributed to a massive tax on the industry. Indeed, the EFLs and the accelerated capital debt policy have meant that the Government have been taking about £4 billion off the industry. All of that is a charge on the electricity consumer, precisely as the £5½ billion gas levy was. Both those industries have suffered an almost £10 billion charge, equivalent to a 9 per cent. increase in price charges. The point is well made by the consumer board, which states:

"the ESI has made net repayments to the Treasury over this period of almost £2 billion."

The Government have imposed those charges has. The Treasury has exploited its monopoly position by passing on charges to those who pay for electricity. It comes a bit rich for a Government to criticise monopoly exploitation when the Treasury has constantly exploited that monopoly power and by imposing these extra charges has increased charges for consumers more than necessary.

The Government are now proposing that the return rate of 2·5 per cent. on assets be increased to 5, 6 or 7 per cent. to increase profits. That is why there will be an increase in charges. The problems for the coal industry, through the importing of coal, will lead to massive closures of pits. The nuclear industry, if passed to the private sector, will not be a great deal of comfort. It has a massive cost programme, a massive decommissioning programme, and is a massive cost to the environment. All those circumstances make electricity a difficult industry, and it would not be in the national interest to privatise it.

The Government's case is that if it privatises the industry prices to the consumer will come down and there will be better investment. I wish to quote the example of the private electricity supply in America. In 1983, the United States Department of Energy said:

"Public confidence in the electricity industry and the regulatory system has deteriorated over the past 10 years as electricity prices have gone up. There is a growing perception that utility companies are not as well managed as they could be nor as regulated as they should be."

That industry is starved of investment and unless major moves are made to invest in the industry, the US Department of Energy estimates that annual electricity bills

"could be as much as $18 billion—roughly 12 per cent.—higher".

Our case is that privatisation of the electricity industry, as of the water industry, has nothing to do with benefit to the consumer or with improving competition or the national interest — it is solely about generating money for the Treasury and increasing the power of the private market. We reject the Government's philosophy and will oppose the Bill tonight.

9.37 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Michael Spicer): I wish to join other hon. Members in congratulating the hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe). As has been said, he made a powerful and, above all, concise speech, and I warmly and sincerely congratulate him on it.

I welcome the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) to his new responsibilities. I think that this is the first time that he has addressed the House in his new role. I understand that he did not want the job, but I hope that he comes to like it after a while. In fact, this evening seems to have become worse and worse for the hon. Gentleman. Not only does he not get the job that he wants, but worse is to follow—much to his horror, he gets me to oppose him on his debut night. That is not part

[Mr. Michael Spicer]

of some terrible plot against him—it is just that, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said, for the electricity industry this Bill is a mini paving measure to which it is highly appropriate that a mini Minister should respond.

The question why the hon. Gentleman was not able to get together with Lord Marshall is not one for the Government. There is no question of my right hon. Friend intervening one way or another in such a matter. However, the hon. Gentleman was offered a full factual briefing by the CEGB—as, in our view, he should have been. We fully concede that it was absolutely right for the hon. Gentleman to raise in this debate the question of electricity. Indeed, I am rather relieved that he did so because I wish also to say something about electricity matters.

This has been a wide-ranging, not to say philosophical, debate. I wish to respond directly to what was said by several hon. Members, especially the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley), about the effect on privatisation of the water and electricity industries of the storms that hit southern and eastern Britain and the subsequent flooding this week. As hon. Members know, the wind force on Friday was unique; there has never been anything like it. Unlike several hon. Members, especially the hon. Member for Caernarfon, I shall draw no inference from this freak and, I hope, one-time event about the structure of the electricity or water industries. There would undoubtedly have been a major problem under any system, and I hope that under any system individual employees of the industry would respond as magnificently as so many of them have done in the past few days. On my visits to the worst-hit areas, I have met employees, especially of the area boards —some of them quite junior—who had not been home for 40 hours. The whole House will wish to acknowledge and applaud their dedication and sense of service.

Understandably, the debate has touched upon the generalities of the Government's privatisation programme. It is understandable because privatising those two industries will give a major thrust forward to that programme, although the Bill is only a modest part of the process. The hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham), my hon. Friend the Member for Devizes (Mr. Morrison) and others asked whether the act of privatisation is itself sufficient to guarantee that businesses which were previously state owned will respond to the needs of the customer and the market place. I have no hesitation in answering unequivocally no. Where there is not already substantial competition in the market, the act of privatisation is itself insufficient to guarantee customer power. Having said that, I do not accept the validity of several criticisms which have been levelled by Opposition Members against previous acts of privatisation.

Since the privatisation of British Telecom, telephone charges to the average consumer have fallen by nearly 9 per cent. in real terms. Waiting lists for telephones have been almost eliminated and the industry is putting right the distorted investment decisions taken over many years while it was in the public sector. British Telecom is undertaking £2 billion of annual capital expenditure—over one third more than before privatisation. What is more, recently the company announced that it plans to hold charges for basic telephone services at current levels for another year. Full competition has been brought into the telephone retail market.

Mr. David Blunkett (Sheffield, Brightside): The Minister believes that privatisation had a dramatic effect on British Telecom. Does he believe that that will be mirrored in the water industry by a massive investment in providing clean and wholesome water and the disposal of effluent rather than a massive investment in metering which will create not the shabbiest but the smelliest nation in Europe, no doubt followed by the suggestion that if we cannot get water, we should ask people, Marie-Antoinette style, to bathe in champagne?

Mr. Spicer: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will remember that, under the Labour Administration, investment in water decreased by 30 per cent., whereas under this Government it has increased by 35 per cent. We have a pretty good record and we need not take lessons on investment from the Opposition. It is likely that in a privatised market the effects on investment would, at the very least, be not as distorted as if the industry was left in the public sector.

Full competition has been brought into the telephone retail market, and British Telecom's competitor Mercury is growing into a large and successful company, with more than 3,500 business customers and with plans to extend trials to residential users.

Secondly, the domestic prices of British Gas, which has often been mentioned in the debate, are now set by reference to purchase costs and projected efficiency gains. The company was able to make substantial reductions in domestic tariffs in July, leaving United Kingdom domestic prices the lowest among our major European competitors. So we do not need to be too concerned about the effect of privatising those two industries.

The Bill is in part a paving measure to ensure that there can be no question of the water and electricity supply industries being without adequate powers to take the necessary steps to prepare for privatisation. In the case of the water authorities, this also takes into account the establishment of the National Rivers Authority. We believe, for instance, that the industries must be able to take certain advice as to how best to contribute constructively to the detailed decisions about their future.

The Bill covers the appointment by the water and electricity industries of certain advisers and the commitment of certain necessary expenditure. The industries will be empowered under clause 1 to facilitate the implementation of Government proposals for the transfer of property and functions to other bodies, including proposals for privatisation. The industries will also be able to facilitate the implementation of any related proposals of the Secretary of State or, in the case of related proposals, to secure their modification.

The rights that the industries will be given under the Bill will therefore be restricted, and clause 1 does not, for instance, give the industries the right to modify our main privatisation proposals. Naturally, there may be secondary matters that are related to our main proposals for which the industries may wish to propose modifications. Subsection (1)*(b)* deals with these secondary matters. They might, for example, include the detailed allocation of assets, or financial or other management arrangements following a transfer of functions.

The hon. Member for Copeland argued that it is inappropriate to give the two industries these powers before the Government's main proposals for legislation for the industries are brought before the House. I say to him and to other hon. Gentlemen who share his opinion that the Government's intention to privatise is clear and we have a mandate from the electorate to carry it through. It is only prudent to clarify the industries' powers so that they are free to play their full part in discussions about their future.

Several hon. Members have, understandably, asked for more information about the proposed future structures of the two industries. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has outlined the nature of his plans for the water industry. I shall pick up one or two points about water before turning to the question of electricity. First, privatisation of water is not a novel idea. Private sector water companies have been supplying water to much of our population for more than 100 years, and doing so very successfully. A quarter of the water supplied in England and Wales comes from the statutory water companies. Areas supplied include cities as large as Bristol and Newcastle. That is perhaps one answer to those who have argued that privatised companies would be a danger to health. To the best of my knowledge, the water company areas do not have noticeably higher rates of sickness or insanitary diseases — the very notion is absurd. The water supplied by the statutory water companies is regulated and controlled in exactly the same way as that supplied by the water authorities. Indeed, the regulation of the industry on drinking water standards will be further tightened and improved under our privatisation Bill.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) reminded us, water metering is not new. Indeed, it has been in Malvern, in my constituency, since 1871 and since 1 April 1982 the people of Malvern have been given the option of paying for water according to rateable value and fewer than 5 per cent. have chosen to do so.

Several hon. Members have expressed anxiety that compulsory metering will discourage essential water use and lead to a collapse of public health standards. Such fears are, of course, completely unfounded. There is no evidence in my constituency to suggest that metering has discouraged essential use over the past 100 years. What is evident in Malvern is that people have a greater awareness of the value of water.

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): Does the Minister accept that as 90 per cent. of the costs of providing a water supply are the fixed capital costs, which exist regardless of the amount of water used, the introduction of compulsory metering would be the greatest waste of capital expenditure since the pyramids?

Mr. Spicer: The purpose of the Bill is to establish the right of water authorities to have trials and to see whether the hon. Gentleman is right or wrong. Until we have had those trials, it will be impossible to answer the hon. Gentleman.

The hon. Member for Caernarfon asked about the situation in Wales. I cannot give him the assurance that he sought. We do not propose to have a separate authority for Wales, but the Welsh water authority will be consulted about our proposals. There will be a period of deep consultation and the Welsh authority will be consulted very closely on the matter and on the structure for Wales.

The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East rightly mentioned the electricity industry. I am not in a position tonight to give our plans for the future structure of the electricity supply industry, but I can give the House information about some of the principles and considerations that we are applying to the decisions that we are in the process of taking.

We shall keep in mind the technical and legal complexity of an industry which supplies a potentially dangerous product which, to all intents and purposes, is impossible to store and whose current operation is governed by 22 Acts of Parliament, going back to the Electric Lighting Act 1882.

Security of supply will always be at the forefront of our minds and there is absolutely no question of breaking up the national transmission grid.

Many arguments are made in support of the present structure, ranging from the merit ordering of generating plant to matters related to the stability of the system. I assure the House that the Government are exploring those questions with the services of specialist advisers of the highest competence. As part of that process, I spent a good deal of the summer studying the workings of the electricity supply industries in other European countries and in the United States.

In my view, there is no single overseas model on which we can properly base the United Kingdom industry, but it has been extremely useful to see how other countries run their electricity supply industries. For example, I have seen power pools whereby the operations of the network are optimised by a central organisation that has a separate identity from a number of power companies supplying the system, and I have also seen systems that optimise through a set of long-term and short-term contracts.

Within the technical constraints, we are assessing ways of introducing the maximum amount of competition into the workings of the electricity supply industry. I know that a number of my hon. Friends are interested in that matter. There will undoubtedly be elements of the industry that are not easily subjected to competitive pressures, especially at the distribution end of the business, although even here there is scope for competition by emulation.

Where competition is limited there will undoubtedly need to be tight regulation to protect consumers' interests on price and service, but my travels, especially in the United States, alerted me to the severely restrictive nature and the costly bureaucracy that can result from heavy emphasis on regulation. There are clear advantages to be gained from having competition and commensurately less economic regulation. This is a matter to which we are giving close attention, especially with respect to electricity generation which, as many hon Members have said, represents 80 per cent. of the costs of the industry and which is currently effectively the monopoly of the Central Electricity Generating Board.

It is sometimes said that the size and monopolistic position of the CEGB is necessary to manage the massive and complex assets under its control and, above all, to generate the enormous investments which lie ahead as the industry embarks on a major modernisation programme.

We are, of course, exploring these arguments. There are certainly economies of scale in electricity generation. Equally, I have seen power companies in the Federal

[Mr. Spicer]

Republic of Germany and in the United States which are much smaller than our CEGB and which manage highly complex operations, including nuclear power stations, very adequately.

In terms of new investment, the Government certainly believe that the industry's rate of return will need to improve above that of its historic levels. The industry should be earning a proper return on its capital, particularly as it gears up for a heavy investment programme.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: Does the Minister acknowledge, as I acknowledge, that we need effective regulation and competition? Has he not confessed to the House that he does not know how to privatise electricity but is determined to go ahead and do it anyway? Would it not be wiser for him to keep an open mind until he has found out how to do it?

Mr. Spicer: If the hon Gentleman is saying that we need different regulatory systems for different industries, that is an easy point to concede. I do not concede that we do not have firm ideas, although we have not yet announced them. *[Interruption.]* Are the hon Gentlemen who are giggling on the Opposition Front Bench trying to suggest that the Government should not be given time to make their decisions on a matter as complex as this without necessarily having to tell the Opposition as we go along? We shall be coming up with our decisions in the very near future. That answers the question about consultation.

At present the industry is earning a rate of return of around 2·45 per cent. on assets. It can improve on this either by reducing costs or by increasing its prices, or by a bit of both. Further pressure on costs should come first. The entry of the industry into the private sector will give a great opportunity for competitive pressures on costs to reflect themselves in lower price increases than those that would result if the industry were to continue to receive the protection of the public sector.

Three specific aspects have been raised in this debate. The first was the question of safety. The British electricity supply industry has a safety record second to none. There can be absolutely no question of privatisation resulting in a lowering of safety standards. This has certainly not happened in other privatised industries, and the question of ownership does not affect the industry's obligation to meet legal safety standards which will continue to be monitored by the public authorities.

Secondly, there is the question of the future of coal. There is no doubt that for the foreseeable future coal is likely to be the predominant fuel used in the electricity generation industry in this country. Privatisation of the electricity industry will undoubtedly further underline the need for British Coal to demonstrate that it can compete in terms of price and reliability.

I am very optimistic about the coal industry's ability to rise to this challenge. I base this confidence on the remarkable increase in productivity that the industry has achieved in recent years. Productivity in British Coal has risen by over 50 per cent. since the strike of 1984 and that rate of productivity increase is continuing.

Thirdly, the future of nuclear power has been raised. The Government firmly believe in the future of the nuclear industry as a major contributor to the baseload demand for electricity. It is our aim to ensure that United Kingdom customers continue to have the opportunity to benefit from this.

There is no doubt in our minds that the changes that we propose for the two industries we are considering tonight will be to the benefit of the consumer and the nation. They will result in greater efficiency, better use of resources and the greater motivation of those who work in the industries. Nor is there much doubt that, when the substantive Bill is introduced, we will have to discuss the matter at great length. However, for the present, this is a very minor, modest proposal. I ask the House to give the Bill a Second Reading.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 24, Noes 344.

Division No. 29] **[10.00pm**

AYES

Alton, David
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Beith, A. J.
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fearn, Ronald
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Livsey, Richard
Maclennan, Robert
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Salmond, Alex
Steel, Rt Hon David
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wigley, Dafydd

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. James Wallace and
Mr. John Cartwright.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James

Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

Main Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 60 (Amendment on Second or Third Reading):—

The House divided: Ayes 342, Noes 235.

Division No. 30] **[10.17 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin

Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David

NOES

Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack

Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, James
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Douglas
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Mrs Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, John
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Ms Joan
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Ray Powell.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Bill read a Second time, and committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 61 (Committal of Bills).

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Scottish Development Agency Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

Public Utility Transfers and Water Charges Bill [Money]

Queen's Recommendation having been signified—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Public Utility Transfers and Water Charges Bill, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of money provided by Parliament of any administrative expenses incurred by the Secretary of State in consequence of that Act.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

10.31 pm

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): I am aware that any money resolution is rather limited in its extent. Although the Bill is largely concerned with matters relating to England and Wales—the sections of the Bill on water apply entirely to England and Wales; Scottish water is controlled by the local authorities — it also covers the South of Scotland Electricity Board and the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board. However, we had no Scottish input in the Second Reading debate.

We have a different system of electricity supply in Scotland. Recently I was at a reception given by the CEGB and it had a big graph on the wall together with a flow chart showing electricity flowing from its system into Scotland. I had to point out that that was totally wrong and that the flow should be the other way round — England gets a lot of electricity from the South of Scotland Electricity Board.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I cannot hear my hon. Friend properly because of the gaggle of English Tory twits at the end of the Chamber. Would you please instruct them either to get out or to sit down?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): I hope that right hon. and hon. Members who are not listening to the debate will carry on their conversations outside the Chamber.

Mr. Maxton: Of course, I hope that the hon. Members who are speaking at the end of the Chamber will listen to the debate rather than leave. They might learn something for a change.

There is a Scottish element to the Bill and it is right that we should have a debate, however limited it might be, on the Scottish aspect. Yet again we are seeing Scottish business, related to Scotland under the powers of the Secretary of State for Scotland, included in an English Bill. That limits the opportunity for hon. Members representing Scotland to debate the Bill and that we all deplore.

We in Scotland also deplore the fact that the SSEB and the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board are included in the Government's privatisation schemes because — I say it again, and I shall keep saying it—the Government have no mandate in Scotland to carry out such legislation for Scotland. The Scottish people firmly rejected the philosophy of the Conservative party. It lost 11 seats in Scotland and is down to a rump of 10. A mishmash of Ministers is left as a result of the election, and the fact is that they do not have the backing of the Scottish people for what they propose to carry out.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): Where is the Secretary of State for Scotland?

Mr. Maxton: He is not here. He should be here to answer some of the questions that I wish to put to him.

The Bill is enabling legislation. It gives the Secretary of State and the electricity boards the power to carry out certain functions prior to privatisation. If that is so, perhaps the Minister can tell me why the Secretary of State has already appointed as legal advisers to the SSEB McGrigor Donald (Solicitors) of Glasgow, although I am delighted to see a constituent of mine being given that task. I should like to know why the SSEB has already appointed merchant bankers Noble Grossart to advise it on privatisation. Under what powers are the SSEB and the Secretary of State undertaking this expenditure? As I read the Bill, they have no power to undertake such expenditure until the Bill becomes law. On what authority has the SSEB started down that road at this time?

It appears that the Secretary of State for the Environment will reply. I should prefer it if it were the Minister of State, Scottish Office, because the two electricity boards are his responsibility, not that of any other Minister. It would be right for him to reply to the debate.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): Does my hon. Friend share my concern that while we are having a debate of such importance to Scotland the so-called Secretary of State for Scotland is in Japan and is not here to reply to the grave allegations that my hon. Friend is making about the economy and the supply of electricity to Scotland?

Mr. Maxton: I agree. I think that all my hon. Friends will accept my point that the reply to my speech must be made by the Minister of State, Scottish Office, not by the Secretary of State for the Environment, whose Department has nothing to do with the electricity supply industry. He is here only to deal with the parts of the Bill on water. I hope that the Minister of State is taking notes and will reply to the debate.

Other expenditure may be undertaken by the Secretary of State and the SSEB before privatisation. One assumes that there will be some advertising early on. Perhaps the Secretary of State himself will undertake some of the advertising. Millions might be spent on a campaign to sell off the SSEB and the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board. Millions of pounds have been spent on the BP and British Gas advertising campaigns—although I suppose that it will be not Sid but Jock they are looking for. Such a campaign will be mounted again at enormous expense to the SSEB and the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board. I am sure that most Scottish people would prefer the money to be spent on reducing electricity prices in Scotland. One also assumes that some money will be spent to underwrite the issue of South of Scotland Electricity Board stock. I assume that it will cost much more to underwrite the privatisation measures now than it did before the recent collapse of the stock market. Many stockbrokers will find that they get burnt fingers or perhaps find themselves facing a major disaster as a result of the BP issue. They will demand much higher prices for the SSEB flotation than they did for the BP flotation about which they thought they were sitting pretty and there would be no problem.

I know that some of my hon. Friends want to take part in this short debate, so I shall bring my remarks to an end.

However little money is to be spent by the Secretary of State and whatever money will be spent on the SSEB and the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board, the Scottish people have said that they would prefer that money to be spent on ensuring that industry comes to Scotland to create jobs and on ensuring that those who are old and weak and who need electricity during the winter for appliances to keep themselves warm get that electricity at a price they can afford. We should remember that the SSEB and the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board may become one body under privatisation. So much for competition.

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): Does my hon. Friend agree that the concern about the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board is that it is unique in having a special social remit written into the legislation which is incapable of protection under privatisation? Does he agree that the whole concept, as advanced by Tom Johnson in more civilised times, is likely to be thrown away in this lunatic idea of privatising a body such as the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board and the social remit that goes with it?

Mr. Maxton: I agree entirely with my hon. Friend. In fact, the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board has a remit to supply electricity to remote areas such as the Highlands and islands of Scotland at a disproportionate cost for each individual user if they had to pay the full cost. One could envisage a situation after privatisation, particularly if there is one large electricity board run from the central belt of Scotland by people unaware of the social problems, where the special social remit would be ignored. I know that when the electricity supply in the south of England is hit by a major storm there is an outcry and people down here, quite rightly, feel deprived when they are without electricity. However, in the Highlands and islands a major storm is not unusual and the electricity supply is often threatened. Who will meet the enormous ongoing cost of ensuring that the supply in the north of Scotland is maintained? Will it be the privatised board, whose major concern will be profit, or will the state still have to pick up that cost without any return through the electricity supply industry?

The people of Scotland would prefer every penny that is spent on the privatisation of the electricity supply industry in Scotland to be spent on ensuring that they get electricity at a price they can afford and that industry gets electricity at a price that ensures it is competitive with the rest of the world. That is what the Scottish people want. That is what they voted for in the general election on 11 June. In my view, the Government should withdraw all the proposals in the Bill relating to Scotland and leave the South of Scotland Electricity Board and the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board alone.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

10.45 pm

The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Nicholas Ridley): I do not want to deny hon. Members their fun——

Mr. Foulkes: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it in order for the Minister to reply to the debate before it is concluded? There are hon. Members on the Conservative Benches — kilted and otherwise — and on the Opposition Benches who wish to contribute. It does not seem appropriate for the Minister, however garrulous and arrogant he may be, to reply before he has heard the debate. Surely it would be more appropriate for you to call hon. Members from the Back Benches, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so that the Minister can give a more comprehensive, if inarticulate, reply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Minister has risen and I have called him.

Mr. Ridley: I simply wished to inform the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) that the money resolution, which I quote, authorises

"the payment of money provided by Parliament of any administrative expenses incurred by the Secretary of State in consequence of that Act."

In this case, the Act means this Bill. The only administrative expenses incurred under the Bill are mine, not the Secretaries of State for Scotland or Energy. I incur administrative expenses in the sense that the metering trials could cost my Department and the Welsh Office £22,000 in 1988-89 and perhaps £15,000 each year for the duration of the trials. That is about £2,000 per scheme. As the hon. Gentleman knows, these trials are all to be held in England. We might also need to employ consultancy services that could cost about £10,000 a year for five years.

Those are the sums of money that Parliament is being asked to approve as a consequence of this Bill. Any money that might be spent by the water authorities or the electricity boards can be spent under powers in other statutes. Therefore, the passage of the Bill in no way affects what the Scottish, Welsh or English water or electricity authorities might spend. It is simply a question of asking the House to authorise me and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales to pay some small administrative expenses — and "administrative" is the word in the resolution before the House — for the metering trials.

Although the hon. Gentleman made a fine speech, which I much admired — and I would not wish to intervene in Scottish politics — I have to say that I suspect that these issues do not arise on the money resolution, and I ask the House to pass it without becoming too excited by the late-night appearance of the Scots, which is becoming rather a plague for those of us from England.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): The right hon. Gentleman referred to administrative expenses, but is not the Department of Health and Social Security involved, given the important relationship between that Department and the health boards on, for example, direct payments?

Mr. Ridley: No. Each Bill presented to Parliament that might give rise to new spending has in its money resolution the suggested authorisation for Ministers to spend on items on which they have not previously been given authority by Parliament to spend. In this case, neither my Department nor the Welsh Office has authority to spend money on consultancies and the various small administrative expenses for the water metering trials. That is what the money resolution seeks to grant to us. In no way does it affect other Departments, let alone the Scottish Office, the electricity boards, the water authorities or anyone else.

Mr. Maxton *rose*——

Mr. Ridley: I have finished my speech. I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman, but I make it clear that I am giving way within a speech which has already come to an end.

Mr. Maxton: If the right hon. Gentleman thinks that the late-night appearance of Scots only four months after the general election is a plague, I have to tell him that he ain't seen nothing yet.

If the right hon. Gentleman looks closely at the money resolution, he may see some examples of where the Secretary of State for Scotland will incur administrative expenditure. For instance, I cannot see how two separate boards established by separate legislation could be merged into one board unless the Secretary of State for Scotland carried out a function which will be his rather than the function of either board. Therefore, he will incur administrative costs, not someone else.

Mr. Ridley: That is incorrect. The only point of the Bill in relation to electricity is to give the electricity boards in England and Scotland the legal power to spend money in preparation for privatisation. They do not require financial resolutions to do that. They need the vires. The Secretary of State for Scotland will not incur expenditure because the Scottish electricity boards may spend a little money on preparing for their privatisation. In no sense does the money resolution apply to the Secretary of State for Scotland — nor does it apply to the Secretary of State for Energy — in relation to expenditure by those Departments or electricity boards.

I repeat to the hon. Gentleman that the money resolution, if the House is wise enough to approve it, will give the Welsh Office and my Department the power to contribute to the administrative costs of the metering authorities.

10.52 pm

Mr. John Home-Robertson (East Lothian): The House will have enjoyed that Back-Bench contribution from the Secretary of State for the Environment, and we look forward to the definitive reply on behalf of the Government from the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker). I presume that he is speaking on behalf of the Government on Scottish affairs. When replying to the debate, perhaps he will explain the impact of clause 1 on Scotland. Subsection (7) states that

"'electricity board' means the Central Electricity Generating Board, an Area Board, within the meaning of the Electricity Act 1947, the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board or the South of Scotland Electricity Board."

But the only reference to "electricity board" in the remainder of clause 1 is in subsection (1), which refers to "an electricity board in England and Wales."

How an electricity board in England and Wales can include either the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board or the South of Scotland Electricity Board is not entirely clear to the Opposition. We look forward to an explanation from the hon. Member for Tayside, North.

The money resolution states:

"That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Public Utility transfers and Water Charges Bill, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of money provided by Parliament of any administrative expenses incurred by the Secretary of State in consequence of that Act."

My hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) muttered earlier that expenses are already being incurred by electricity authorities in Scotland, preparing for privatisation, whether the Secretary of State acknowledges it or not. We have seen many advertisements hyping the corporate image of the SSEB, presumably to make it attractive to prospective investors. As my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) said, most electricity consumers in Scotland would far rather the SSEB used its scarce resources to minimise the cost of electricity to its consumers than preparing to do the Government's dirty work in an area where the Government have no democratic mandate to carry out policies of privatisation or anything else.

I may say in passing that we have a nuclear power station at Torness in my constituency — my hon. Friend the Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) would make the same point in relation to the Hunterston power station — and there is a great deal of alarm at the prospect of privatisating nuclear installations. I have yet to hear that any private investors are falling over each other to take on the financial responsibility and commitment that will be involved not only in the operation of nuclear power stations but in the long-term commitment to decommissioning nuclear installations, however long a period that may involve.

A whole stack of issues is related to the general principle of the Bill, but I do not want to dwell on them at this stage because we are supposed to be talking about the money resolution. There are Scottish aspects of the resolution that should be answered by the Government. The Secretary of State has characteristically refused to do that. Money will be spent on administrative expenses, if not on other aspects of the legislation. That is not appropriate and there is no mandate for it. Why on earth are the Government going ahead with it? We look forward to hearing a reply on behalf of the Government from the hon. Member for Tayside, North.

10.56 pm

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): The hon. Members for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) and for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) alluded to the North of Scotland hydro-electric board. Neither of those two hon. Gentlemen represents constituencies where that board operates. They should not say that that applies in my case. The hydro-electric board operates in parts of my constituency.

Mr. Wilson: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Walker: I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman in a moment.

Because of what I have said, I can stand here this evening and say that I have had the endorsement of the voters of Tayside, North. I still enjoy the largest percentage of the vote of any Conservative Member in Scotland. Because of that and because the North of Scotland hydro-electric board is such an important employer and so vital to my constituency, I say to my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Front Bench that I welcome the contents of the money resolution, which will ensure the administrative expenses that will be incurred, and make it possible eventually to privatise the board.

Mr. Wilson: Given the way in which the hon. Gentleman is dressed, I thought he was going to give us a rendition of the hiking song. If so, and if he goes through the litany of the Scottish islands, he might realise that Arran is in my constituency, and within the remit of the North of Scotland hydro-electric board.

Mr. Walker: As the hon. Gentleman is new to the House, he does not realise that interventions are not speeches. I alluded to the speeches made by the two Opposition Members that I have mentioned. If the hon. Gentleman waits a little longer, he will realise that we have a format for dealing with these matters, and he will then realise what I said.

10.58 pm

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): As my hon. Friend the Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) says, the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) was wrong about Arran, but he is wrong about many things, so why should he miss out Arran?

It is always a great pleasure and joy to follow the hon. Member for Tayside, North, representing as he does 10 per cent. of the Scottish Conservative party in Parliament, He has a great, wide and varied experience, and it is a great tragedy and loss to Scottish government that he is not part of the Scottish Office team. People who have been described variously as fanatics and incompetents — I would not use such terms—are there instead.

Mr. Bill Walker: I should like the hon. Gentleman to be aware that there are some hon. Members who, unlike him, are not prepared to do anything in order to climb the greasy pole—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Foulkes: Tempted as I am to ask the hon. Member to withdraw that disgraceful slur against the hon. Members for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) and for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton), I shall let it lie.

Reluctantly moving away from the hon. Member for Tayside, North, I must say that I am surprised, nay, bewildered—if Dame Edna Everage will excuse the use of that expression—at the reluctance of the Secretary of State for the Environment to debate the motion. The Government are noted for their concern about public expenditure, limiting expenditure, every kind of control, making sure that the PSBR is kept down, and so on. I thought that they would be eager to subject to parliamentary scrutiny any expenditure, however modest and carried out by whatever Department or Secretary of State for whatever purpose.

It is amazing that the Secretary of State for the Environment, who is one of the architects of the Government's policy on public spending control, is so reluctant to have democratic scrutiny. I thought that he would be encouraging us, welcoming our questioning. We want not only a detailed explanation from the Secretary of State but justification for the expenditure. Explanation to Parliament is essential, but justification for expenditure, beyond mere explanation, is even more important.

The Secretary of State said that the money resolution was relatively narrow, was specific to him as Secretary of State for the Environment and covered only water metering and some other matters. However, you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the eminent Clerks who advise you know that the resolution is not specific to the right hon. Gentleman. It is general; it says only "the Secretary of State". In this case, that could be the Secretary of State for Wales or the Secretary of State for Scotland.

The words of the Secretary of State for the Environment will be recorded in *Hansard* and we have some faith in what he says, but that will not be the law of the land or a resolution of the House. The resolution will mention only "the Secretary of State".

Despite the fact that the Secretary of State for the Environment has said that the resolution will cover only metering trials and consultancy, those matters are not mentioned. The right hon. Gentleman or other Ministers could get involved in other kinds of expenditure. To coin a phrase that I am sure has been heard before, we are giving the Secretaries of State blank cheques. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) has heard that phrase before. He may have coined it in one of his more eloquent moments. I am sure that the last thing the Secretary of State would want the House to endorse is the giving of blank cheques to any Secretary of State — even himself — given that from time to time he may not have the same kind of self control that he in his more wiser moments might wish to have.

Mr. Wilson: More wiser?

Mr. Foulkes: I am sorry. At this time of night my English tends to deviate from being excellent, as my hon. Friend the Member for Cunninghame, North rightly says.

Mr. Norman Buchan (Paisley, South): Even Shakespeare approved of the double intensive.

Mr. Foulkes: I am told that the double comparative is endorsed by the English bard.

Mr. Buchan: "the most unkindest cut . . ."

Mr. Foulkes: The Minister says that we are dealing only with metering trials. He gave us a very general, off the cuff, ad hoc indication of how much these metering trials would cost. In fairness to the House, we need more detail of what the trials involve. We were also told that there will be all sorts of consultancy. We know what happens with consultancies. Friends of the Tory party get roped in and are paid thousands of pounds to tell well-versed officials what they already know. By picking the brains of the officials in the Departments the consultants produce reports saying exactly what the officials could have told the Secretary of State at the beginning of the discussion. I hope that the Secretary of State will give us a clear indication of exactly what these costs involve. We need more detail.

I shall now turn briefly to the principle behind this expenditure, why we are being asked to spend this money, however small, for whatever purpose and spent by whatever Secretary of State. In a very lucid moment when talking about the free market concept of Government hon. Members one of my hon. Friends said:

"If Adam Smith were here today he would be turning in his grave."

Mr. Buchan: Who was it?

Mr. Foulkes: I will not say. There has been a perversion of the theories of Adam Smith by the Adam Smith Institute. The hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) is the architect not just of privatisation but of that dreadful excrescence that we have in Scotland and which will come to England—the poll tax. Councillor Douglas Mason is one of the gurus. The hon. Members for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) and for Darlington (Mr. Fallon), who are both here, and the director of the Adam Smith Institute, Dr. "Mad" Madsden Pirrie, are all from that hotbed of the radical Right and its perversion of all that Adam Smith

[Mr. Foulkes]

stood for — the twisting of Adam Smith's ideals — St. Andrew's university. I know that others such as my hon. Friends the Members for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) and for Kirkcaldy (Dr. Moonie) made better use of the education provided by that noble institution. It is notable that many people who espouse the Right-wing cause and are the architects of this privatisation came from St. Andrew's university. That place certainly has something to answer for.

Mr. Bill Walker: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am trying to follow the debate, but I cannot see how the hon. Gentleman's comments have anything to do with the money resolution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am also beginning to get uneasy. The hon. Gentleman is straying and must restrict his remarks to administrative expenses.

Mr. Foulkes: I totally accept, as I always do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, your comments, even though they were prompted by an hon. Member whose advice I respect rather less than I respect yours.

As I said earlier, the money resolution is drawn so wide that it is not what the Secretary of State says it is. It relates to any Secretary of State. The Bill does not simply refer to water privatisation. It could also refer to electricity privatisation. Therefore I submit that we can talk about the possible expenditure because any Secretary of State is to be given very wide powers to spend money on administrative purposes for any privatisation.

My hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) was right to talk about possible expenditure by the Secretary of State for Scotland in the preparation for the sell-off of the South of Scotland electricity board. My hon. Friend referred to the fact that the Secretary of State for Scotland is seeking professional advice. I hope that that professional advice is better than that sought by the Secretary of State for Energy in relation to the BP sell off.

My hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) mentioned that my hon. Friend the Member for Cunninghame, North may be worried about a possible private enterprise firm taking over a nuclear power station. Like my hon. Friend the Member for Cunninghame, North, I live close to the Hunterston power station. The thought that any private operator might take over the operation of Hunterston sends shivers down my spine. The thought of Townsend Thoresen running that power station really sends the shivers down the spine of anyone who has knowledge of the way in which these private enterprise companies operate by maximising profits and being unconcerned about safety. That is how they would act in such a situation.

Mr. Maxton: I hope that my hon. Friend will agree that one of the administrative costs that the Secretary of State must carry prior to the privatisation of the SSEB in particular, is an investigation into how the security of nuclear installations will be maintained and at whose cost once the nuclear power stations are in private hands.

Mr. Foulkes: I had not thought fully about that and I am grateful to my hon. Friend for elaborating on that point.

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): My hon. Friend has gone on at great length about his total opposition to this measure. Will he give us the guarantee that tonight he and his Front Bench colleagues will vote against it?

Mr. Foulkes: I am glad that the hon. Gentleman described me as his hon. Friend. I am very pleased to accept that accolade. Just as his party gives us advice about civil disobedience and does not want to lead anything that will follow, I will give his advice the same kind of weight that the people of Scotland gave it at the general election.

With regard to the question of the expenditure by the electricity boards in Scotland—or at least, expenditure by the Secretary of State on behalf of the electricity boards —we and even the hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh) in his more enlightened and wiser moments— which occur from time to time—would be interested to know whether expenditure could be authorised under the money resolution for public relations and publicity? Will it be possible for the Secretary of State for Scotland to employ public relations consultants under the terms of the resolution to try sell to the Scottish people, to "propagandise" to the Scottish people, any advantage, detail or other information about privatisation?

I am grateful for the opportunity to say a few words. I had intended to say a lot more, but clearly time is limited and other hon. Members may want to speak. If no one else appreciates it, I hope that the hon. Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Mr. Lang), who has the Galloway hydro-electric scheme in his constituency just over the border from my constituency, will appreciate the value of that scheme and the vital importance of balancing the generation of energy with maintaining the environment and its integrity without spoiling it. I hope that even he will understand that that sort of balance between energy generation and protection of the environment can be maintained only by a public utility that takes account of all concerned. It will not be maintained by a private enterprise that is dedicated to making a quick buck in the form of private profit. It is that to which we are addressing ourselves and not merely the few thousand pounds to which the Secretary of State would have us limited.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Public Utility Transfers and Water Charges Bill, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of money provided by Parliament of any administrative expenses incurred by the Secretary of State in consequence of that Act.

Scottish Development Agency Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

11.15 pm

The Minister of State, Scottish Office (Mr. Ian Lang): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

The purpose of the Bill, as effected by clause 1, is to increase the statutory financial limit for the Scottish Development Agency from the present level of £700 million to £1,200 million. The agency's financial limit was last raised by the Industry Act 1981, when it was expected that the new limit would remain in place until 1989. Because of a revision in the method of calculating what constitutes grant-in-aid, however, it is now estimated that the financial limit will be reached by the end of the present financial year. It is therefore necessary to raise the limit so that the agency's activities are uninterrupted.

Under section 13 of the Scottish Development Agency Act 1975 a number of items count towards the agency's financial limit. First, there are the agency's general external borrowings—mainly out of the National Loans Fund but covering other borrowing by subsidiary companies. Secondly, the limit includes agency guarantees and Treasury guarantees. Thirdly, there are overseas borrowings from, for example, the European Coal and Steel Community and the European Investment Bank. Finally, the largest item comprises payments from the Secretary of State, consisting of grant-in-aid less administrative expenses, plus public dividend capital issues.

As is customary when seeking parliamentary approval for increasing a financial limit, we propose to set a new limit which should suffice for around five years ahead. I therefore propose that the limit should be raised to £1,200 million.

Under the Scottish Development Agency Act 1975 the agency has the principal purposes of furthering the economic development of Scotland, improving its international competitiveness and improving its environment. These it accomplishes through a variety of functions, including the provision of finance, premises, business advice and counselling, sectoral advice, redevelopment of land and property and bringing derelict land back into use. A recent review of the agency carried out by the Scottish Office and the Treasury concluded that in its first 10 years it had made a substantial and positive impact on Scotland's economy and environment. Agency investments from 1981 to 1985 have created additional output of £275 million per annum and a total of about 10,000 jobs.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): Is the Minister aware that in my constituency the Scottish Development Agency spends less per head of population than in any other constituency on the Scottish mainland? Will he tell me and my constituents what the Bill will do to foster redevelopment and regeneration in the constituency?

Mr. Lang: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman is aware that the agency spends resources on the basis of its perception of the areas that most require its assistance and on what sections would most repay investment, for example, and not on a constituency assessment of need. The agency must have the freedom to make these assessments itself. The Bill will enable it to have the resources with which to pursue such a programme over the next five years.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): On the issue of the rehabilitation of derelict land, can I take it that the Inverclyde initiative budget will be increased as a result of the Bill's enactment? The Minister will be aware that we are facing massive unemployment problems in Inverclyde.

Mr. Lang: I agree with the hon. Gentleman that the problems of Inverclyde are very severe, and I am glad that the agency is bending so much effort towards finding a solution to them. The Bill will enable the agency, after the end of this year, to continue to receive grant-in-aid and other types of assistance in the form of public funds which will enable it to continue with that policy. I cannot give an assurance on the specific budget of the Inverclyde initiative; that is a matter for the agency itself. However, I am sure that the agency will consider any representation that the hon. Gentleman makes on the matter.

Various sector initiatives are judged to have played a substantial role in creating, for example, some 2,000 to 3,000 jobs in electronics and some 150 in health care. In its relatively short lifetime, Locate in Scotland, a partnership between the agency and my Department, has been instrumental in attracting over 300 projects involving investment of almost £2·4 billion, expected to create 30,000 new jobs and safeguard a further 16,000. In its environmental role, the agency has since 1979 cleared over 16,000 acres of derelict land, some of them in the Inverclyde initiative area.

Behind those bald statistics lie many achievements. The statistics cannot easily show the importance of major infrastructure projects involving the agency and bringing wide benefits to Scottish industry, such as the National hyperbaric centre in Aberdeen and the Scottish exhibition and conference centre in Glasgow. The agency's work in high technology matters such as electronics and health care has not only created jobs and wealth; it has also changed the perception of Scotland from a country of the declining heavy industries to one of the expanding high-tech industries of the future.

In area initiatives, in partnership with local authorities and the private sector, the agency has achieved much in developing opportunities for problem areas, using a continuously evolving approach, from the wide-ranging GEAR comprehensive renewal to encouraging a degree of self-help in the growing number of enterprise agencies assisted.

Mr. David Marshall (Glasgow, Shettleston): The Minister referred to the GEAR project. Does he not think it terribly sad that the Government pulled the plug on that project when it was only two-thirds completed? If they had given it three more years of life, they could have achieved something really long-lasting and worthwhile, a tribute to the work done by the SDA. Does the Minister not regret the Government's decision?

Mr. Lang: I think that the hon. Gentleman underrates the achievement that has taken place in the GEAR project. I pay tribute not only to the SDA but also to the regional and district councils that were involved in that partnership. It has run for 10 years. Some £500 million has been invested in the project, some £300 million of it from public funds. By any standards, that is a major investment. Any of us who go and see the area affected can only be impressed by the enormous strides forward that have been made. I hope that the hon. Gentleman draws comfort, as

[Mr. Lang]

I do, from the fact that all the parties to the project have signed a document maintaining a continuity of commitment to help the GEAR area in the future. I hope very much to see it continue to develop in the encouraging way in which it has developed so far.

One of the agency's major achievements has been its ability to develop innovative mechanisms to tackle problems of enterprise development, business development training, rural areas, urban renewal and peripheral estates. Schemes such as enterprise funds for youth, local enterprise grants for urban projects and the programme for rural initiatives and developments are all examples of such innovation. The agency has also been successful in obtaining the involvement of different bodies in Scotland, ranging from universities to local authorities and private businesses, and bringing them into partnership in projects. The west of Scotland science park, the St. Enoch's development, Drug Development Scotland and the Turing institute all exemplify that approach.

While the recent review of the agency did not propose any major changes to its operations, the report put forward some 50 recommendations related to its detailed running. They ranged from ways of improving the quality of decision-making within the agency to improving the content and presentation of its annual report, and the provision of an integrated strategic and operational planning and budgeting cycle.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Can the Minister find any justification for an annual report that contains, on a rough count, 18 photographs of the chairman? Is that an improvement in presentation, or an exercise in egomania by Sir Robin Duthie?

Mr. Lang: I am sure that Sir Robin Duthie will read the hon. Gentleman's comments in the report of this debate with considerable interest. The report is a valuable tool for the agency in presenting an image of its activities to those potential inward investors and others who can bring great benefit to Scotland. I assure the hon. Gentleman that the agency's image outside Scotland stands very high, and I do not begrudge it the capacity to present itself in an effective and efficient manner.

The aim of the recommendations in the Treasury review is to increase the agency's effectiveness as a motor of change in Scotland. Progress in the implementation of these recommendations is proceeding according to schedule, with action have been substantially completed in over half of them. With an eye to the future, the agency's corporate strategy for the next three years highlights the major thrusts proposed in the fields of technology, Scottish enterprise, internationalisation and urban renewal.

First, the agency recognises — and rightly — that Scottish industry, and not simply inward investors, is its client base. The agency is now increasingly applying to the development of indigenous companies the targeted approach that has brought it success in the attraction of inward investment. Particular emphasis will be placed on the engineering and food processing sectors.

Secondly, the greatest rewards to enterprise are to be found in serving international markets, while the greatest threats to indigenous industry come from international competition and from the international diffusion of technology. By encouraging product and process development, the agency will seek to assist Scottish industry to rise to this challenge. The provision of seed corn and development finance will be needed in these activities, as will a major expansion of the agency's technology transfer capability.

Thirdly, the agency has developed considerable expertise in encouraging property development to achieve environmental renewal and local economic regeneration. The approach, which has paid dividends in Glasgow's merchant city, can be replicated in other major Scottish urban centres. This expertise will increasingly be applied to urban renewal and regeneration in Scotland. We can expect to see this happening, for example, on the banks of the Clyde in Glasgow and in run-down housing areas.

Mr. Michael J. Martin (Glasgow, Springburn): I have been in correspondence with the Scottish Development Agency regarding the rehabilitation and conversion of Spiers wharf in the Port Dundas area, which contains a large number of Victorian warehouses. We have asked the SDA for assistance and it has given a commitment that help will be provided. Will the Minister try to move this project forward? Everybody is happy to see the merchant city development, but there are other parts of Glasgow.

Mr. Lang: I am sure that the agency will note the hon. Gentleman's concern about this point, and, as he has written to it, I am sure that it will take note of his anxieties.

Fourthly, special attention will be paid to enhancing the access to jobs of residents of areas undergoing urban renewal in order to improve their long-term income-earning prospects. That will be achieved through the provision of training associated with urban renewal projects.

Mr. Tony Worthington (Clydebank and Milngavie): Could the Minister confirm that, if precedence is to be given to residents in urban renewal areas, contract compliance will be insisted on in those areas?

Mr. Lang: That is not the same point as that which I was making. My point was about the special attention that will be paid to enhancing the residents' access to jobs by improving their training and their ability to perform those jobs and, therefore, to apply for them.

In undertaking these tasks the agency will continue to adopt a commercial approach. It will emphasise partnerships. Funding will be drawn from a range of other participants, and a realistic and disciplined approach is to be expected.

Since its creation in 1975 the agency's activities have been influenced by the policy and philosophy of the Government of the day, which is right. We set its budget, we are involved in the development of its overall strategy, we agree its priorities and we approve its major specific decisions. That is also why the SDA's role has developed and expanded so that it is now the powerful force that we want it to be in working with the grain of our capitalist economy.

Where its Labour begetters in 1975 wanted the agency to be an instrument of socialism — interventionist and acquisitive — we have transformed it into an engine of free enterprise, creative and catalytic. In recognition of that, and the increased effectiveness it has achieved in the use of its funds, we have been able to increase its budget in real terms since coming into office.

The agency has increased significantly the amount of money generated by its activities, but over the last few years the Government have still provided about £90 million a year in support of its operations.

Mr. Gordon Brown (Dunfermline, East): Will the Minister confirm that the value of Government spending on the Scottish Development Agency in 1987, when unemployment is over 330,000, is less than it was in 1979 when unemployment was one third of the present figure?

Mr. Lang: The budget of the agency has increased in real terms since the Government came into office. The hon. Gentleman may not like that fact, but that is the case.

Mr. Brown *rose*——

Mr. Lang: I will not give way. The hon. Gentleman can develop the point in his speech.

Mr. Brown: Does the Minister agree with the letter that he wrote to me on 13 March? The second paragraph reads:

"While it is the case that direct Government funding of the SDA has fallen in recent years"?

Mr. Lang: That referred to the net budget, which excludes the redeployment of sources generated internally in the agency. I am referring to the gross budget of the agency, which is the figure that the Government authorises it to spend; that is the relevant figure that is taken into account.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden) *rose*——

Mr. Lang: The Bill confirms the Government's commitment to the continuing process of improving the Scottish economy by seting a framework for continued funding for the agency over the next five years. It will allow the agency to capitalise on its undoubted past successes and to undertake the longer-term planning that is essential to secure future success and to meet the new challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

11.33 pm

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): I do not know what the agency has done in its annual report. The presentation may have improved in recent years; there is a similar need in the Scottish Office. The Minister's presentation was dreary. He read his speech with no sense of conviction, but given the quality of the script I am not entirely surprised.

Earlier we had some fairly entertaining similes. The Secretary of State for the Environment was worried about a plague of Scots filling his rather narrow horizons. We saw the hon. Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Mr. Lang) doing his Disraeli and shinning up the greasy pole with remarkable agility. Unfortunately, he could not rise to such high standards of eloquence, although we heard a lot about rising to challenges and scattering seed corn. I am afraid that I remained unconvinced.

It is perhaps a modest measure that we are discussing, but no one should be disappointed about that. It raises the borrowing requirement of the Scottish Development Agency. That in itself is unexceptionable. I am delighted that the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) has joined us. His support for this measure will have damaged further his already shaky reputation with his friends on the Back Benches. I welcome his no doubt genuine conversion to the importance of public investment in the Government's programme.

The debate is of some importance because it gives us a chance to consider the SDA, and not only in terms of a stylish report, interesting though it no doubt is in terms of colour printing and typographical art. Although I take the statistical point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas), it did not strike me that it was a fiction montage of Sir Robin Duthie. I was remarkably impressed by the collection of snapshots of Ministers in happy attitudes sprinkled about the pages. At one time I thought of presenting an annual prize for the official publication that managed to produce the largest selection of political mugshots. I abandoned the idea because I realised that the SDA would win every year. That would have removed any novelty and excitement.

The SDA's importance is out of proportion to its global expenditure and to the people that it employs. It has a budget of £140 million gross and employs fewer then 700 people. It has an honourable position and role and has a key place in deciding industrial strategy. It could have an even more effective role, given the right support in the fight against unemployment and in the fight to build upon the badly shaken foundations of the Scottish economy which has been so damaged in the last seven or eight years. I welcome the chance to examine the agency's workings and the framework within which it operates.

I accept that finance is not the end of the argument. Many other things must be taken into account. Resources and the budget are important. I do not believe that its record is that which is advertised by the Government.

I listened with fascination to the brief exchange between my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) and the Minister. I think that the Minister is being disingenuous. I am sure that he is acting in good faith, but he is misrepresenting the position.

I draw to the Minister's attention a parliamentary answer dated 18 February 1987. I asked a question of the Secretary of State for Scotland. I was given the gross expenditure of the SDA since 1979-80 at constant prices. At 1986-87 prices in 1979-80 the gross outturn of the agency was £134 million and in 1977-78 £131 million. For the last three years the expected outturn was £135 million, £133 million and £131 million. I do not suggest that that is a dramatic fall, but a fall it is. If the Minister says that we do not like the fact that it has gone up in real terms, I return the compliment by saying that he must recognise the facts which his Department supplies and which we are expected to take in good faith. In terms of gross expenditure there has been a fall in real terms; there is no doubt about that.

The Minister might wish to consider other possibilities. He might say that gross expenditure includes the substantial sum which is generated internally by the agency's activities. Perhaps we should examine the Scottish Office's contribution. It peaks at £116·6 million in 1982-3 and this year it will be £88·9 million. There has been a substantial decline in the Scottish Office contribution.

Those facts were supplied by the Minister's own Department in a parliamentary answer on 4 February 1987, at column *714*. The gross budget has declined and the Scottish Office contribution has declined even further. If that is represented as a triumphant endorsement of the Government putting their full muscle behind the SDA, we are in the land of double talk and bordering on the absurd. —*[Interruption.]*—My hon. Friends are encouraging me to give way. Perhaps the Minister would like to defend his

[Mr. Donald Dewar]

earlier statement—he has some explaining to do. I do not want to embarrass him for one moment, but I caution him against easy statements about the budget rising when the Minister's figures show the exact opposite.

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): I have considered the Bill and I am a little puzzled. The hon. Gentleman is alleging that the SDA has declined in real terms. Can the hon. Gentleman explain why, as a result of the Bill, the SDA's financial limit is to be raised by more than 70 per cent.?

Mr. Dewar: I always thought that the hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon) was perverse and almost always wrong, but I thought that he was fairly astute and understood the language of legislation. He will realise that that figure represents the borrowing limit and is accommodating an accumulated borrowing requirement that has mounted over many years. It has nothing to do with the future projection of the SDA budget. I only wish it was true, as the hon. Member implies, that that increase from £700 million to £1,200 million in the borrowing requirement was directly related to some improvement in the financial health of the agency, but that is a non sequitur of remarkable proportions, as the Minister would quickly point out.

Mr. Martin O'Neill (Clackmannan): Given the modesty of the proposals, perhaps that is why there are no SNP Members in the Chamber.

Mr. Dewar: The migrations of SNP Members are beyond my ken and my understanding. *[Interruption.]* On cue, as they say, and I am delighted to welcome back two of them to our deliberations. When one thinks about it, that is quite a high percentage of them.

I believe that I have given a reasonably fair illustration of what has happened to the financing of the SDA, based as it is on Government statistics. There is one component part of the finance of the SDA that will be of particular interest to the hon. Member for Darlington—the part of the budget that is used for industrial investment. I make it clear that I do not necessarily think that the main thrust should be in public investment. I accept the principle that one can pump prime with public investment and that if one attracts a large aggregation of private capital around the public sector core that can give satisfaction to everyone who is interested in the Scottish economy.

Looking at the Government's expenditure plans for 1987-88 and 1989-90, we see that in 1986-87 the amount invested by the SDA in industrial investment was given as £5·5 million, but the associated private sector investment was given as £83·8 million. Of course that is satisfactory and I would be the first to congratulate the agency on using a minimal investment to good purpose. However, I am also entitled to draw the attention of the House to how small the "seed corn store"—to use the new phrase that the Minister has coined tonight—is, at £5·5 million. We are entitled to question the modesty of that sum.

I draw the attention of the House to another parliamentary answer, again to my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, East. It appears in *Hansard* on 5 December 1986, at column *829*. It showed that in 1978-79 the sum used by the SDA for industrial investment was £10·7 million, or 8·5 per cent. of its total investment. This year that sum is £9 million, or 7 per cent. I understand that that £9 million should be updated—that there may be some growth—and I am told that the figure may be as high as £9·7 million. However, it clearly emerges from the figures that industrial investment is another area in which, since 1978-79, there has been a decline in the funds available to or used by the SDA.

As against the Minister's proud claim that he tried to ram down our throats, that the Government had a good record and that the budget had increased, from the Government's own parliamentary answers we see that in real terms the gross budget has declined since the Government came to power, the Scottish Office contribution has declined faster and the amount spent on industrial investment has gone down in cash terms and as a proportion of the total budget.

I accept that figures can be confusing. One of the parliamentary answers to which I referrred, on 5 December 1986, gives the industrial investment figure as £8·1 million. However, those in the House who are familiar with the report of the review group which reported to the Secretary of State for Scotland in February 1987 will see on page 45 that the SDA total expenditure on industrial investment in 1985-86 is given as £5·7 million.

Mr. Lang: If the hon. Gentleman looks at the annual report of the SDA, he will see on page 13, under industrial investment, that in 1985-86 the figure was £6·2 million and in 1986-87 it was £7·96 million. So far from falling, it is rising.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): Bowled middle stump again!

Mr. Dewar: A sporting metaphor from the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) is always something to savour. All that I can say to the hon. Gentleman is that he should stick to rugby and not stray on to the cricket field. He has got it all wrong as usual.

The position is clear and is as I have stated it. The figures have declined in that area as they have in the others to which I referrred. I proposed to draw the Minister's attention to the fact that on page 45 the 1985-86 industrial investment figure is given as £5·7 million while in one of his own parliamentary answers it is given as £8·1 million. That struck me as a curious discrepancy. I therefore took the trouble to telephone the SDA today for an explanation. Having got it, I thought that the House might be interested in it. It gives an interesting insight into the way in which the Scottish Office compiles its figures.

In 1985-86, the £5·7 million which appears in the report of the review group is the gross advances to new investment. The figure of £1·8 million that is added to it is the capital and interest payable to the Scottish Office, and £600,000 is the rural loan scheme. If one adds those three together, one gets the £8·1 million which, in parliamentary answers, the Minister is claiming is the industrial investment of the Scottish Office.

All that I can say, in all seriousness, is that I do not understand the logic, consistency or honesty of claiming that the payment of £1·8 million back to the Scottish Office is industrial investment by the SDA in Scotland and its economy. The figure in the review group report of £5·7 million is much more honest.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the Minister has given the

impression not only that there is adequate funding in the SDA, but that there is a shortage of projects, whereas the reality is that there are more projects coming forward than the SDA can fund? In particular, the rural funding scheme, PRIDE — projects for rural industry and development enterprises—has run out of funding and no new scheme has come forward. I hope that in his concluding remarks the hon. Gentleman will press the Minister to explain what he will do about that.

Mr. Dewar: I do not know whether I shall find room in my concluding remarks, but, as an interim measure, let me say that I agree entirely with the hon. Gentleman. I draw his attention to a parliamentary answer to me on 22 April 1987, at column *568*. It gives a list of applications for investment in every year since 1979. It leaves aside the multifarious activities of the small business department, which last year had 20,000 contacts, which is a formidable range of service. Staying at the top end of the trade, we see that in 1979-80 there were 138 such applications. There were 236 in the past year, a new high and growing all the time. A few years ago, if one talked informally to the SDA, it would say that most of the projects that it thought worthy of support and that there was a pressing need to advance could be accommodated in the existing budget. To my knowledge, no one in the SDA would maintain that position now. The story is very different. People will now say, with total honesty, that there are often projects within the criteria of the SDA, that they feel could and should be helped but where budget restrictions make that impossible. The point made by the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) is a fair one and shows one of our problems.

Mr. Lang: When the hon. Gentleman telephoned the SDA to ascertain some of the facts did the agency tell him that a lack of funds was a constraint upon its investment projects?

Mr. Dewar: No, not on this occasion. That was for the simple reason that I spoke to an official who deals with finance to whom I put a number of specific clarificatory questions based upon the misleading figures that the Scottish Office has been providing. I received a prompt, courteous, full and adequate explanation, which certainly helped me. I did not try to involve that official in the sort of discussions to which the Minister is referring. Over time and at a number of levels within the agency that point of view has been put to me. I honestly relay that as my impression and I hope that it is not a view with which the Minister would seriously quarrel.

I recognise that I have been using a fair amount of figures of one sort or another but I conclude this section of my remarks by dealing with net expenditure by the Scottish Office, after having allowed for net loan repayments and receipts to the Scottish Office itself, on industrial investment through the SDA. It is interesting. The figures are to be found on page 45 of the report of the review group. In 1982-83 the Scottish Office contribution to industrial investment through the agency was £6·24 million. By 1985-86 that had dropped to £730,000. Gosh, that is generous. I have to tell the Minister in the interest of completeness—it may be good news to him—that in 1986-87 the agency tells me that the comparable figure will be £1·29 million. In other words, the net contribution from the Scottish Office to the total industrial investment project of the SDA is just marginally over £1 million. That is a less than impressive record at a time when Scotland is still in the clutch of unemployment and when there are scars to be seen in almost every one of our communities.

I recognise that the general picture is a depressing one. Almost every one of the indicators suggests a lack of Government commitment, a falling-off of financial contribution and an increasingly tight situation for the agency. However, I also recognise that much good work is done in a whole range of areas. The agency is an enormously important landlord in the industrial sphere in Scotland. It is the inheritor of the role of the Scottish Industrial Estates Corporation, which some older hon. Members will remember. About 24 per cent. of the agency's annual budget goes in that area. There is the land renewal programme and environmental improvement, which in 1986-87 will take almost a third of the budget, £46 million. I know that this area can be controversial. For example, I am aware of some of the anxieties about the slice of the budget being spent on the Glasgow garden festival. I regard that as an important and worthwhile project. In passing I pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan), who has worked extremely hard to help and encourage that project.

I referred earlier to the small business division and its 20,000 visits. When I look at the range of activities I am remarkably impressed by the job done by the professionals in the agency. It would be appropriate if the House was to congratulate and send good wishes to Mr. Ian Robertson who has just taken over as chief executive and Professor Neil Hood who is now heading the Locate in Scotland bureau, about which I shall speak later.

My general point is that the agency could be even more effective if it was more effectively supported by Government. One problem is that we shall have to consider the agency's activities against the background of the Government's general attitude and policy on regional aid. I do not think that any hon. Member will disagree when I say that, clearly, it will be more difficult for the agency if the general background of regional development grant and the framework of assistance to industry is being undermined by other Government policies. The agency's work is fundamentally affected by Government policy on exactly that area of regional aid. There can be little hope of reviving the Scottish economy when building on foundations undermined by the bitter experience of recent years, if Ministers insist on dismantling the necessary incentives to invest. Despite the hard selling by the Scottish Office, the Government's contribution to the SDA has been miserable—the budget had a peak of £116 million and has fallen to £90 million today. It is a wholly inadequate commitment from a Government who are happy to parade the agency as a political trapping, but are not prepared to back it wholeheartedly with the cash that it needs.

I have already referred to the report on the agency. It was ordered by the Secretary of State, and it summarises his position neatly. I am sure that the Minister would not disagree with the summary, which states:

> "The Government's economic policy is based on the presumption that the allocation of resources is best left to the free market."

I am glad to note that the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), with enormous self-control, has managed to suppress a smile and a vigorous nod because as he is now

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on the Front Bench he has to try to restrain his natural zeal. The Government's position has led to the problems on which I have commented.

I wish to draw the attention of the House to a matter on which I hope the Minister will comment at the end of the debate, and it is the whole question of the alarming and repeated rumours that the Department of Trade and Industry is reviewing regional aid and that substantial further cuts are on the way. I do not believe that that is irresponsible speculation because the reports are apparently based on Scottish Office sources. It is essential that in this debate the House learns of what is happening and who is in charge. The reports provoked a quite remarkable response from the Scottish Office. Speaking on the BBC's "Good Morning Scotland" programme on 16 October, the Secretary of State could not have been more vehement. Challenged about a cut in regional aid, the right hon. Gentleman said:

"There might be concern if it was true but it is not true. I am able to repeat to you categorically what I believe Ian Lang has also said that there is no question of these resources available for regional aid in Scotland being reduced."

In the context of considering the adequacy of the SDA budget and the future of industrial help in Scotland, it would be extremely helpful if the Minister would confirm that his right hon. Friend meant what he clearly said.

Mr. Norman Hogg (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth): Why is not the Secretary of State here?

Mr. Dewar: Because the right hon. Gentleman is in Japan, and I understand that even he cannot shout that far. I seriously request a comment from the Minister on the matter. I put such emphasis on it because of the promise that there would be no cuts of importance, and because the last policy review carried out by the Department of Trade and Industry resulted in the loss of £100 million a year from the Scottish industrial budget. Indeed, the Government's public expenditure figures suggest that expenditure on regional development grant will fall from £167 million in 1986-87 to £67 million in the current year. The commentary on the public expenditure figures produced by the Scottish Office shows that the total budget for industrial support is scheduled to come down from £210 million in 1987-88 to £110 million in 1988-89.

Those planned cuts result from a policy which is a disgraceful capitulation by the Scottish Office to the Treasury. The House is entitled to know whether the clear promise by the Secretary of State that there will be no cuts means that the perverse determination to cut regional aid has now been abandoned. Will the Minister promise that spending will not fall below this year's figures? I can put no other interpretation on what the Secretary of State said, but it is important that it is confirmed in this debate.

The Secretary of State made another startling suggestion and remarkable claim in that interview. He announced that the Department of Trade and Industry has no responsibility for regional aid north of the border. He could not have put it more bluntly. I quote directly from the Secretary of State:

"It will not be a matter for the Department of Trade and Industry to decide. They may be responsible for regional aid in England and that is reasonable and proper, but I and my colleagues are responsible for regional aid in Scotland."

This appears to be a major shift in power between the Department of Trade and Industry and the Scottish Office. Or has the Secretary of State misled the Scottish public?

As I understood the position—no doubt the Minister will confirm whether I am right—although the Scottish Office is responsible for the administration of the regional development grant, the mechanics of payment, the level of support, the criteria, the qualification for eligibility, the overall policy framework and the boundaries within which the support is paid remain the prerogative of the Department of Trade and Industry. Are we to take it from the Secretary of State's remarks that those central issues are now the sole responsibility of the Scottish Office? If plain English means anything, it means exactly that.

When I spoke on the telephone today to the noble Lord who heads the Private Office in the Department of Trade and Industry he seemed to be blissfully unaware of this important shift in Government policy, but perhaps the Department has simply not yet been informed. I shall check on the position with the Prime Minister. Pending that no doubt authoritative reply, we should have an explanation of what the Secretary of State meant from his senior colleague in charge of this area. If his claims cannot be substantiated, it is essential that we know that. Indeed, it is essential that we know whether the noble Lord or the Secretary of State is calling the shots. If there has been no change of policy, I object to senior Ministers going on radio and saying things which are no more than a dishonest smokescreen, attempting to bolster an inaccurate position.

Mr. Lang: Steady on.

Mr. Dewar: Would the Minister care to rise now and tell me what the Secretary of State meant?

Mr. Lang: I will answer.

Mr. Dewar: I await the Minister's answer with great interest. I read carefully what the Secretary of State said, and I expect the Minister to explain exactly what is afoot.

Mr. Lang: I understood the hon. Gentleman to say that he heard a broadcast. Now he is saying that he read it. Will he clarify the matter?

Mr. Dewar: Both. Broadcasts are not always ephemeral. It is sometimes possible to check the contents in case one misheard. I was so startled I did. I had not.

If there are cuts, they will have a serious effect upon the ability of the SDA to do its job. Perhaps the Minister will turn his attention to the genuine point made by the hon. Member for Darlington. There is a substantial increase in borrowing requirement from £700 million to £1,200 million. The Minister said, coyly, that this would allow uninterrupted activity on the part of the agency, but was careful to say that he would give no guarantees about the future shape or size of its budget. It is important to press him to know whether the increase in borrowing requirement will leave adequate room for a generous and necessary increase in the agency's funding, and to ask him whether we can look for some redress against the miserable approach that has characterised Government policy during the past few years. There is no doubt that there are projects that require help and areas that are in the grip of recession, and that the agency could have a

more effective role if it was given the resources to carry on the job that it has done with some distinction in many places.

I strongly support—it is worth putting this on record—the efforts of the agency to take areas in which it believes there can be genuine industrial growth in Scotland, to try to encourage excellence there and to attract firms that move in. The most obvious example of that, as you, Mr. Deputy Speaker will know, is the electronics industry, which is at the centre of the debate.

I sometimes resent the myth-making that comes from Conservative Benches which suggests that we in some way resent the introducton of the electronics industry to Scotland and are grudging in our welcome when there is an announcement about it. I am delighted to see any signs of growth, movement and inward investment in Scotland, such as Compaq at Irvine, Ford in Dundee, or the big development in Livingston with Japanese capital by the Shin-Etsu Handotai company mentioned in the press today. I shall be delighted to see it come. However, we are entitled to protest against the way in which the arrival of an electronics company is sometimes used as an alibi for almost everything else that is happening on the Scottish industrial scene.

Again, I recommend that the Minister reads the answers that his Department provide to Parliament. One, given in reply to a Question on 5 December 1986 suggests that in the electronics section in 1979 there were 38,350 jobs in Scotland, and in 1985 there were 39,700, an increase in six years of just over a thousand. Of course, that is welcome; let no one take any of my remarks as begrudging the importance of that improvement; but even if one makes a generous projection and assumes that that total has risen to 44,000, when measured against an unemployment rate that, on a comparable basis of compilation, has more than doubled since 1979, it cannot be regarded as a panacea. We need much more effort by the Government actively and energetically to reinforce any favourable trend that exists.

Of course the agency has done well in Clydebank, in the Garnock valley, in Inverclyde and Dundee, and many other parts of Scotland. No one would deny that. However, I do not believe that it will be able to build and improve on that record unless there is a change of direction on the part of the Government.

I and my hon. Friends thought it interesting that the Minister boasted that the Government were turning the agency into an engine of free enterprise. That sounded like ideological claptrap, and the Minister should be ashamed of himself. Perhaps it was an apologetic attempt at a peroration, but it did nothing for me. Turning the agency into an engine of free enterprise is not the end product. Certainly, the agency should be about partnership and working with the private sector, but to talk about it as some sort of Thatcherian model, as the phrase suggested, is fundamentally misconceived.

I say to the Minister with some regret that there are still, perhaps, people in high places in the Scottish Office and on the Conservative Back Benches who entertain real doubts about the value of this type of agency. Plenty of Conservative hon. Members will regard with suspicion even this modest increase in its borrowing powers. They do not even all wear kilts, although some of them do. There will be those who see themselves as the sea-green incorruptibles of the Prime Minister's new revolution and who see any increase in public expenditure as some form of fiscal anathema. Those are not the people who should be voicing thoughts about the future development of the Scottish Development Agency. It is, perhaps, not surprising, however, because if one looks back over the record, while Conservative politicians have always been happy to use the agency as part of the propaganda battle, they have always dragged their feet when it came to spending money and giving real incentives and support to the fight.

Even now, we see some extraordinary developments in Conservative thinking. Many of us remember Mr. Michael Ancram, though it seems a long time since he was an hon. Member. He explained recently that everything had been wrong in the previous Government, of which he was a distinguished member, because they had not forcibly fed Thatcherian policies in Scotland with sufficient vim and vigour.I suspect that Mr. Ancram would tell me that part of the revolution would be a new hostility to the kind of partnership arrangements between the public and private sectors that are represented by the SDA.

In closing—I want to allow time for many of my hon. Friends—I tell a cautionary and instructive tale to those who worry about policies that would allow the agency to develop its full potential. I used to serve on the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs. Some hon. Members will remember that Committee and I say in parenthesis that I hope that the Scottish Office will use its influence with the authorities and the Leader of the House to ensure that the Committee is soon up and running.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): If the hon. Member will confirm that he will come back as chairman of the Select Committee I might change my views about that Committee.

Mr. Dewar: Was ever an hon. Member tempted thus? However, I have to weigh carefully not only whether I would be good for the Select Committee, but whether the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) would be good for the Committee—which may be a more difficult matter. I know that he made his intervention seriously and I take it up. I have seen stories in the papers in which the hon. Gentleman and, I think, the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) have made it clear that they would never serve on the Committee. Labour Members were genuinely sorry to see those statements. If the hon. Member for Tayside, North is saying that in certain circumstances he might reconsider his position, that might encourage his hon. Friends to advance the setting up of the Select Committee, and that would be a good thing.

But I am being distracted,. I was about to say that back in 1980 the Select Committee carried out a lengthy inquiry into the attraction of investment into Scotland. It is a matter of peculiar interest, because I constantly hear from Scottish Ministers, including the Under-Secretary who opened the debate, much praise for Locate in Scotland. I endorse that praise; the agency has done well and has showed imagination and been successful, often in a highly competitive market.

However, I find it extraordinary—I am sure that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will at least understand my puzzlement even if it may not be professionally proper for you to share it—that Conservative Members should be so enthusiastic about Locate in Scotland when they were so hostile to its birth.

I was chairman of the Select Committee during its investment inquiry and a chairman's report emerged under

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my name. It gave heavy and proper emphasis to the opportunities for marketing Scotland and the importance of preserving the independent offices of the SDA, especially in north America. It became a matter of very great contention and the Conservative majority on that Committee threw out that Chairman's report and substituted its own. The report was finally adopted by a majority vote of the Committee and it argued that there should be no independent attempt to market Scotland abroad, that the independent offices of the Scottish Development Agency should be closed, and that every effort should be made to merge Scotland's interests in something called an "Invest in Britain" bureau.

Perhaps I could give a hint of the summary by reading from part of it to give hon. Members a taste of it. It says:

"Abroad, a separate Scottish effort alongside the FCO network would result in duplication of effort and would confuse potential investors."

It went on bravely to argue that one might second Scots into appropriate consulates on a temporary basis to give a little bit of expertise to the British selling effort.

That report ran totally counter to the independent selling of Scotland abroad and totally counter to the whole spirit of Locate in Scotland. That was forced upon us by the Conservative majority led by the hon. Member for Eastwood who moved the amendment and in turn, although passingly, became Scotland's Minister for Industry. He was loyally supported, I am sure with total sincerity, by the present Minister for Industry, the hon. Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Mr. Lang). I do not know whether he is now in sackcloth and ashes and penitent, but I find his praise for Locate in Scotland and his pride in that institution just a little hypocritical, given the extent to which he fought against its founding. That is a cautionary tale because it illustrates the true colours flown by the Minister, despite the presentational exercise carried out by his Department. We are entitled to be sceptical about his bona fides.

I could be tempted to say a few words about the general economic climate in Scotland because it fully justifies anxiety. There is no doubt that many storm signals are still flying. I welcome any improvement in the unemployment figures and the Minister will rightly point to some decline in recent months. When he looks at our industrial base he will agree that there has been a great loss in manufacturing jobs. That was tellingly and effectively dealt with by the director-general of the CBI in a recent speech in Glasgow. When the Minister looks at the problems that we face in many sectors he will understand my concern. In expressing that concern I am echoing what is felt by many people throughout Scotland.

The important thing is to try to improve that situation. I hope that the Minister will think again about the way in which the Scottish Development Agency has been dealt with in recent years. I recognise that he has doubts about the tradition of intervention and about the role of public investment. But if he looks at the considered judgment contained in the report of his own review group set up by the Secretary of State when the SDA was under pressure from the Treasury—there may be some credit there for the Scottish Office—he will see that it contains a strong recommendation for the kind of work carried out by the agency. Paragraph 2.28 says:

"The Agency has had a substantial and positive impact on Scotland's economy and environment. On balance, we are satisfied that over the first ten years of its existence the Agency has borne out the expectations that considerable benefits would flow from such a body in Scotland."

The hon. Member for Darlington, who has great expertise in this matter, will agree that there is great interest in the north of England in the development agency model. It is a cliché to say that imitation is the best form of flattery, but I do not regard it that way. It is good that the model that we have pioneered in Scotland should now get such sympathetic consideration in other parts of the country which also suffer from Britain's metropolitan obsession and where structural difficulties are very apparent and the unemployment so scarring.

There is an enormous amount of work to be done and that is why we decided to raise these issues in the debate and decided not artificially to foreshorten discussion. We have done it because we feel strongly that we cannot be satisfied by the Government's record and have every reason for pressing and pressing again and returning again and again to the themes and the crisis which is undoubtedly a major cause for worry in the everyday lives of Scots in every part of the country.

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I understand that this debate is likely to go on for several hours. I wonder whether some medical assistance could be brought to bear for the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn), who appears to be indisposed or possibly anaesthetised as a result of the effects of one of Scotland's greatest exports.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): I think that we had better get on with the debate.

12.20 am

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): I was disappointed by the rather grudging speech from the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) when the Government are putting forward a great programme of increased borrowing powers for the Scottish Development Agency of £500 million. I would have thought that that would receive warm approval from both sides of the House and particularly from Opposition Members. It is nice to see so many Opposition Members coming back to try to redeem their soiled reputations after they were taken to the cleaners in the debate in July.

It is good to consider that the debate is taking place in the context of a continuing fall in the level of unemployment in Scotland. The SDA has played a part in that welcome news.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): Rubbish.

Sir Hector Monro: Why is it rubbish for the SDA to take some credit for the fall in the level of unemployment in Scotland? That is very welcome. After all, it was the whole objective of the SDA to achieve just that.

Mr. Home Robertson: That is why we set it up.

Sir Hector Monro: I do not disagree that the hon. Gentleman's party set up the SDA in the 1970s. Some of the issues raised then were very relevant to the development of the SDA that has taken place since.

Mr. Norman Buchan (Paisley, South): What proportion of the so-called drop in the level of unemployment is caused by part-time employment and how much by the fiddling of the figures over the past nine years?

Sir Hector Monro: If the hon. Gentleman goes to the Library he can look it all up.

The important point is that the percentage of unemployment has dropped by one point in the past year. That means that there are 25,000 more jobs in Scotland than a year ago. That is certainly good news. That is a very much better position and represents many more new jobs than were created in one year at any time during the previous Labour Government.

In the travel-to-work area in my constituency, the unemployment level in Annan has dropped to 12.4 per cent., in Lockerbie it has dropped to 11.7 per cent. and in Dumfries to 9.6 per cent. All those figures are below the national average and are very welcome. With regard to Dumfries, if we exclude Orkney, Shetland and the Borders, the figure there is the lowest in Scotland. However, we are not complacent about this. Heavens, no. It is, however, a basis for a move forward to improve the economic position and to bring down unemployment still further.

How should we develop the trend? First and most important we should continue the sound economic policies that have brought the trend into being — containing inflation, keeping interest rates under control and good housekeeping, particularly among local authorities, and keeping down rate expenditure. Secondly, we must tune, and indeed fine tune, all the Government agencies involved — the Highlands and Islands Development Board, the Scottish Development Agency that we are discussing tonight, assist in every way in the private sector through the enterprise trusts — which have been very effective throughout Scotland — and through the local authority economic development committees.

There is no doubt in all that in the fine tuning that has taken place programmes such as Locate in Scotland and the selective assistance that has been given to industry have helped immeasurably overall. That is why we welcome the arrival of Ford into Scotland in a significant way and the substantial development at Butlins. We welcome also the Japanese companies that have expressed an interest in Scotland and have arrived in it over recent months. We pay tribute to the dept of the Scottish Office that deals with industrial affairs and to the SDA, which is able to provide factories throughout Scotland when they are required, sometimes at quite short notice. I am pleased by the way in which the agency reacted in respect of the large new factory at Annan for Pinneys, which has been one of the great successes of recent years.

There are difficulties, however, with regional policies and assisted area status in Scotland for those who receive financial assistance. It would be much better if we considered each application on its merits and not merely in terms of the proposed siting of the factory. There will obviously be a better return for Government money if the factory is established where it is most likely to be successful and where market forces suggest it should be. That is especially important for rural industries because much of rural Scotland is outwith the assisted area map. There are forestry and infrastructure problems in terms of European grants, which are not available except within assisted areas. [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] I am allowed to say what I think. I know how this situation has arisen and I am telling the Minister that I do not agree with the considerations that lie behind it.

Mr. O'Neill: Will the hon. Gentleman explain to the House why on 25 June 1975 he voted against the creation of the Scottish Development Agency? Is he thankful now that on that occasion there were 75 more Labour Members than Conservative Members to support the then Labour Government and ensure the establishment of the agency and the successes that it has achieved?

Sir Hector Monro: Objections were expressed in Committee to the establishment of the small industry section of the SDA. There is no doubt that without SICRAS, which we lost with the setting up of the SDA, small businesses in Scotland, especially in rural areas, have suffered considerably.

There is much to be said for individual applications for industrial assistance in Scotland to be treated on their merits and not on the basis of assisted area status. If that criterion were adopted, we should enjoy better value for money throughout Scotland for the resources that are allocated to regional policy.

By any standards the SDA has been an overall success. Its budget has been increased from £80 million in 1979 to £136 million in 1986. Some of the great projects — most of them in the constituencies of Labour Members — have been extremely valuable to Scotland. I have in mind the St. Enoch's complex and the garden festival, which will be a great success next year. I am glad that many local authorities are making a particular effort to ensure that the festival is the great tribute to Scotland that we expect it to be. There is also GEAR, Glasgow Action, the Clydebank scheme, the Leith project and the Coatbridge project. A great deal is going on in Scotland through the SDA, and all credit to it.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): The hon. Gentleman has referred to Coatbridge, a reference that is normally reserved for the Minister, who did not get round to making it this evening. Has the hon. Gentleman ignored the fact that the Coatbridge project has not yet produced the number of jobs that were lost at Gartcosh alone?

Sir Hector Monro: The equation is pretty simple; anyone could have told the hon. Gentleman the answer to it.

The SDA report speaks in glowing terms of the Coatbridge project, and good luck to it. We do not want to criticise it for other reasons. All these projects show just how enthusiastic the Government have been to reduce unemployment, and to raise the standard of living and quality of life in Scotland. However, unemployment is equally unacceptable in the rural areas. Does the Minister think that the SDA is putting enough resources into rural Scotland, in comparison with what is going into urban and industrial areas?

We have looked at the report from the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs, and the hon. Member for Garscadden quoted at length from another subject discussed by the Committee. When we considered the Highlands and Islands Development Board, and went into great detail about what it had achieved, the Committee concluded that there was room for a rural development fund to assist rural Scotland elsewhere in the same way as the Highlands and Islands board does in the Highlands. Indeed, we advocated some £20 million to £25 million a year for rural Scotland. That, I think, was worthwhile, and it was strongly supported in the Select Committee, probably because there was a strong feeling that the rest

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of Scotland — outwith the Highlands and Islands Development Board area—was not receiving sufficient resources from the SDA for rural development.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will talk to the SDA, and that it will consider its priorities and emphasise them in terms of where it is placing its resources. I know that it will come up with a large number of schemes; if we look through the report, we can read about them. But there is still a great deal more that could be done to help in the countryside, particularly at a time when farming is going through a difficult period and looking to alternative land use. Here again, support will be needed for small industrial efforts in, perhaps, farmsteading and crafts. We need a flexible approach to planning, and, indeed, to rating. When something quite simple such as cheese-making or a craft workshop is set up, what was a farm building becomes a commrcial building and is rated, and half of the objective of the transfer to alternative land use is destroyed.

I feel that there has been a lack of support for small local industry, compared with what was available before the setting up of the SDA under the SICRAS scheme. We should do all that we can to enable the SDA and its rural offices, such as the one in Dumfries, to do all that they can to help small industries in the countryside. I am glad, too, that the SDA appreciates the importance of the environment, and of tourism and light industry, and is providing support. But I think that there is plenty more to do.

I should like to put two questions to my hon. Friend the Minister, which I hope that he will be able to answer later. First, is he yet in a position to announce a new DRAW scheme like the earlier one for rural workshops? I felt that it was most unfortunate that the scheme ended in June, with a number of applications before it, before a new scheme was ready to take them over. Some applicants have felt very let down. Will the Minister tell us whether the applicants who were in the original DRAW scheme will have priority in the new scheme when it is introduced?

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving way, because, for once, I completely agree with him on the importance of the DRAW scheme. In my constituency a DRAW scheme applicant was told by the Scottish Development Agency that his project was eligible and that he would be given the money, but the scheme was brought to a sudden halt. He had planned his development on the basis of that scheme, but he was led up the garden path. He was extremely disappointed and inconvenienced when the scheme came to a sudden stop. The SDA then offered him a loan instead of a grant. It is vital that there should be a replacement scheme. For once, the hon. Gentleman has got it absolutely right.

Sir Hector Monro: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. I know of an exactly parallel case. I hope that the SDA will take on board the fact that it has failed to introduce a new scheme, and also my great concern that previous applicants must not be overlooked when the new scheme is introduced. They must be given priority and the money as soon as possible.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will be able to say that there is a new scheme in the pipeline for rural initiatives and that it will be announced shortly.

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): I am delighted to hear the hon. Gentleman say that he wants money to be put into schemes in his constituency. Does he mean that extra money should be given to the SDA to finance those schemes? I hope he is not suggesting that money should be taken from SDA schemes in other parts of Scotland where, as he admitted earlier in his speech, unemployment is considerably higher than in his area.

Dr. John Reid (Motherwell, North): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. At half past 12 in the morning, when such important business is being discussed, there are twice as many people in the Strangers Gallery as there are Scottish Tory Members of Parliament sitting in the Chamber to discuss it.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): That is not a point of order for the Chair.

Sir Hector Monro: I hope that a similar amount of money will be made available for the new scheme as was made available for the previous schemes. I feel sure that my hon. Friend the Minister will be able to reassure me on that point. It is also important that British Rail should realise the importance of the part it has to play in reducing unemployment by maintaining services in south-west Scotland and elsewhere for both industry and the public.

Mr. Norman Hogg: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Is it not apparent that the Government are determined to talk out their own Bill and that this is a filibuster? The hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) has nothing of substance to say, and it would be better if he sat down and allowed some of my hon. Friends to make a reasonable contribution to the debate.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I have every intention of hearing out the hon. Member for Dumfries.

Sir Hector Monro: The hon. Gentleman obviously did not hear what was said by the Opposition Front Bench spokesman. If he had, he might have raised his point of order then.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): I know that the hon. Gentleman is concerned about the possible closure of railway stations in his constituency, but does he support the extremely harsh financial restrictions that his Government have placed on British Rail?

Sir Hector Monro: I disagree with the priorities that British Rail give to the performance objectives that have been laid down for it by the Government. British Rail has tried to wriggle out of its responsibilities in the wrong way. I welcome the increase in the borrowing powers of the SDA and I welcome what the Minister has said tonight. I wish Sir Robin Duthie and Ian Robertson well in the coming year. I hope that they will be able to continue increasing development in Scotland and that they will put particular emphasis on the development of rural areas.

12.40 am

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): Despite the low key introduction that the Minister gave to the debate—given what was to follow from the Benches behind him it may have been appropriate — it is important to place on the record the fact that the SDA, along with bodies such as the Highlands and Islands Development Board, is a successful example of the blending of public and private cash. Before we hear too

much about how the Thatcherite revolution has changed the course of history, it must be recalled that a Labour Government introduced the SDA. The Conservative Government, despite their policies, have continued to support the blend of the public sector attracting private sector finance.

The Minister, particularly in his role at the Scottish Office, would be well advised to give slightly more unequivocal support to the SDA than the tone of his contribution suggested, not least for two reasons. First, the SDA has operated against a background of uncertainty that was caused by the Treasury review. We should congratulate the SDA on coming through that review with flying colours. Secondly, the Secretary of State for Scotland, to his credit, had to fight a political battle shortly after being appointed when the eyes of the Treasury were cast towards the profits from the enterprises in which the SDA and the HIDB had invested. The fact that the SDA, with backing from the Scottish Office, was successful in that instance should be welcomed.

The Bill is welcome because it recognises the continuing role of the SDA and it has allowed its borrowing to be increased. However, without wishing to be churlish, it must be recorded that the borrowing requirement of the SDA may be increased by this legislation but, as the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) and others have said, the direct contribution from the Scottish Office to the SDA has decreased. Whatever the Minister may say in trying to justify the argument that he was putting forward earlier, I hope that he will agree with the objective analysis of the SDA accounts carried out by the House of Commons Library. They show that in 1985-86 the grant was about £91·5 million, but by 1986 it had gone down to £87 million. Therefore, in real terms the amount of funding that the Scottish Office is giving the SDA is declining. Against a background of Scottish industrial decline, that can only be severely damaging, particularly to those parts of the Scottish economy that have suffered most in recent times.

In addition to the uncertainty of recent times and the fact that the Government commitment to the SDA is on a downward path there is a further nagging anxiety which concerns the draft proposals now with the European Commission which are liable, in the spring of next year, to be submitted to the Council of Ministers. Given the restructuring of the Community budget and the enlargement of the Community as a trading market between now and 1992, the proposals will remove a substantial part of Scotland from eligibility for full regional support. That will be damaging to the SDA's activities and will mean that major infrastructure projects cannot go ahead.

Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): Give way.

Mr. Kennedy: Of course I shall give way. I am tempted to say to the hon. and learned Gentleman, "Make my night."

Mr. Fairbairn: One of the greatest mistakes that I made this evening was to wake up. The greatest mistake of all was to wake up when the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) was speaking. I have never heard such rubbish. Perhaps he can explain, to those on his right and on his left, their ludicrous policy in the garbage that he is talking.

Mr. Kennedy: That must be one of the few contributions in the House which show that the hon. and learned Gentleman makes more sense when asleep than awake. I congratulate him. The House will forgive me if I continue.

The changes to the European regional development fund will be extremely damaging to Scotland and will have a damaging effect on the SDA. I hope that the Scottish Office and the Department of Trade and Industry will take the lead within the Council of Ministers to press the matter in strong terms. If they do not the loss will be great.

We also want assurances about the SDA budget since the Minister's arguments are not in line with the facts. I ask the Minister also to examine the index used to evaluate projects in terms of cost per job. Too often political directions come from the Scottish Office. Sometimes there is political unwillingness to approve a major project. That has happened recently in the constituency represented by my hon. Friend the Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir Russell Johnston). An apparent political unwillingness is sometimes translated into decisions which public agencies have to make when justifying turning down a project on the basis of cost per job. I should like the Minister to consider that matter.

In conclusion I follow on from the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro), who spoke about the need for a rural development fund or a full rural development agency of the type that exists within the boundaries of the Highlands and Islands Development Board, but which, as yet, has not been extended to other parts of Scotland. On behalf of my hon. Friends and, I am sure, hon. Members representing rural constituencies in different parts of Scotland I would stress that we endorse the recommendation from the earlier report of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs. I hope that the Minister will be positive in his response to that.

Mr. Canavan: The hon. Gentleman may be surprised to know that I agree with a lot of what he has said. He said that he spoke on behalf of his hon. Friends and I wonder whether he includes in that phrase the leader of the neo-militant tendency within the alliance?

Mr. Kennedy: Yes, it extends both to the Devonport Druze and the Selkirk shi'ites. That comment is perfectly parliamentary as a reading of the middle east situation at the present time will show.

I should like to underscore the importance of the rural infrastructure — *[Interruption.]* My hon. Friend the Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) has just suggested the Caithness Contras.

I hope that the Minister will give attention to the importance of rural infrastructure when considering either the existing remit and budget of the SDA or some extended remit that is based upon that important sector.

A political point that is the cause of great concern to a great many people north of the border is the increasing drift towards the south-east in terms of the operational control of headquarters——

Mr. Fairbairn: What about Ford in Dundee?

Mr. Kennedy: I believe that there is another company that is close to the heart of the hon. and learned Gentleman—Guinness.

The Minister should consider mergers, takeovers and general company distribution within Britain. In those

[Mr. Kennedy]

areas of the economy where there is a specific Scottish interest the SDA should have a more enhanced role than it presently enjoys.

Although the Bill is welcome, we must not lose sight of the fact that it does not address itself to the more political considerations. In due course I hope that the Scottish Office will turn its attention to those considerations because it would find broad support from all sides of the House and, more important, across political opinion in Scotland.

12.53 am

Mr. Thomas McAvoy (Glasgow, Rutherglen); I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for this opportunity to make my maiden speech as the Member for Glasgow, Rutherglen.

I would like to spend some time considering my predecessor, the right hon. Gregor MacKenzie. Many people will remember that Gregor MacKenzie won a by-election in May 1964, ending 13 years of that constituency being represented by a Conservative. It is a sign of the respect with which he is held in the constituency that the former marginal constituency was left in such good stead. He entered Parliament in 1964 and quickly became parliamentary private secretary to James Callaghan and subsequently a Government and Opposition Front Bench spokesman on post and telecommunications matters, industry and the Scottish Office.

In the short time that I have been in the House I have picked up the feeling that Gregor was regarded as a good House of Commons man. In addition, he had the reputation in Rutherglen of being an extremely diligent constituency Member of Parliament. There is no doubt that the partnership of Gregor and Joan MacKenzie was successful in representing the constituency, and I know that he is regarded in the House and still in the constituency with great affection. He is now a Privy Councillor. Many people here and in the constituency would be highly delighted to see him return to Westminster in another place. As the successor to Gregor and a representative of the Labour and Co-operative movements, I have an ideal before me for which I should strive in the next few years, and, I hope, longer.

I should like to describe the constituency. As Gregor's maiden speech was in 1964, some people might need reminding of details of the constituency. Gregor represented Rutherglen from 1964 to 1983, and Glasgow, Rutherglen from 1983 to the recent general election, so most of the years were spent within the old constituency boundaries. The bulk of it comprised the Cambuslang and Halfway area. The communities are based on the mining, steel and iron industries. Unfortunately, with their decline, employment has declined in those areas, but in Cambuslang and Halfway we have communities that reflect traditional values and pride in those occupations.

In the town of Rutherglen, we have a tight-knit local community. At one stage many small employers contributed to the economy and kept the community tight-knit. The town was the oldest royal burgh in Scotland, dating back to the 12th century. In Cambuslang and Halfway and Rutherglen there was a valued tradition of service to local government and a good reputation held by the local councils, which unfortunately, to our regret, was ended by the Government of the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) in 1974, with the reorganisation of local government.

Since 1983 the boundaries have been extended by the addition of parts of Castlemilk and Toryglen housing schemes, part of the city of Glasgow. Although those communities are comparatively young, they have the advantage of having people who moved there who represent the best of the great city of Glasgow. It is such people and their fathers and mothers who made Glasgow great.

All the communities that I have mentioned have one thing in common, which causes great blight in many sections—the problem of unemployment. Many people before me have spoken and, I am sure, after me will speak more eloquently of the damage done to the social fabric by unemployment. Having been born, brought up and stayed all my life in the constituency, I have seen at first hand the damage done by unemployment in many areas, particularly the damage done to families and young people.

That brings me to the role of the Scottish Development Agency. It is appropriate that I should make my maiden speech on the SDA because when Gregor MacKenzie was a Minister at the Scottish Office he was directly concerned with it. I am comparatively lucky in having quite an extensive knowledge of the work done by the SDA because of Gregor's continual reporting back to the constituency. The SDA represents a public commitment to employment and the attraction of investment into Scotland. That public investment should be safeguarded and supported, not just tolerated in public life.

As has been mentioned, the review group reported favourably on the reputation of the SDA. Between 1980 and 1985, 5,000 to 7,000 jobs could be attributed directly to the work of the agency. The inward investment represented by Locate in Scotland is crucial because without it, the new technology and the continual flow of new jobs, one ends up with no employment.

It is against that background that I appeal, on behalf of the people I represent, for support for the principle and practice of the SDA. Without being too controversial, may I say that there is a feeling among many people that the support from the Government is ambivalent. In spite of the success of the SDA—we feel that what it tackles it tackles well—it is limited by a lack of resources. There must be additional resources so that the work done by the SDA can be expanded and improved in order to bring more employment to areas such as mine. I believe sincerely that market forces alone will not bring employment to my constituency, and I am sure that that applies to many other constituencies.

The Hoover factory is located in Cambuslang in my constituency and I have some knowledge of that factory because I worked there for 13 years before coming to Parliament. I have first hand knowledge, through the trade union movement within the factory, of the role played by the SDA in securing grants and investment for the Hoover company and securing the future of Hoover at Cambuslang. The investment and support from the SDA is highlighted by the recent purchase by the Hoover company of the land on which the factory is situated. The land was bought from the SDA and the agency was extremely co-operative in its negotiations with the company. The proof of the pudding is shown by the agency's support for the Hoover factory. The factory is

now the major European manufacturer of upright vacuum cleaners. We are first in something and that is important to me. In addition, in January 1988 the factory will start exporting upright cleaners to the United States, and, again, that is a success for us. There will be future investment, again with the help and co-operation of the SDA, and early next year we hope to introduce a new range of cleaner motors. In all those issues the presence and support of the SDA was crucial.

We cannot ignore the role of the trade union organisation within the Hoover factory. After some difficulties there is no doubt that the relationship between the trade union movement and the management at Hoover has enabled the SDA to become involved to a greater extent in recent years. I can speak from first hand knowledge of the reputation of the trade union movement within the factory because my brother, Edward, is a convenor for the Amalgamated Engineering Union within the factory.

On the other side of the Clyde from Cambuslang is the Cambuslang investment park. It is situated within the constituency of Glasgow, Shettleston. The SDA has invested in the park. It has built many small factories and has actively encouraged small businesses to set up. I was privileged to be a Strathclyde regional councillor for five years prior to coming to the House. I was also fortunate enough to be chairman of the urban aid committee for the Glasgow division of Strathclyde council. In conjunction with the Scottish Office and other organisations, we planned the application and distribution of urban aid. There is nothing wrong with planning. I sometimes get the feeling that "planning" has become a dirty word. We will not get anywhere unless we plan. The Scottish Office co-operated with Strathclyde in planning the distribution of urban aid, although there were one or two comments about the amount of aid. Planning, through the SDA, must play a role in future investment in Scotland, particularly in my constituency. In my opinion, there is no alternative to planning. There is no alternative to maintaining and expanding the role of the SDA and ensuring that we maintain and increase employment within my constituency.

I know that in previous maiden speeches there has been anger about the breaking of the convention that maiden speeches should be non-controversial. I respect that convention and hope that there has been nothing controversial in my speech. However, I also respect other conventions, one being that when a Member of Parliament is elected it is to represent all his constituents in Parliament. Allied to that, when a Prime Minister and a Government are elected, they also represent all the people. That should be remembered on both sides of the House.

I have put forward the case for the people of my constituency as other hon. Members have done for all those in their constituencies. We need more employment, and the role of the SDA in providing it is crucial. I strongly support not only the future expanded role of the SDA but the provision of more resources. I therefore ask that a commitment be given to expanding the resources of the SDA.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Ernie Ross (Dundee, West): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I know that you will be able to help me. There appears to be a rumour circulating that, despite the fact that many hon. Members have deliberately stayed in the House to talk on this important issue, the Government intend moving the closure of the debate. I am sure that you are aware of the number of hon. Members on the Opposition Benches who are seeking to catch your eye. We advise the Government that it would not make much sense if they were to attempt, at this very early stage in this very important debate, to close the debate.

1.6 am

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): The hon. Member for Glasgow, Rutherglen (Mr. McAvoy) certainly took the House with him in his comments about his predecessor, Gregor MacKenzie. There is no doubt that Gregor was respected and held in deep affection in all parts of the House. We found the hon. Gentleman's speech interesting. He spoke with conviction and displayed clearly his love of his constituency and his great love of that great city of Glasgow. He also displayed his genuine concern for the problems of the unemployed in his constituency and he left the House in no doubt of his knowledge of the Scottish Development Agency—in particular the assistance that it has given to Hoover. We look forward to his contributions in future debates and are sure that he will take the opportunity, as all of us do from time to time, to be provocative. I congratulate him on his maiden speech.

During the debate we have been discussing the activities of the SDA, and I wish to place on record my appreciation for the work done by its former chief executive, George Matheson. During his period of office, I always found him extremely courteous and helpful. The hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) said that not everyone on the Government Benches supported the SDA and intervention. He is quite right. I have no hesitation in saying that I have never believed that the only way to pump prime or to encourage internal or inward investment was through vehicles such as the SDA. The creation of conditions that encourage investment is much more important an area of Government activity than the setting up and operating of agencies such as the SDA. The control of inflation, the reduction in taxation and in local and national borrowing together with other measures such as privatisation linked to employee shareholdings——

Mr. Canavan: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I realise that you are being bullied by the Tory establishment there, but will you bear in mind——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I can tell the hon. Gentleman that I am not being bullied by anyone in this House, but I will hear him out.

Mr. Canavan: Will you bear in mind the fact that the Labour party is the majority party in Scotland and will not be bullied by English Tories such as the man on your right-hand side, the Government Chief Whip, who is trying to influence you to bring about a premature end to this debate?

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The right hon. and learned Gentleman is seeking my advice on a matter.

Mr. Walker: I welcome your protection from these interventions, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The control of inflation, the reduction in taxation and the reduction in local and national borrowing, linked to measures which change attitudes — measures such as privatisation, with the necessary ingredient of employee shareholding—do much more to stimulate investment

[Mr. Walker]

and create jobs than agencies such as the SDA. Equally, I believe that, if we must have such an agency, it is nonsense to operate it within a regional aid policy which is determined by lines drawn on a map, instead of targeting the aid, such as it is, on individual industries, firms or sections of industry where there is real need.

I can give an example of why I believe that the Scottish Development Agency and regional aid are nonsense. Recently British Aerospace set up a flying training school at Prestwick. I welcome that. I do not welcome the fact that the school is heavily subsidised with public funds, so that it can offer much enhanced wages and pass on much increased costs to potential customers. That would not matter if it was the only flying training school in Scotland, but when another flying training school which has been in operation for 50 years has its business opportunities substantially diminished, and many of its employees enticed away by heavily subsidised wages, it is the economics of the madhouse. It is not useful either to Air Service Training, which is the 50-year-old school in my constituency, or to British Aerospace at Prestwick because it creates completely false economic circumstances at Prestwick and adverse economic circumstances in Perth. That cannot be sensible or logical in the long term. By pricing the training of overseas students out of the Scottish market, instead of having two flying training schools in Scotland we will end up with none because they cannot get customers.

The other danger is that the future of the 50-year-old school is put at risk because the opposition is enticing away its best employees and then pricing it out of the market, because to continue training the school must bring in new people, who must be offered the inflated salaries which are boosted by the grant-aided assistance.

The Government must also examine carefully the activities of the SDA in Dundee. I have no objection to the Dundee waterfront being improved, and I support anything that will improve that city, but it is incredible that the waterfront project will contain many retail units when Dundee already has relatively recent developments at Wellgate and Overgate, both of which will be put substantially at risk if the waterfront project goes ahead as presented.

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman, who hails from Perth and is not associated with Dundee, except for the fact that he was a bus driver in the city, has not taken on board the views of the elected representatives at district and regional council level — including members of the Tory party — who supported the waterfront development. Despite the Wellgate and Overgate developments, they continue to support the waterfront development as a major strategic development for the city of Dundee. We would welcome if it the hon. Gentleman would keep his nose out of our affairs.

Mr. Walker: The hon. Gentleman has his facts wrong. Let me correct them. I was born in Dundee; I grew up in Dundee; I was educated in Dundee; I worked for a substantial part of my career in Dundee; it is still my home town. My daughter will be married in Dundee. The hon. Gentleman has only been in the House for a short time and I suggest that he consults his hon. Friend the Member for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross), with whom I have collaborated in matters affecting Dundee. I like to think that where the best interests of that city are concerned, none of us will practise political charades just because we want to use them as means to an end.

I am concerned that public money is to be put into a project that should be examined much more carefully. If the hon. Member for Dundee, East (Mr. McAllion) had done his homework he would have known that I was the managing director of a retail stores group, so I know something about retailing. I am absolutely certain that among the new retail units on the waterfront, there will be many empty shops as well as in both the Overgate and the Wellgate developments. There are not enough customers for the project to go ahead and for all the shops to be sustained.

Mr. Fairbairn: Before we get too sentimental about Dundee, let us examine an example of unfairness there. The Stakis hotel on the waterfront can have five years without paying rates. Not 500 yards from it, the Angus hotel has to pay rates of half a million pounds a year. That is not a sensible system; it occurs thanks to Socialism.

Mr. Walker: I thank my hon. and learned Friend for his intervention. He and I take a keen interest in all developments on Tayside, and we are well aware that the advantages of not paying rates often create distortions for existing businesses. As with the air services training school at Scone, it is equally true that if a company is assisted in such a way that it does not have to meet its normal requirements to sustain services locally, firms that are already in business in its area are disadvantaged.

I turn now to the issue of industrial development. The hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) is an honest gentleman and I always listen carefully to what he has to say. Although I do not agree with much of it, I have never doubted his industry, integrity and conviction. I was therefore surprised that he did not mention the substantial inward investment that would take place under Health Care International. He seems selective in what he chooses to discuss, and I do not condemn him for that — all politicians tend to be selective. Surely, however, if it is right to have one type of inward investment that creates jobs and opportunities, we must also welcome others.

I also welcome the decision taken with regard to the quality of decision making in the Scottish Development Agency. One of the major criticisms that I have levelled at the agency down the years has been the difficulty of obtaining decisions from it, particularly for small firms and in rural areas, where getting a decision often took so long that the process was overtaken by events and the matter under discussion became irrelevant because other things had happened.

My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary will not be surprised if I tell him that I am not excited about allowing the SDA to have greater borrowing facilities.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the debate be now adjourned.—*[Mr. Michael Forsyth.]*

1.21 am

Mr. Dewar: I think that I am right in saying that this is a debatable motion.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am willing to have the motion debated.

Mr. Dewar: I am grateful to you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I do not wish to delay the House for long and it

is not necessarily productive for us to have a lengthy exchange on the motion, but I should express my disquiet at the fact that the motion has been moved at this stage.

This is an important debate and we must know the Government's mind. It was obviously their intention that the debate should be continued to a finish tonight. We have a remarkable turn-out of Scottish Members in every part of the House and the Government have obviously decided to delay the debate until another day. Before we reach a decision on the matter we ought to be told when we shall return to the Bill.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Forsyth): I am happy to help the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar). I should have thought that next Thursday, when there is to be a debate on industrial policy, would be an appropriate time to reconvene.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Knowing your concern for the rights of minorities in the House, I am surprised that you accepted the motion without hearing from all parts of the House. Given the number of Scottish Members who wanted to make a contribution to the debate, I am also surprised that the Front Benches want to close the debate so early.

1.22 am

Mr. Tom Clarke: The Under-Secretary's intervention was extraordinary. We have just come to the end of a recess which lasted for almost three months — *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I thought that I heard the word "lie" used by a Labour Member. I hope that that was not the case, because I believe that that is not the sort of language that should be used in the House.

Madam Deputy Speaker: That is certainly not the type of language that should be used in the House. I must confess that I did not hear the word.

Mr. Clarke: The people of Scotland will find it astonishing that—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Welsh: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The comment was made by the hon. Member for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross). I invite him to make it again publicly, instead of privately.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. It would be very helpful if hon. Members were not invited to use language that is not appropriate in the House.

Mr. Clarke: I am addressing myself to the Under-Secretary's motion. We have had a three-month break and we are here ready to go into the small hours to discuss the extremely important matter of Scotland's high unemployment and the role of the SDA, which has been steadily diminished by the Government — their approach was made clear in the weak ministerial speech on Second Reading. The Scottish people expect us to discuss the SDA and the budget proposed by the Government.

There is considerable urgency about the matter. For example, the Minister spoke about the European Coal and Steel Communities. How do we know that there will not be recommendations about Ravenscraig and that the SDA will be in a position to deal with those recommendations? We do not know, and we are entitled to give this matter the utmost thought.

I understand that the Secretary of State for Scotland has gone to Japan. There was a suggestion that he went there in a hurry when he discovered that the Government of Japan were looking for a Prime Minister. Equally, it has been suggested that they decided quickly to find a compromise before he arrived. The absence of the Secretary of State for Scotland and the quite outrageous way in which Government Ministers are trying to approach this problem is quite unacceptable to the people of Scotland and to the majority of Labour Members that they elected. I hope that the proposal by the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) will not be accepted.

1.27 am

Mr. Buchan: I am grateful for the opportunity to speak on this eminently debatable motion. The motion is a disgrace. We have waited for some months for the House to reconvene so that we could discuss the affairs of Scotland, having demonstrated only five months ago that the people of Scotland wish us so to behave. At 11 o'clock tonight we were confronted by a motion in connection with the most important economic agency for the development of the industry and the environment of Scotland. We went along willingly with the decision to have a late-night debate instead of, as should be the case, a debate starting at 3.30 in the afternoon.

It was no wish of ours to have a debate on this important subject at this time of night, but we were prepared to do it on the basis that every hon. Member would have an opportunity to say how the economy of his constituency and its environmental well-being was faring and how the Scottish Development Agency under the tutelage and guidance of the Government was conducting the business for which it was set up. On the first day back our Front Bench, our Whips and, indeed, our Back Benchers showed a willingness to co-operate in the business of the House by saying that rather than delay discussion of this important matter, we were prepared to have a debate late at night.

Some extraordinary things have been said and should be corrected. One of the extraordinary problems that we face is that the Minister of State and his junior Minister who flanks him do not believe in the involvement of public agencies in the economy. The more they tried to stress the success of the Scottish Development Agency under their guidance, the more foolish they made their own economic position. We understood the hesitancy of the Minister in the face of that. However, he had been left with the task and had to do it, because his lord and master had seen fit, on this day of all days, and on this subject of all subjects, to go to Japan. Because of that, we recognise the difficulties of the Minister.

Nevertheless, no hon. Member speaking after the Minister took advantage of the embarrassing situation that he and his colleague find themselves in. On the contrary, they dealt with the merits of the situation as it affected the people of Scotland instead of making cheap, shuttlecock political points. We are now tempted to play those cheap, political points, but we shall avoid the temptation because the issue is too serious. We must be concerned about the minority parties. That is to say, the SNP——

Dr. Godman: The Tory party.

Mr. Buchan: I was coming to the Tory party. My hon. Friend should not take my best lines. There is also the Liberal party and both factions of the SDP. We have heard from only one faction of the SDP in this debate, but he uttered an immortal phrase—if I can find it—which encouraged us to hope that the other faction might enter. Not only have we had a double comparative from my hon. Friend the Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) who spoke about a "more wiser" Minister, but we were exalted, or rather the Minister was exalted, when the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) asked him to give "slightly more unequivocal support." I ask the House to consider this phrase and the problem facing the Minister who has to respond to such a request. How does the Minister respond to a request to give "slightly more unequivocal support"? We look forward to hearing that point developed by the other faction of the SDP, because that party must still be seen as a minority party and it has not had the opportunity to develop that point. We look forward even more to hearing the Minister reply to learn how he can give slightly more unequivocal support.

There was a curious intervention from the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth). It was curious because the Minister of State is present to conduct the business of the House and make such interventions. The Whip is present, keeping his hon. Friends in order and making technical interventions. But no, the theorist, the ideologue, the man whose very soul must have been burned by the words uttered in support of the SDA by the Minister of State which affected his St. Andrew's reactionary economic thinking, intervened. We know how much the Government have rejected Adam Smith, but for the hon. Member for Stirling to sit beside the Minister of State who was endorsing the role of the SDA must have finally caused his impatient intervention. The hon. Member for Stirling had endured it for a few hours, but he could not resist the opportunity to come in.

What did the hon. Member for Stirling say when he intervened? He said that we should stop the debate for which we had been waiting and in which the Opposition and other minority parties were willing to engage through the night. Even though it should have taken place during the day, we accepted the imposition of the timing of the debate. We recognise that we can only speak to time and eternity because no members of the press are listening to us. Nevertheless, we embarked on the debate and the hon. Member for Stirling said "Let's stop the discussion. Let's not explore the role of the SDA or whether we are getting the right figures or the wrong figures or whether the Bill should be passed." No, he said, "Let's postpone discussion and let's put it on when we are committed to a debate on Scottish industry during the day and some of the matters that we were willing to discuss during the night can be dealt with during the day when they may be reported, for example when we debate the nature of the Scottish economy next Thursday. We could then explore some of these issues." That is compounding evil with evil. First he prevents us from debating these matters tonight, then he replaces a debate during the day on the Scottish economy with this debate. We are facing a monstrous conspiracy from the Government Front Bench

Mr. Foulkes: Double jeopardy.

Mr. Buchan: Double jeopardy. Indeed, a double comparative between the two hon. Members on the Government Front Bench.

This is monstrous. I am an innocent in these affairs. I admit with humility that I know a little of the workings of the House. However, I have never understood them. We have an opportunity to explore them tonight. To what extent is it in your hands, Madam Deputy Speaker, to stand up and say, as I am saying, that you are willing to hear a discussion but that, upon hearing the words of truth from the Opposition Back Benches, you understand that this monstrous proposition should not be accepted?

We know that the Tories have the power to carry the vote. They are all in the woodwork, in the wainscotting, behind the busts and statues. They are skulking in the bars. They are ready to come out at the call of their lord and master. Although she is not here, her spirit is here. They will carry the vote. I cannot give any hope to my colleagues, comrades friends and minority groups. The Government will carry the vote. If they do, and if you, Madam Deputy Speaker cannot intervene to stop it, can you tell me whether you have the power to return the debate to the earlier topic of discussion?

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have to inform the hon. Gentleman that I have no power to do that.

Mr. Buchan: We learn things, even at 1.33 am.

I regret that, but I have utmost confidence in you Madam Deputy Speaker and I recall that you once said on a famous occasion "Just call me madam."

Mr. Fairbairn *rose*——

Mr. Buchan: I am willing to give way as long as I do not lose the opportunity to speak again. Surely the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn) is not to make a speech now. I have been awake waiting to make a speech about the Scottish Development Agency. I am trying to point out the inadequacies of the figures while the hon. and learned Gentleman has been sleeping in his fond Elysium, dreaming of castles. That has been his contribution while the rest of us have been working.

We are in a difficult position, Madam Deputy Speaker. First, I have your assurance that you have no power to intervene to reject the monstrous suggestion that has been made from the Government Front Bench, Secondly, there is the smug contentment of the Minister of State and the Under-Secretary of State that they have an army of cohorts who are available to carry the day. They are trying to prevent a debate on the Scottish economy from being conducted during the day by replacing it with the Second Reading debate on which we were engaged. They had a mandate to hold the debate through the night and we were willing to accept that. I hope that the Government Chief Whip and the Prime Minister have been sent for to see the behaviour of his and her junior Ministers. We are faced with a monstrous proposition and I hope that it will be rejected with contempt.

There are Tory Members everywhere and I turn to them. There are some honest men among them—there are not many but statistically there must be some. After all, many of them are still in the Palace. They have not thrown themselves out of windows, despite the events at the stock exchange this week. The fact that they are here

shows a devotion to duty beyond the call of profit. I understand that some of them must have been pretty sad this week.

We are facing yet another crisis of capitalism. I have lived through 17 final crises of capitalism and this week we have been witnessing yet another. It would not be relevant to debate what has been happening but I believe that it would be in order to discuss the nature of the present crisis. The Tory party, the governing elite of the country, has rejected its connections with industry, commerce, the land and agriculture. Instead, it has confined itself to creating a link with the City. It is concerned only with exchanging pieces of paper and not with the production of real wealth. It has been assuring the country that these pieces of paper would continue to expand but, lo and behold, they have decreased in magnitude.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am interested in the hon. Gentleman's speech, but he is straying a long way from the point. I have been enormously tolerant and I wish that he would return now to the motion that is before the House.

Mr. Buchan: I did not realise that I was straying, Madam Deputy Speaker. I was merely trying to describe the nature of the crisis. The facts speak for themselves. We have massive unemployment and the failure of manufacturing industry in Scotland. When I became a Member of this place there were 14 engineering workshops in my town of Johnstone, and under this Government there is none. My hon. Friend the Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham) comes from Linwood, and under this Government a factory at which 4,500 workers were willing to work was closed down overnight. In the face of this we are asked to forgo a debate on the Scottish economy, a debate that would have taken place during the day, and instead to continue with the Second Reading debate in which we were engaged. I suggest that in their shame the Government should show a little humility, withdraw the motion and allow us to proceed with the Second Reading debate.

1.39 am

Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): The speech of the hon. Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Buchan) has given me two regrets. One is that I did not sleep longer, and the other is that the recess was so short.

It is fairly important that Opposition Members wish to pretend that they have some claim to be interested in Scotland.

Mr. Buchan: Scotland is not interested in the hon. and learned Gentleman.

Mr. Fairbairn: If they wish to have a claim to be interested in Scotland, they should remember first that this debate was deliberately delayed by Opposition filibustering, and secondly that the speech to which we have just had the misfortune to listen had nothing whatever to do with an interest in Scotland or in investment in the Scottish Development Agency. Nor was any credit given to the fact that, under the present Government, the SDA has regenerated Glasgow. It was all political filibustering. I hope that the message goes out from the House tonight —of course, the press is closed—that the Conservative Government have vastly increased the funding of the SDA, the attraction of funds to the SDA and the effect of the SDA. All that the Opposition are about is delaying and preventing a debate. They are not interested in the economic benefits that Scotland has had.

Let the message go out: Scotland is the most prosperous part of the United Kingdom, thanks to this Government. Let it never be forgotten that that is so.

1.41 am

Dr. John Reid (Motherwell, North): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for allowing me to speak. I realise that it is very good of you to do so at this time of night. I shall be considerably briefer than some of the earlier speakers, and considerably less articulate and astute in my observations than my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Buchan). I would not attempt to teach him anything, but perhaps I could correct one fact that I have picked up from his speech. The low incidence of defenestration during the recent City crisis may not be related directly to the incidence of integrity on the Conservative Benches; it may merely be a product of the increase in double glazing over the past 10 years.

I am not only less astute but more sympathetic to Conservative Members than my hon. Friend. There are Scottish Ministers who want at any cost to stop us debating the motion on the SDA. I am understanding, because their burdens are many and their numbers few. I say to my hon. Friend the Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) that it is no good telling them that they have just had three months' holiday; some of their colleagues have just been assigned 10 years' holiday.

Let me make two brief serious points. First, there have been a number of Opposition speeches on the substantial motion we are discussing from the Opposition Front Bench, and one maiden speech from the Back Benches. But there have been no speakers from Lothian, Strathclyde, Fife or Lanarkshire, whose constituents are vitally dependent on the motion.

Mr. Foulkes: Is my hon. Friend aware that there has not been a speaker from Ayrshire either? I know that, as someone who hails from Ayrshire, he will understand the point.

Dr. Reid: I was not aware of that. I am sorry; there may be other areas that have been missed out. But that is only a further illustration of the inadequacy of the debate.

Mr. O'Neill: My hon. Friend omitted to refer to the Central region. The Minister's intervention when he tried to wind up the debate cannot be called a speech. The problems that face the Central region that my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, East (Mrs. Ewing) and I wanted to draw to the attention of the House have not as yet been aired. We wanted also to draw the problems faced by Stirling to the attention of the House, but the Minister is reluctant to have those problems exposed at this stage.

Dr. Reid: The electors of both Central region and Stirling will note with interest the fact that after three hours of debate it was their Member of Parliament who intervened in order to stop further discussion of the problems faced by Scotland and the SDA.

Another group of people in my constituency will note with great interest the Government's attitude tonight. Within 12 days of this debate the giant Caterpillar plant at Uddingston is due to close. This Government proclaimed that they were prepared to back that plant

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against the decision of a multinational company to close it. Although taxpayers' money had been ploughed into the plant, that multinational company was prepared to loot the pension fund, to abandon the work force and to snub the Government.

The Government proclaimed what they were prepared to do from the rooftops, but we have heard nothing from them during the last three months. The Government said that they would fully support the efforts of the local community to keep the Caterpillar plant open, and yet, while the Government publicly proclaimed that they would use every ounce of economic muscle that they had to change the company's mind, privately they ensured that the Caterpillar company would be able to tender for a large Ministry of Defence contract. If 1,200 people at that plant are about to face years on the dole, they will be asking why the Government were unable to spend more than three hours tonight discussing the role that the Scottish Development Agency might play in saving their jobs.

1.47 am

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): I had anticipated that when we agreed to the motion that stands on the Order Paper the Second Reading debate would be completed. The fact is that 76 per cent. of the Scottish electorate voted for opposition parties, and those parties have been well represented in the House this evening. We are willing and able to stay here for as long as is necessary to complete the Second Reading of the Bill.

If the Government believe that this is important legislation and that it should come before the House during prime time, why was it tagged on to other major legislation that affects the whole of the United Kingdom? If Scottish legislation is important, it should have been allocated prime time. The Government would not then have chickened out at this late stage and refused to ensure that the Bill had a Second Reading.

It is strange that the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) should tell us in advance of the official statement about the business of the House and that we can anticipate a debate on industrial policy next week. We have no guarantee of that until we hear in the business statement that such a debate will take place. Even if a debate on the Scottish economy and industrial policy were to take place next Thursday, that debate would now be limited to the Scottish Development Agency. The SDA is a welcome part of Scotland's industrial scene, and all hon. Members pay tribute to the work that the agency is doing. However, to limit the debate to the SDA would mean that we were avoiding an examination of other aspects of the Scottish economy and Scottish industrial policy.

Perhaps the Government do not want to discuss these issues. But perhaps even more appalling was the fact that the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), in the initial debate that was taking place through the usual channels, appeared to acquiesce in the decision to report progress — [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] The hon. Member for Garscadden, in discussions with myself and the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood), indicated that he was willing to accept the motion to report progress. Will you advise me and other hon. Members, Madam Deputy Speaker, whether it is a regular function that Second Reading debates can be postponed on report progress motions? I am not an expert on the various technicalities of the House, but it seems unusual that a second reading debate should be interrupted in this way.

Mr. Dewar *rose*——

Mrs. Ewing: Finally, Madam Deputy Speaker——

Hon. Members: Give way.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Lady is obviously not giving way.

Mrs. Ewing *rose*——

Mr. Foulkes: The hon. Lady knows that she is wrong.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. Lady must be heard.

Mrs. Ewing: I am affording to the hon. Member for Garscadden——

Mr. Foulkes: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Is it not a convention of this House that when one hon. Member has made a direct allegation against another, who then seeks to intervene, that hon. Member gives way? If the hon. Lady had any honour she would honour that convention.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. It is the convention of this House that an hon. Member gives way in such circumstances, but it is entirely up to that hon. Member. If the hon. Lady does not intend to do that, it is for the Chair to protect her.

Mrs. Ewing: No doubt the hon. Member for Garscadden will have ample opportunity to voice his opinion, but I am perfectly willing, unlike others, to give way.

Mr. Dewar: I wonder whether the Chair could give me some protection on this occasion? The hon. Lady made a specific allegation. I make no comment on the taste of reporting private conversations in that way, but I am entitled to protest when they are distorted, inaccurately, to the point where they bear no relation to the truth. I say, quite categorically, that I am not in agreement with the Government Whips to close this debate or to report progress. If the Government Whips are unwise enough to insist on that course I shall advise my hon. Friends to vote against it.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman has now had an opportunity of stating his case.

Mr. Foulkes: Withdraw.

Mrs. Ewing: I shall continue with my earlier point. It was quite clear in earlier conversations what the situation was——

Mr. Buchan: I hesitate to raise another point of order, but we have reached a point where I must. I heard part of this private conversation and the version given by my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) is accurate. I ask the hon. Lady to withdraw the allegation.

Madam Deputy Speaker: If the hon. Gentleman had been listening, I am sure that he would have heard me say that I am sure that the House is happy that the hon. Member for Garscadden has had an opportunity to clarify the position. He has clarified it and that will appear in the *Official Report*. It is up to the hon. Lady whether she withdraws; it is entirely her prerogative.

Mrs. Ewing: The clear impression that was given to me was that that I have already stated. The hon. Member for Garscadden has made it clear how he interpreted matters, as in his right.

I should like to make it clear that not only have we lost a debate on the general economic situation in Scotland next week, we also leave an uncertainty hanging over the future of the SDA Many of the projects that have been anticipated by people who are looking for funding from the SDA and many people whose jobs are currently supported may find that week a very difficult one to live through. Scottish interests have been neglected by the Government and that is intolerable.

1.55 am

Mr. John McFall (Dumbarton): My hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) said that he was surprised that two questions had not been answered by the Secretary of State this evening — who was in charge of economics in Scotland and who was in charge of the SDA budget. Is the debate to be curtailed without answers to those questions when the Secretary of State gave an assurance that he would answer them?

The debate is essential to the Scottish economy because the SDA is the fulcrum of investment in Scotland. Many hon. Members need the SDA in their constituencies. My constituency has a population of over 80,000 and between 1985-86 and 1986-87 its budget was cut by 42 per cent. That is the kernal of tonight's argument. The lack of investment in areas with increasing unemployment and poverty means that the SDA has a role to play.

The SDA figures show cuts in the programme over the last five years. My hon. Friend the Member for Garscadden was correct when he mentioned those figures at the beginning of the debate.

Dumbarton needs the SDA to work with the private sector to tackle the industrial and economic development of the area. As the Secretary of State said, the SDA should be used as a tool of regional policy. He and his fellow Ministers should go ahead forthwith. The SDA should be credited for what has happened in my constituency, but it has acted with a distinct lack of resources.

We say that the SDA should be given the resources to do the job that it should be doing. Environmental projects are taking place in my constituency, but there are no major economic initiatives. That is missing.

According to the official figures Dumbarton has an employment rate of 21 per cent. Greenock 20·3 per cent. and Lanarkshire 19 per cent. Those figures show the crying need for economic initiative——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will relate his remarks to the motion. We are discussing the motion to adjourn the debate, not the Second Reading. The hon. Gentleman must relate his remarks to the motion.

Mr. McFall: My points emphasise the fact that we should not close the debate. We have waited since 10 pm. Each of us has been patient, as my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Buchan) said, so that we could put the case for our constituencies. Are we to be told at this hour, despite our patience and initiative, that we cannot put the case for our constituents and the Scottish economy when it is so fundamental? We want to air our views.

Dr. Reid *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is this an intervention?

Dr. Reid: Yes. I asked very quietly.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I should like to hear.

Dr. Reid: I just want to ask my hon. Friend the Member for Dumbarton (Mr. McFall) if he would care to repeat the point that he made at the beginning of his speech concerning the two definite promises from the Minister. I ask my hon. Friend to do so because the Minister was not listening at the time and I do not know whether he is listening now. My hon. Friend should remind the Minister that he promised to answer two specific points before the close of this discussion tonight. If my hon. Friend does so I am sure that the integrity of the Minister will ensure that, before we get to the close of the debate, he will answer the questions put by my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) and which are of great importance regarding the SDA.

Mr. McFall: I remind the Minister that those two important questions should be answered. They hightlight the fact that the Minister has something to answer. Without extending your patience any further, Madam Deputy Speaker, this is a crucial debate and it must continue. There must be a political commitment allied to public investment to regenerate the communities. We are speaking here on behalf of our constituents and the Government should have the decency to answer the case.

2.1 am

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): I simply wish to make plain how much I deplore and regret this motion moved by the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth). I have been in the Chamber for some hours and I hoped to make a constituency speech. I had hoped to ask the Minister if he would give assistance to the identification of Inverclyde as prime location for inward investment and make it a priority area for Locate in Scotland. That opportunity has been denied to me by the motion.

The Minister will be aware that, in the past, Locate in Scotland has not, perhaps for understandable reasons, encouraged much inward investment into Inverlyde. However, Inverclyde has been transformed because of the fine work performed by the decent, honourable public officials of the Inverclyde initiative.

The Inverclyde initiative and its officials are working with an inadequate budget against darkening economic circumstances. The male unemployment rate in my constituency is almost 26 per cent. At this time there are rumours circulating in my constituency concerning a redundancy programme involving upwards of 1,000 men now employed in a local shipyard. One of the reasons why that yard is under threat is that the Government reneged on their promise to give it a Ministry of Defence order for three small vessels.

I deplore the motion because I was denied the chance to admire the good work conducted by SDA officials under Donald Draffen. In recent days he displayed delightful initiative as he rescued, for the price of £1, the derelict 'Maid of the Loch'. I hasten to add that she is not a prostitute of the lower Clyde, but a Clyde steamer featured, as many of my hon. Friends will recall, in "Para Handy". I offered 50p towards the cost of that purchase. Mr. Draffen is hoping to obtain money from the SDA for

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what I believe would be a dramatic and marvellous visitors' centre based on Custom House Quay in Greenock.

There is another reason why the motion causes me deep dismay. I had hoped to obtain some sort of assurance from the Minister about the possibility of Inverclyde being declared an enterprise zone. He may or may not have read the report on enterprise zones produced by the Cambridge economic consultants, which states, inter alia, that the two most successful enterprise zones are in Scotland — in Dundee and on Clydebank. One of the reasons why they are successful is that they are based on publicly-owned land. I suspect that the Minister is not much concerned about those problems, but it is absolutely essential that if Inverclyde is made an enterprise zone, the land should remain in public ownership as per the recommendation in that report.

What we have seen again tonight is the hatred of Ministers for critics of their policies, whether those critics are the honestly awkward critics in the Opposition or— God knows there are few of them — awkwardly honest critics in the Conservative party.

The motion is to be deplored, especially by people living in constituencies such as mine with massively high unemployment and the real threat that that level of unemployment will not come down in the near future, but will increase further. The SDA has an important role to play in Inverclyde. I regret that I have not had the chance to outline in detail the superb work carried out by the officials of the Inverclyde initiative.

2.6 am

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): I do not believe that the impasse in which we find ourselves is unusual or unique. Such a situation could arise with monotonous and increasing regularity in the coming weeks and months.

I oppose the motion, but it is symptomatic. I am addressing my remarks to the rump of the Conservative Back Benchers, who are sitting in on the debate wondering with an air of puzzlement what is going on. I say to them directly that in my view what is happening now is symptomatic of the fact that we do not have proper time to debate important Scottish issues in the House of Commons as it is presently constituted here at Westminster. The problem that we are now having reflects that. It will not go away until we have a proper focus for important Scottish debates, whether in Edinburgh or anywhere else. I have my own views about the need for a Scottish Parliament, where never in a month of Sundays would any Government in Scotland attempt to adopt a device to curtail a debate about the financing limits of the SDA of the sort that is being used now.

Mr. Fairbairn: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Kirkwood: I do not want to take any interventions, because I want to make a brief speech.

I oppose the Government's motion because it sets a worrying precedent to start interrupting and adjourning Second Reading debates. Opposition parties have precious little weaponry available to them in their armoury in any case. We have become accustomed to the Government having increasing recourse to guillotines. I understand that there are occasions when Governments have to use guillotines, but guillotining Second Reading debates is altogether different. It is new to me. *[Interruption.]* My experience may not be as great as the 150 years that the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) seems to have been in the House, but I believe that guillotining Second Reading debates on such issues is a worrying precedent. I should like an assurance from whoever winds up the debate, if anybody does—none of the Ministers looks as if he is itching to do so — that there will be no more repetitions of motions to adjourn the debate on Second Reading being moved in this fashion because it would be a retrograde step.

Mr. Fairbairn: I am sure that the House would be interested to discover on behalf of whom the hon Gentleman imagines he is speaking. The hon Gentleman talks about focusing issues. Can he tell us how, whichever party he belongs to and whatever name it will be given, he regards it as a focus?

Mr. Kirkwood: I am speaking on behalf of my constituents.

Mr. Home Robertson: Including me.

Mr. Kirkwood: Yes, including the hon Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson), who keeps meeting me in the Lobby and asking whether I am looking after his interests. I find that a difficult thing to do for a Labour Member who is a gentleman farmer. However, that is a different point.

The hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn) is a sensible enough parliamentarian to realise—*[Interruption.]* That may be stretching a point. He may not agree, but he has to admit that there is a growing body of opinion in Scotland that feels the need to bring some of the issues back to Scotland in sensible time and with sensible procedures, not at 10 minutes past 2 in the morning. If we had a proper Scottish assembly we would be sensible enough to organise our affairs better than this and would not need to have debates at this ludicrous hour.

I was interested in what the Minister said when he introduced the motion. I agree that, prima facie, the SDA financing limits are primarily a technical matter. The debate we had was entirely sensible. I was hoping to contribute to it before it was curtailed. I pay tribute to the hon Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar). He made an entirely pertinent speech. Nobody could say that there was padding in anything that he said. I have heard debates that have been restricted to an hour and a half under the statutory instrument secondary legislation procedure which have had a wider significance in terms of the amount of money and number of people involved. Therefore, I concede the Government's case to a certain extent and agree that it could have been a technical debate. I am not very experienced in the House, but I warn hon. Members from all parties that if we reach a situation in which the usual channels cannot accommodate problems such as this and come up with sensible answers to meet everybody's needs we shall never get all we want. If we are to go into the breach every time and make a point of principle out of every debate that deals with Scottish matters we shall all spend many fascinating hours in the House throughout the night. In fact, we may end up doing a disservice to our constituents and the people of Scotland.

We minority parties have a difficulty in that we are not involved in the direct communication within the usual

channels. I do not wish to apportion blame, but, if it is true, as the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) said, that as a result of what has happened tonight, we will lose a full-scale debate on Scottish industry and development next Thursday, that is a scandal. It is all very well for experienced parliamentarians such as the hon. Member for Garscadden to say that one can make one's points if one is clever enough and that one can get round the technical and narrow nature of the debate quite easily if one puts one's mind to it but that is not the point. The hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing), who was in the Chamber earlier, made a sensible contribution to the debate. She said that there are many aspects of Scottish industry such as the heavy industries and rural development that the occupant of the Chair would not allow within the remit of the debate or the rules of order.

I make a plea not only to the Government Front Bench but to the whole House to stand back from this confrontation this evening. Lay persons in the street do not understand the arcane nature of what we are about or the subtleties of the usual channels and so on. We must be careful that, in the party-political knockabout, we do not do a disservice to our constituents and to the people of Scotland.

2.15 am

Mr. Henry McLeish (Fife, Central): Like many of my hon. Friends, I regret that I am unable to talk about my constituency problems or the qualities that the SDA has brought to many activities in my area. I shall address myself to the closure motion, because that is important. As the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) said, it shows a complete contempt for the Scottish people—although that is nothing new from the Government. They do not have any sympathy for Scottish culture or way of life, and this motion is another example of the utter contempt in which they hold not only the electorate but the Scottish people. It also does a great disservice to this House. I was elected a few months ago to represent my constituency interests. I note that a few hon. Members have decided to leave the Chamber. When will this Mother of Parliaments tell the Government to stop laughing, start listening and treat seriously the key issues that are facing Scotland?

The Minister said earlier that he would answer specific points put forward by my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar). Despite the fact that the motion has been moved, we have a right to expect the Minister to honour commitments made on the Floor of the House. To help him do so, I remind him that the rate support grant in 1982-83—and we have been discussing a financial Bill with regard to the SDA — was £343 million. The estimated figure for Scotland for 1987-88 is £66 million. That is the enterprise culture about which the Minister spoke so eloquently. Basically, it means more despair, more hardship and longer unemployment queues. The Minister still fails to listen. He is preoccupied with the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn), who made such an eloquent contribution to the debate. In 1982-83, the SDA's gross budget was £147 million. Adjusted to 1986-87 prices, this year it is estimated to be £130 million. Scotland has 330,000 people who want some enterprise, but they are unlikely to get it from this Government.

Will the Minister tonight reply to the points that have been raised, despite the closure motion put forward by the Government, despite the disreputable tactics that they have adopted and despite the fact that Scotland will read in the national press tomorrow that, once again, the Conservatives who were humiliated in the polls still continue to treat the Scottish electorate with contempt beyond belief? I hope that in a few minutes the Minister will turn his mind to what is happening in this Chamber and address himself to these points.

2.19 am

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): I am very much against the motion to close the debate, because I believe that several issues have not been fully explored. Whatever arguments I may have had with the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) this evening, I thought that he made an important point when he reminded the House of the report of the Scottish Select Committee in 1980 and the performance of the seven Conservative Members on that Committee. Of course, that was at a time when there were such things as Scottish Conservative Back-Bench Members. Five of them are no longer with us, but two of them are very much concerned with tonight's proceedings — or would be if the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) had remained in the Chamber. The other surviving Member is the Minister of State. Those Conservative Members voted to take the Scottish Development Agency outwith the realm of inward investment and to close the overseas SDA offices. The closure motion is entirely inappropriate, because we have not had a chance to hear the Minister's answers to those points.

There has been a debate about SDA finances in real terms. There should be no argument that, during the past few years, the total finances available to the Scottish Development Agency have declined in real terms. That has been against the background of savage cuts in total regional development aid and grants. In Scotland, regional development grants and other aid represent only 45 per cent. of the amount made available 10 years ago when the SDA was created. I should tell Labour Members that 40 per cent. of that cut came in the last two years of the Labour Government.

We have not explored the direction of SDA funding. An important aspect of the SDA is the fact that funding has been pushed away from risk equity investment. The SDA was formed to fill a gap in risk equity funding in Scotland, and initially 25 per cent. of its funding went towards that. Now only 2 per cent. goes to risk equity funding, such has been the dogmatism with which the Conservative party has pushed the SDA away from fulfilling one of the essential roles that it was given.

We have not considered the direction of inward investment. Conservative Members believe that economic development in Scotland can be created only by bringing companies into Scotland. They are keen on inward investment, but it cannot be a good argument that the centrepiece — indeed the only piece — of the economic strategy for Scotland should be bringing in mobile, footloose international investment. Of course, it is a good thing, but it should not be the only requirement of an economic policy.

Many hon. Members have mentioned rural schemes, including PRIDE and DRAW. A marine engineering company in my constituency is in a position similar to the company mentioned by the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes). It went into the

[Mr. Alex Salmond]

DRAW scheme, but the rug was pulled suddenly from underneath it. After spending money on a survey to see whether it was eligible, the company discovered that the DRAW scheme had been abandoned and it was left with no aid. It is ridiculous to have a policy which can give almost any amount of aid to international investors, if they are prepared to go to the right areas and to wait for the money, while there are no aid schemes to which many indigenous Scottish companies can turn.

I hope that when the Minister replies to the debate he will have the courage of his contradictions and explain the changes in his attitude to the SDA's role in international investment. The motion shows the embarrassment and uneasiness with which the Conservative party views the SDA. Although it welcomes SDA and Locate in Scotland successes in inward investment, it is uneasy because this is a public body, established by a Labour Government under pressure from the SNP—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh, come on!"] I note some dissension among Labour Members, so I shall quote the same source from which the hon. Member for Garscadden read so eloquently. The Industry Department for Scotland and the Treasury conducted a review of the SDA in 1986. It went into the history of the SDA, and at page 17 the report states:

> "The formation of the Agency was in part a response to the growing impact of North Sea oil on Scotland and the political debate on the use of oil revenues, with strong nationalist pressure for them to be spent within Scotland. Indeed the Government's anouncement of the setting up of the SDA came first in a White Paper on North Sea oil in July 1974."

This is the very document that the hon. Member for Garscadden quoted earlier. It certainly supports the case and the argument that we got the Scottish Development Agency because of the strength of the Scottish National party and its ability to influence the Labour Government of that time.

Mr. Buchan: If the hon. Gentleman's analogy were true, that would be correct by analogy. However, it happens not to be correct. We created the Highlands and Islands Development Board because it was right to do so and the SDA was a development of the same conviction. I was involved in the planning process, so I know that. The SNP was hardly heard of at that period and was not in our minds at all.

Mr. Salmond: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, but I think his theory of political decision-making in Scotland has been overtaken by biography and memoirs. I am particularly thinking of the latest volume from Lord Donoughue who was very much involved in the Labour Government of the time. If one reads his memoirs, they support the view that many of the concessions granted to Scotland in the period of the mid-1970s were made by the Labour Government in response to Nationalist pressure and the Nationalist threat to Labour seats.

Mr. McAllion: The hon. Gentleman mentioned—as did several members of the Scottish National party—the ability of his party to influence the 1974-79 Government. My predecessor as the hon. Member for Dundee, East, Mr. Wilson, made that point on a number of occasions. Equally, he made the point that the Labour Government between 1974 and 1979 were the worst Government Scotland has had in many a year. How does the SNP rationalise its ability to influence a Government who were the worst Government Scotland ever had?

Mr. Salmond: We could argue that however bad were the cuts of 40 per cent. on industrial funding in the last two years after the withdrawal of regional employment premium by the Labour Government in 1976—the cuts might have been even greater if the Labour Government had not been responding to Nationalist pressure. If the hon. Gentleman wants me to concede that, however bad the Government of the mid-1970s were, they did not approach the sort of policies that are now imposed on Scotland, I am perfectly prepared to accept that point.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: We are intrigued by the hon. Gentleman's explanation and wonder whether he takes credit for having heralded the Conservative Government elected in 1979 by bringing down the then Labour Government.

Mr. Salmond: I shall continue my theme of memoirs. If the hon. Gentleman consults the memoirs of the Prime Minister of the time, he makes it clear that on that occasion he was not frightened of the SNP's approach to the devolution legislation — he was frightened of the Labour Back Benches. If anyone wishes to dispute that, he should take it up with the former Labour leader.

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): If the hon. Member wishes to deal in memoirs, will he refer to those of the great sage Mr. Sillars? He spelled out rather a different story: he pleaded with the 11 members of the SNP not to vote for the downfall of the Labour Government with the Tories, but in spite of that, although a couple of SNP members, Hamish Watt for one, wavered, at the end of the day all 11 voted with the Tories, an action for which they will never be forgiven by the people of Scotland.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. That may be very interesting, but it is a long way from the motion before us, which is whether the debate should be adjourned. Speeches must be addressed to that issue.

Mr. Salmond: I am grateful for your intervention on my behalf, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Presumably when the former Prime Minister, James Callaghan, was talking in his memoirs of his fear of Labour anti-devolutionists the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) was one of the people he had in mind.

Before I was so elegantly interrupted by several hon. Members, I was saying that the Conservative party has a problem with the SDA, which is a public body that was set up with public funds and shows that the public sector has a key role in the economy. When we move to an independent Scotland, I shall suggest that one of the first policy initiatives of an independent Government—whether SNP or Labour—should be to ensure a major expansion in the SDA's funding to the level that will allow it to tackle the economic crisis facing Scotland.

2.31 am

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): Until about an hour ago the House was discussing the economy of Scotland, and the Scottish Development Agency in particular. It is a matter of particular regret that a Minister has tried to stop that debate.

I think that I speak for all Opposition Members when I say that we should have been happy to go through the

night, if necessary, to discuss the problems facing Scotland. Conservative Members obviously do not want to discuss the economic problems of Scotland; indeed, they do not even want to discuss the motion to close the debate. There is a simple answer for them: they can go home—just as they have been sent home in Scotland.

I said that I think that I speak for all Opposition Members, but I am not sure about the tartan threesome, because they seem to be content to trade gratuitous insults and attack the Labour party instead of attacking the Government. It is no wonder that the SNP is Scotland's fourth party and is even behind the alliance.

If the debate had been allowed to run its course, I, as the hon. Member representing the constituency in which the headquarters of the SDA is sited, would have developed the theme touched on by the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy), who mentioned that the problems facing Scotland involved not only the firms that the SDA could or could not help, but the major structural problems in our country. He cited the failure of Guinness to move its headquarters to Scotland, despite the promises made to the Government and the Scottish people.

My constituency would have benefited from the jobs created by the establishment of the Guinness headquarters in Scotland, and the rest of Edinburgh and Scotland would have benefited because Guinness would have been a magnet to draw many other firms away from the cosy insularity of the south-east of England. Until the lopsided nature of the British economy is addressed by the Government and the work of the SDA and other Government action is directed to taking some of the heat from the economy in the south-east, the structural problems that afflict Edinburgh and Scotland generally will endure. That problem was not addressed in the debate, but if it had been allowed to continue Labour Members would have addressed the issue.

It is ironic that the closure motion was moved by the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth). The Minister of State made the valid point that public cash creates jobs, but the hon. Member for Stirling and many other Conservative Members do not agree with that philosophy. The hon. Member for Stirling sat and said nothing, but I think that there is one element of the SDA's recent conduct with which he does agree, and that is the disgraceful decision by the Scottish Development Agency to lend a large sum of public money for the building of a private hospital in Clydebank.

The Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh is beginning to crumble because of lack of investment and has identifed £6·8 million worth of work that needs to be carried out to bring it up to modern standards. Despite that, it has been allocated only £400,000. The hospital is in my constituency, and had the debate been allowed to develop I would have made the point that if so much public money is available for a private hospital, surely it could be made available to build a valuable teaching hospital within the National Health Service.

The Minister said that when the Scottish Development Agency was set up he saw it as being an instrument of change and, more importantly, a creator of the image of Scotland. I would have liked to make the point that the image of Scotland is not one of profiting from providing medicine but one of providing medicine on the basis of need. That aspect of the conduct of the Scottish Development Agency ought to be debated, and I am sure that it would have been explored at great length if the debate had been allowed to run its course.

It is necessary for the House to discuss the Scottish economy and not just the role of the Scottish Development Agency. Many points could have been developed in the debate. We also need to discuss the structural problems that face Scotland. The hon. Member for Stirling said that we are to be offered a debate next week.

Mr. Bill Walker: The hon. Gentleman mentions the structural problems of Scotland. He also mentions the Guinness situation and will be aware of my interest in that problem. Does he agree that the Guinness decision to locate the Distillers whisky operations headquarters in Scotland will be helpful in the long term because if the Government should decide to order disinvestment after the full inquiry is completed, it will make it easier to do so.

Mr. Darling *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The debate is straying again. Hon. Members must restrict their remarks to the comparatively narrow issue of whether the debate should be continued or adjourned.

Mr. Darling: With your advice in mind, Mr. Deputy Speaker, perhaps the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) will vote against the motion so that the point he raises can be developed. Had the debate continued, I would have made the point that no matter how welcome the decision by United Distillers to locate its headquarters in Scotland, the real control of United Distillers lies with Guinness and the real control of Guinness, as with so much of the British economy, lies in London.

It is precisely those points that I and my hon. Friends would have liked to develop had the hon. Member for Stirling not leapt to his feet, I suspect in some way to defend his colleague who would have had to answer some of the telling points put by my hon. Friends the Members for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) and for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown). They are points that we and the people of Scotland want to discuss.

Before the intervention by the hon. Member for Tayside, North I said that we are apparently to be offered a debate next Thursday on the Scottish economy. The Opposition would welcome that but for the fact that we know full well that Conservatives representing constituencies in the south-east of England who know little and, I suspect, sometimes care even less about the Scottish economy will be wheeled in to vote on this motion, just as they will be wheeled in next Thursday to speak from scripts carefully prepared by Scottish Ministers in order to prevent a full discussion by those hon. Members who represent the majority of Scottish seats.

I have a great deal of sympathy with hon. Members who spoke about the amount of time being made available to discuss the Scottish economy and matters that greatly affect Scotland. We in the Labour party who represent Scottish constituencies are deeply concerned about all parts of the United Kingdom. However, we have a particular interest in what happens north of the border, and if we are not allowed a decent amount of time uninterrupted by closure motions, the Government will simply store up troubles that will have to be dealt with at some time in the future.

I very much regret that an attempt has been made by the hon. Member for Stirling to stifle a debate which was

[Mr. Darling]

flowing very well. Issues subsist in Scotland today that will not go away. The Second Reading of the Bill does not address those issues and they will have to be discussed. I should have thought that Tory Members would have a great interest in discussing those points. If they will not discuss them, they may find that the next time that the electors have the chance to express their views on the matter, instead of 10 Members there will be no Conservative Members north of the border, and that would be a richly deserved fate.

2.40 am

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): It is important that the little huddle of Tory Members sitting at that far end of the Chamber waiting and wondering when they can leave realise that what is happening this morning is a manifestation and true dessert of the way in which the Government have behaved since 11 June. Since then the Government have behaved as if nothing happened on that day. It is time that English Conservative Members realised that something happened on 11 June.

Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones (Vice Chamberlain of Her Majesty's Household): The Labour party lost the election.

Mr. Wilson: The hon. Gentleman is absolutely correct. We lost the election. We live with and recognise that state of affairs and we cannot avoid it. However, in the same spirit, I suggest that it is incumbent upon Tory Members to make some concession to the other reality. If Scotland, which has a separate dimension to its political affairs and separate legislation in the House, if Scottish business, Scottish rights and Scottish interests are to be dealt with justly in this House, Tory Members must make some concession to that reality. I give notice to that little huddle of Tory Members at that far end of the Chamber, that if that does not happen, they had better start to bring their sleeping bags along and brush up on their bottle stocks because what has happened this morning will happen on a great many other mornings as well.

Mr. Salmond: I agree that those Tory Members should make some concessions to Scotland's Labour majority. However, what will the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) do if they do not, apart from threaten them with more late nights?

Mr. Wilson: Here I am trying to be conciliatory and that is the thanks I get.

The reason for the motion to close the debate is not simply that Tory Members want to go to bed. Rather, what the Tories stand for in Scottish matters has been cruelly exposed. I have never heard such a mea culpa from the Tories for a long time. They seem to have been wrong about everything in the past 25 years in Scottish affairs. Even from the Government Front Bench tonight, we heard glowing tributes to the Highlands and Islands Development Board, to the SDA and to Locate in Scotland. I remember the debates when the Highlands and Islands Development Board was being set up. I remember reading of Michael Noble who represented Argyll, the constituency in which I grew up. In his later incarnation he was Lord Glenkinglas. He condemned as Marxist the concept of the Highlands and Islands Development Board. He used that word to condemn the concept put forward by the Labour Government in 1964 which the present Government are now praising. He said that it was Marxism in action. When the SDA was set up, the Conservatives fought it tooth and nail, but now they tell us about the wonders of the SDA. We heard earlier that when the idea that Locate in Scotland was intended to promote a Scottish presence abroad was discussed, the very people who bask in its achievements now were those who sought to destroy it. Yet they do not learn the lesson that on occasions they are wrong and that there are ideas and concepts, such as partnership, public participation and response to need, that they could support instead of brushing aside with their usual arrogance. They should think about these matters instead of resorting to slander and categorising.

I travel to the small towns in my constituency and I see a tremendous level of need. In a town such as Kilbirnie or an area such as Glengarnock there is industrial devastation on a scale that would make the stones weep. In the town centre of Kilbirnie there is utter urban dereliction on a small scale. I am delighted by the hope that the Scottish Development Agency will be acting fairly soon to contribute to the resuscitation of Kilbirnie, but the example can be multiplied by 100 in my constituency alone. We can see the potential of the SDA and yet in real terms its funding is being cut. Where is the logic in that?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman is straying into general debate. He must restrict his remarks to whether the Second Reading debate should be adjourned.

Mr. Wilson: If the motion had not been moved by the Under-Secretary of State, we could have taken up the remarks of the Minister of State about the GEAR project in the east end of Glasgow. The success of that project is clear and yet it is cut off in its prime. Why should this be? The Government should have the courage — unfortunately, it was not present in 1961, 1975 or 1981 — to follow through to their logical conclusion the words that have been uttered this evening.

If the debate had been allowed to continue, an important but peripheral issue — peripheral in some people's minds — could have been raised. I see the pictures in the annual report of the SDA, and women who appear in them are almost exclusively wives or waitresses. There has never been a woman member of the SDA or the Highlands and Islands Development Board. It is a non-party political issue that is surely worth considering, and it would certainly have been worthy of consideration this evening.

We have seized this opportunity to talk about the SDA and the Scottish economy. We are here in large numbers because of the depressing condition of the economy, which has caused the majority of the people of Scotland to vote against the Conservative party and not merely for the Labour party or other parties. They have rejected the economic philosophy for which the Conservative party stands so overwhelmingly. We are bitterly angry when for the convenience of a handful of individuals the Government choose to take away the limited amount of time that is available for us as Scottish Members. This will not go unnoticed in Scotland.

The word "filibuster" was used to defend the closure motion, but there has been no filibuster of any sort from the Opposition Benches. If filibusters are sought, let those who do so turn their attention to the Government Benches. For example, there was the lengthy speech of the

hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro), which was admittedly an attack on Thatcherism. There were the confessions of a Dundee bus driver—the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker)—with excursions to Scone airport and other diversions. I listened to the interventions—I shall restrain myself on this occasion—of the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn). The filibusters came from Conservative Members. We have heard half of the Scottish membership of the Conservative parliamentary party in the form of grunts or speeches. By the same token, there would still be a very long way to go before the political opinions of Scotland were fully represented in this debate. There is no filibuster; there is deep concern about the economic plight of Scotland, and in each and every individual constituency represented here tonight. By running away from the argument—by shutting their ears to the debate, and to the strength of feeling on the Opposition Benches—Conservative Members compound the felony, and increase the feeling of betrayal and rejection that exists in Scotland.

2.50 am

Mr. Foulkes: I think that I should make it clear—indeed, all Opposition Members want to make it clear—that we should much prefer to be speaking in the substantive debate rather to this procedural motion. However, we have heard some brilliant and eloquent speeches from Members such as my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Buchan), who made a model speech. It was perfectly in order throughout, eloquent and with some brilliant rhetoric. It was also totally grammatical — unlike those of other hon. Members, as my hon. Friend pointed out earlier when I strayed from my normal grammar.

Mr. Buchan: I agree with every word that my hon. Friend has said, but I am not sure whether he agrees with it.

Mr. Foulkes: At 2.51 am, neither am I.

Earlier, when I saw the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), leap to the Dispatch Box to move this procedural motion, I recalled the words of the former right hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, Mr. Francis Pym, when he warned of the tyranny of the large majority. That is the attitude that we are seeing tonight, and have seen on other occasions: the jackbooted attitude that they will force an issue through, that it does not matter if it has not been properly debated, of if great sections of the community in Scotland have not had the chance to be represented, or if people who have been active in the sphere of concern that the SDA represents have not had a chance to speak. That is why a strong feeling of spontaneous revulsion, annoyance, frustration and concern has been expressed by Opposition Members tonight. There will be more of it, tonight and on future occasions, if that kind of tyrannical approach is used again by the Government.

I want to stick to the motion. We wonder why it has been put forward; we look for the motive behind it. With the slight discipline that I acquired at university all those years ago, I try to detect and divine the motivation and the determinant for the action, and to argue against it.

We have heard a number of arguments tonight as to why the House should not support the motion. I should like to mention about half a dozen, but there will be plenty of time left for my hon. Friend the Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington). I must not forget Milngavie: I like to give a litte teaser to the *Hansard* reporters, and Milngavie is a good one.

The first reason is the right of minority parties. As the vast majority party in Scotland, with 50 out of 72 representatives, we have said that we respect that right. If we have a proper debate, the full time that ought to be allocated for Second Reading debate allows the minority parties to have their say. I did not like it when, earlier in the debate, the hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) was so ungracious—I cannot say "ungallant", because it is a sexist word—in not conceding that she had made a mistake and had misrepresented my hon. Friend the Member for Garscadden. It is understandable that such a mistake should have been made, particularly after a busy and no doubt enjoyable day and evening.

Mr. Salmond: If the hon. Gentleman had been listening more closely, he would have realised that my hon. Friend the Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) gave way to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) when he raised his point of order.

Mr. Foulkes: The hon. Lady was forced to give way, but even when Madam Deputy Speaker said that the normal courtesy was to withdraw the hon. Member for Moray still refused to do so.

The Scottish National party is bereft of ideas and initiatives. It is resorting to smears and slogans against the Labour party, which represents the majority of the people in Scotland. However, we shall not resort to smears and slogans.

Mr. Salmond: I do not know what the hon. Gentleman is complaining about. I have not once this evening uttered the words "the feeble fifty."

Mr. Foulkes: No, but there were enough memoirs to last us a lifetime.

Whatever slogans the minority parties may utter and however trivial they may be, we shall continue to accept that they have the right to participate in these debates and to argue, on a procedural motion, that time ought to be given to the minority parties to argue their case.

Furthermore, it is usual for the Second Reading of Bills to start at 3.30 in the afternoon and to continue until 10 o'clock. That means that six and a half hours are provided for such debates. However, well before half of that time had been reached tonight the hon. Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Mr. Lang), not realising the procedure, the protocol and the conventions of the House, tried to move the closure of the debate. However, it was pointed out to him that it was not right for him to do so.

I hope that the House will not agree to the illegitimate curtailment of the Second Reading of this Bill. It is not automatic for such motions to be agreed to. Hon. Members will have to decide which way to vote when we reach that point.

The hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) referred to the need for a Scottish assembly. The need for this motion would never have arisen if the Government had not repealed the Scotland Act 1978. It was not incumbent on the Government to repeal it. They did not have to repeal that Act. The assembly could have been set up and it could now be meeting in Edinburgh. We certainly would work more sensible hours and we would

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have more time to discuss matters such as the SDA. We could discuss the workings, plans and development of it and we would be able to argue on behalf of our constituencies, including Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley. That is one reason for the frustrations that we have experienced tonight.

The fourth issue that I should like to raise relates to areas not having their views expressed, and it is another reason for voting against the motion. I should explain this point to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, as you represent an English constituency. My hon Friend the Member for Western Isles (Mr. Macdonald) represents a distinct area of Scotland that experiences many different problems. He might want to talk about the integrated development programme that the EEC is no longer continuing or about other matters concerning the Western Isles. The hon Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) represents an area with its own particular problems, but we have not heard anything about that region. I do not think we heard in the substantive debate from any representative from the Borders. That is a huge regional area of Scotland, yet we did not hear from one of its representatives. Nor did we hear from any representative of the huge Grampian region. We heard from two hon Members from the rural Tayside area but from nobody from Dundee, which is a vital part of Scotland. As my hon Friend the Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) pointed out in an intervention, no one from the Central region participated in the substantive debate. Vast areas of Strathclyde, including Ayrshire and particularly Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley, did not have an opportunity to have their views heard.

Ironically the region that was given a lot of time for its Members of Parliament to speak was Dumfries and Galloway. Neither Member made a very good fist of speaking. One was hampered by the fact that he is a Government Minister, and the other was hampered. If the Minister did not represent Galloway and Upper Nithsdale, he would have been able to point out that Sanquitar, which is part of his constituency, shares with Cumnock the highest level of unemployment in Scotland. If I had been able to speak on the substantive motion, I could have argued the case for Sanquitar, and I am sure that the Minister would have appreciated that.

My fifth point was made by one of my colleagues earlier and I should like to underline it. My hon Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) made one of the best Front Bench speeches that I have heard since the recess. If the Minister does not have an opportunity to reply to the debate, all of us will have an inkling of a feeling that perhaps he wants to dodge the questions that have been raised, particularly by my hon Friend the Member for Garscadden.

My sixth point concerns the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy), who talked about the EC structural fund. I understand that soon the report will be considered by the Council of Ministers. Because 80 per cent. of the regional fund will be concentrated on Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy and Ireland, the remaining small proportion will have to be divided between the rest of the Community. That means that funds for the United Kingdom, particularly Scotland, will be cut and fewer areas will be eligible for regional aid. That is serious.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is straying wide of the motion.

Mr. Foulkes: I did not raise the issue. It was raised by the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye. No other hon. Member has had the opportunity to pursue the point and the Minister will not be able to reply. That is important. The debate is being ended prematurely.

My seventh point is that the Minister wanted the debate to finish early because the Conservatives are tired after the recess. I have been fed up watching Scottish television seeing again and again the Minister responsible for education and social work—still the young, prematurely balding person — going on and on scratching around Scotland purporting to represent the people of Scotland when we know that he does not. Ministers might be tired because of their strutting around but my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing) wisely boycotted the opening of the hospital to which the Minister for Health was invited. Ministers are obviously tired and do not want to spend time in Parliament discussing such issues. If on day one Ministers feel a bit peely wally I emphasise what my colleagues have said — "You have seen nothing yet." Standing Committees are still to come. All it needs is one staunch Tory to go and the whole edifice will crumble. Then we have a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs — or have we? That Committee has a Labour majority, but will English Members be appointed? If the Government think that by truncating this debate they can save trouble in the future, they have another think coming. The only way that the Government can achieve a majority on the Select Committee is to have a Committee of three and press-gang two unwilling Tories to sit on it. That is the ridiculous position that they are in. Then they must consider the Scottish Grand Committee and Scottish Question Time. That will keep Ministers on their toes. Finally — [HON. MEMBERS: "Encore."] Hon. Members hesitated a little before that cry for more came along so this will be my final point. I thought that one reason why the hon. Member for Stirling proposed the motion was that he may be worried about the people here, the catering staff, the *Hansard* staff and the people working all the equipment. Then I thought again, this motion has been proposed by the Conservatives and they could not care less about the ordinary people who are working to support us. My one regret is that we are going on in these unsocial hours——

Mr. Home Robertson: My hon. Friend is talking about the other people who work in this House, but will he spare a moment for the tired and huddled masses down below the Gangway? They should be contemplating the ineptitude of their Front Bench that means that they will have to sit and listen to a lot of the same arguments all over again when we get back to the substantive debate. What on earth are the Government achieving?

Mr. Foulkes: My hon. Friend has put his finger on it. The Government have clearly bungled and there is no doubt that they have made a mistake. The Chief Whip has not made a brilliant debut. The whole thing is crumbling about him, but as I have said, this is just the beginning.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. David Waddington) *rose in his place and claimed to move*, That the Question be now put.

Question put, That the Question be now put:—

The House divided: Ayes 114, Noes 43.

Division No. 31] **[3.11 am**

AYES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Hon Peter
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cran, James
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
French, Douglas
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gow, Ian
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hayward, Robert
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Timothy
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marland, Paul
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Neubert, Michael
Patnick, Irvine
Portillo, Michael
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Warren, Kenneth
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. David Maclean.

NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Buchan, Norman
Canavan, Dennis
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Darling, Alastair
Dewar, Donald
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Foulkes, George
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Ingram, Adam
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Nellist, Dave
O'Neill, Martin
Reid, John
Robertson, George
Salmond, Alex
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wilson, Brian
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Ernie Ross and
Mr. David Marshall.

Question accordingly agreed to
Question put accordingly:—
The House divided: Ayes 112, Noes 42.

Division No. 32] **[3.23 am**

AYES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Hon Peter
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cran, James
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
French, Douglas
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gow, Ian
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hayward, Robert
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Timothy
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marland, Paul
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Neubert, Michael
Patnick, Irvine
Portillo, Michael
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Warren, Kenneth
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. David Maclean.

NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Buchan, Norman
Canavan, Dennis
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Darling, Alastair
Dewar, Donald
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick

Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*	McLeish, Henry
Foulkes, George	Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Galbraith, Samuel	Maxton, John
Galloway, George	Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.	Moonie, Dr Lewis
Graham, Thomas	Nellist, Dave
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*	O'Neill, Martin
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*	Reid, John
Home Robertson, John	Robertson, George
Hood, James	Salmond, Alex
Ingram, Adam	Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Kennedy, Charles	Wilson, Brian
Kirkwood, Archy	Worthington, Anthony
McAllion, John	Wray, James
McAvoy, Tom	
Macdonald, Calum	Tellers for the Noes:
McFall, John	Mr. Ernie Ross and
McKelvey, William	Mr. David Marshall.

Question accordingly agreed to.
Debate to be resumed this day.

PETITION

Poll Tax

3.31 am

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): I have much pleasure in presenting to the House a petition relating to the poll tax legislation. It comes from the provost and councillors of Dunfermline district council, City chambers, Dunfermline, and it is appropriate that this will be the first of many petitions against this especially odious tax which will be levied on the people of Scotland.

The petition speaks of the Government's policy to impose a poll tax—community charge—on the people of Scotland as being unjust and unfair. It will impose a burden on those least able to pay and, additionally, cause a considerable increase in local expenditure to collect the tax and dislocation of local administration. The petitioners pray that this honourable House shall take immediate steps to repeal the legislation which introduces this tax, remove the burden of unfair taxation on the people of Scotland which the people of Scotland firmly rejected in the June 1987 election and replace it with a more progressive system of taxation.

As a resident of Dunfermline, I have great pleasure in presenting this petition. Dunfermline was the ancient capital of Scotland and it is symbolic that interred in the abbey of Dunfermline are the bones of the Bruce, representing the independence and sincerity of the Scots in fighting against oppression.

I trust that the House will note that my petition is the first of many that will be presented by my right hon. and hon. Friends to show the Government clearly that they have no political mandate in Scotland for this unjust tax.

To lie upon the Table.

Disabled Persons (Clothing)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Durant.]*

3.35 am

Sir Marcus Fox (Shipley): My first thought on rising at 3.35 am is that I hope that I am not setting a precedent for Adjournment debates for the rest of this Session. If I am, this will be the last one that I apply for.

The subject of the debate has caused me considerable worry and I wish to draw attention to serious problems in our provision for the disabled. I am interested in about 100,000 of the most seriously disabled people in the United Kingdom. That number works out at an average of about 125 per constituency, though I believe that there are more such people in inner cities than in other areas.

Much has been done to help the disabled and I do not want to appear critical of the many good provisions in housing, mobility, transport, the provision of ramps to make it easier to get into public buildings, and so on. However, the debate is about the neglected issue of special clothing.

The people to whom I am referring cannot enjoy shopping as most of us do—if "enjoy" is the right word from a husband's point of view. They cannot go into multiple or chain stores in high streets and buy articles of clothing. Their garments have to be made specially. Businesses will not set up to provide such items, because most are one-off garments and there is no profit in them.

Our friends who are disadvantaged are no different from us in many ways. They have the same self-respect, and I think that dignity means more to them than to those of us who are fortunate. Many of them do not venture outside their homes because they do not have the right garments to wear. Their pride makes them housebound, and that is a reflection on our welfare state. I hope that the Minister will at least give me some hope that the importance of the matter has not escaped him.

Let me give one or two examples from my constituency. John has a dwarfing disease and is 54 in. round the waist, with an inside leg measurement of 12 in. He buys trousers and cuts the legs off above the knee. Suits are impossible to get and all other garments are much too long in the arm. His head is too big to go through T shirts, and polo, crew-neck or even round-neck jumpers.

Evelyn has an 86 in. bust and is 101 in. round the hips. She had only a nightdress when she was first met by the people who run this workshop in Shipley.

My third example is Samantha. She has spina bifida which has left her with a hump on her back just below the waist and a twisted spine. She is in a wheelchair and has to sit with her feet straight out in front of her. If she buys a jacket that fits her bust, it will not go over the bump and rides up. If it is big enough to go over the bump, it is too big everywhere else. Trousers were a dream for her. Her mother could not buy any that came anywhere near her waist at the back and masses of fabric collected in her lap. When the workshop made some trousers for Samantha, her mother burst into tears. One mother with curvature of the spine was not going to her daughter's wedding because she could not buy an outfit that hung correctly.

I shall now talk about warmth and give two examples. Andrew is 11 years old, has spina bifida and is mentally disabled. He lies flat all day and moves a hand to play with a rattle. He is blue with cold. An all-in-one suit was made for him in a new thermal fabric and for the first time in his life he was pink like everyone else. Lastly, John's parents had to get up every two hours during the night to rub his arms and legs to keep the circulation going. A pair of pyjamas in a special fabric means that they can now sleep through the night.

Those examples convey just what a tragedy it can be for families who do not have access to the facilities that this workshop provides. In my constituency there is a dedicated lady called Nellie Thornton who decided to do something about this. She is a former dressmaking teacher and while on a community study course, she worked in a hospital with patients who had had strokes. She found that great emphasis was placed on making them independent and allowing them in the home to do whatever could be done. However, no one paid any attention to the special clothing that they needed. In 1981 she started this workshop, Fashion for the Disabled, in Shipley. With urban aid money and the help of the Manpower Services Commission, much progress has been made. We must not forget the sponsorship provided by the Bradford and Ilkley college.

I emphasise that two services are provided at the Fashion for the Disabled centre. One is training, where dressmaking courses are held for the disabled. Weekly courses are available for young spina bifida students, 16 to 19-year-olds from special schools, older disabled people and even young blind people. They learn how to measure, to fit and to make patterns, and to design and make garments. Within a week all of these people, whether or not they have sewn before, can make a garment to fit themselves. The joy that that brings to them because it is an achievement has to be seen to be believed.

Training is also provided for staff from other areas to set up their own centres. Regular courses are now held in Perth, Edinburgh, Kent and Surrey, and this year Belfast and, believe it or not, Athens, are to be added to the list. We were fortunate to have the Princess of Wales visit the centre in the early part of the year. She was deeply impressed by the work carried on there and by the devotion of the staff to the disabled. The Princess afterwards pointed that out in a very kind letter.

In the field of training there are no financial problems. Finance comes from the base budget of Bradford and Ilkley college and will continue to do so.

I come now to the second type of service, which is for the disabled who cannot help themselves. It is a workshop where individual garments are made to order for the sort of people that I described earlier. It is quite a task to fit such people and often means visits to them in their homes. If a fair charge reflecting the cost of the garment had to be made, these people would not be able to afford it. Hon. Members can imagine how time-consuming and expensive it is to make a garment to fit some of the people that I have described. Therefore, a subsidy of some sort is inevitable and the costs, according to figures that I have been given, vary from about three to eight times the price in a multiple store. That is easy to understand, given the wear and tear to which the garments are subjected and the extra work that is involved in making the garments.

It is not simply a question of covering these people's bodies. There is an immense social benefit for those people. It can take up to two hours for some of these disabled people to get dressed. Imagine the effort involved in that. If we consider the matter, we realise that people do not go out if they feel that what they are wearing is not

[Sir Marcus Fox]

socially acceptable. They become housebound and their partners—when we consider married couples—get tired of going out alone and marriages have broken up as a result.

Imagine the change in our life styles if we had only clothing that was too big, which did not fit, with necklines that gaped, collars that poked or waistlines nowhere near the waist. Imagine all those clothes wearing out rapidly because we had to wear appliances and, because of our size, no ordinary clothes would fit.

I submit that we only realise what independence means when we lose it. Too many of those people have lost that independence. I hope that the Minister accepts that there is a need for this kind of service. The proof is that, following the experiment in Shipley, there are now 22 workshops around the country that are all in the same boat. In other words, they have no permanent funding. No one seems to want to pick up the funding of a scheme that is guaranteed to make a loss. This is a national problem. If we ask anyone in hospital, social workers or anyone involved in community work, I am sure that they will confirm the importance of the matter.

To give some idea of cost, the workshop in Shipley which employs six staff would need a subsidy of about £25,000-£35,000 to break even. I believe that that is a good investment for the improvement in morale of the disabled. I wonder how many fewer hours of medical attention are required because these people feel so much better with new clothes.

I hope that everyone now understands the importance of this subject. When I considered the provision of funds, I thought that I should first address my remarks to the Department of Health and Social Security. I understand that it is possible, through legislation, for local health authorities to provide some assistance in that direction. I have no doubt that local authorities could assist and the Social Services departments also have a responsibility. Perhaps the Minister can do something to bang a few heads together to ensure that this provision is not allowed to fade away. We need only think about the number of road accidents that occur and the ill-health that befalls people who do not believe that they will ever need this service to realise the extent of the problem. However, who knows what the future holds?

I submit that there is a basic human need to provide people with the dignity that comes with the right clothes and garments. I hope that the Minister will be able to give me some encouragement in this matter.

3.49 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. Michael Portillo): I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Shipley (Sir M. Fox) most warmly for raising this subject tonight and for giving us the opportunity of this short debate. I congratulate him on speaking so interestingly, movingly and penetratingly. I pay tribute to him for his clear concern about the future of an organisation in his constituency that is involved in such excellent and useful work. I re-emphasise one of the points that he made, for I understand that when Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales visited Fashion Services for the Disabled in March she was most impressed with what she saw. My hon. Friend's concern is typical of the assiduous way in which he cares for his constituency and all that goes on within it.

I am delighted to respond to the issues that my hon Friend has raised, and, like him, I shall take my remarks a little wider than merely the subject of Fashion Services for the Disabled, although I shall deal with that first. I shall echo many of the things that my hon. Friend has said.

Dressing and undressing oneself is an important part of our everyday lives and something that most of us take very much for granted. Yet this operation, which is so simple to most of us, can be extremely difficult for some disabled people. It is essential that wherever possible disabled people should be able to dress and undress themselves to maintain their personal independence and dignity.

There are many reasons why disabled people might have difficulties and my hon. Friend has explained many of them. For example, arthritic hands and joints may not be able to cope with zips and buttons, mentaly handicapped people may find it difficult to cope with fasteners, there are those whose body shape does not fit conventional clothing and there are others whose clothing must accommodate body-worn supports or possibly incontinence pads.

It is important that all disabled people should be given the opportunity to lead lives that are as full and independent as possible, and this applies to their dressing and clothing needs as much as to other aspects of daily living. It means that there will be some who will need special clothing that is tailored to their individual disability. This helps disabled people to be and to feel more independent, and the act of dressing itself can have beneficial results. For example, it can help to mobilise joints and strengthen muscles as well as providing a boost to morale.

We recognise that it will not do to provide clothes that merely overcome the problems to which I have referred. Clothes are an integral part of the personality and individuality of the wearer and his or her acceptance socially. Good fashionable clothes increase the self-esteem of the wearer and the regard in which he or she is held by others. Disabled people now—I think that this is their absolute right—are very fasion conscious. They demand a choice of clothing which, while functional, does not obviously proclaim itself as being different from the sort of clothing that they might have been able to buy in a high street shop. This applies equally to those who might be unable to dress or undress themselves or who need help to do so.

It was against that background that Fashion Services for the Disabled proposed a three-year project, which was accepted for funding by the urban programme and the Manpower Services Commission. It was sponsored by the Bradford and Ilkley community college. The aim of the project was twofold. First, the aim was to provide a training centre offering courses to encourage self-help among disabled people and their carers. Courses were offered also to teachers to give them a deeper understanding of disability and practical experience of working with, designing for and fitting disabled persons. There are courses for disabled people and their carers to learn about fabrics, design, pattern making and garment construction. Professionals working with disabled people have the chance to discuss with Fashion Services for the Disabled the clothing problems that they meet and to work with the organisation to solve them.

The second aim was to set up a workshop to produce fashionable clothing that meets individual need and gives maximum independence in dressing and care. For this purpose people from the workshops visit homes, centres, hospitals, schools and individuals on request to discuss with individuals the problems and to take measurements as necessary. Garments are made in the fabric of the client's choice and fitted before completion. The prices to the customer are normally then comparable with similar commercial products.

As my hon. Friend said, the project began in 1983 and continued until April 1987, which was when the funding problem reared its head. Fashion Services for the Disabled contacted the Department of Health and Social Security on several occasions, most recently in June, requesting funding for a continuation of the project at a cost of about £32,000 per annum.

Unfortunately, we were unable to agree to the request as the project did not meet the criteria under section 64 of the Health Services Public Health Act 1968; nor did it meet the criteria as a research project.

My hon. Friend will appreciate that funding schemes must necessarily have rules or criteria governing the purpose for which a grant may be made, and to whom it may be made. The section 64 funds are provided mainly to assist with the central administration costs of national voluntary organisations in the health and personal social services spheres. Funds are, however, also provided to support innovatory projects of potential national significance, or to develop a particular pattern of service. Such project funding is essentially pump priming, and is intended to be time-limited, normally to a maximum of three years.

The organisation that put in the request is not now an innovatory one, and I very much regret that we have been unable to help that very worthwhile organisation.

Fashion Services also raised the question of joint funding, and was advised to seek support from local statutory authorities or voluntary bodies that use their services. My understanding of the pesent position is that Fashion Services' workshop has been taken under the wing of Bradford and Ilkley community college, which has agreed to cover the costs until March 1988. Beyond that, I understand that Bradford education department is currently reviewing the position from April 1988 onwards, and recently met representatives of Dr Barnardo's with a view to the latter having some involvement with Fashion Services. Dr. Barnardo's is discussing with Fashion Services the possibility of some involvement in the management and development of the project as a youth training scheme, together with the city of Bradford. Such involvement will obviously depend on a number of factors, including the satisfactory resolution of financial arrangements and sufficient grant aid from the local authority to match any input from Dr. Barnardo's. I earnestly hope that the arrangements will be concluded satisfactorily, and I am very sorry that, as far as I can judge, the project does not fit the section 64 criteria, for the reasons that I have explained.

None the less, we recognise that my Department has a primary responsibility for disabled people, and must play a part in helping. For the majority of disabled people, their needs for clothing and to exercise personal choice of style can be met by certain types of clothing produced for the general market, or by adaptations to standard garments. That view is supported by the Disabled Living foundation, perhaps the major voluntary organisation for the disabled. My hon. Friend the Minister for the Disabled will be visiting that organisation in a few hours' time. We provide a substantial grant to the Disabled Living Foundation, whose clothing advisory service is the main source of information on the subject, collecting, storing and disseminating information on all aspects of clothing for disabled people.

I mentioned earlier the special needs of people who are mentally handicapped, and who may lack the necessary intellectual ability or dexterity to dress themselves in conventional clothing. In 1985, my Department agreed to provide the DLF with an additional grant of some £20,000 to fund a project to produce a book on clothing and dressing intended for all concerned with the care and teaching of mentally handicapped people, to enable them to help such people achieve greater independence. A final draft of the book has just been received.

My Department also funds the organisation Equipment for the Disabled, which provides and updates a series of reference books on a wide range of disability equipment and self-help devices currently available. One of their publications, "Clothing and Dressing for Adults," provides information on a number of factors which need to be taken into account in selecting clothing, and which help the individual to choose suitable styles. Work on updating the book is shortly to begin.

Through its disability equipment assessment programme, the Department sponsored the Southampton general hospital's assessment of the use of lower limb dressing aids. The programme assesses disability equipment while it is in use by disabled people under clinical supervision and records the advantages and disadvantages of the equipment. It offers guidelines on the most important aspects to be considered when such equipment is prescribed.

The programme is aimed primarily at helping disabled people, their carers and the professionals working with them to choose the most suitable equipment to meet their needs. It is also of value to manufacturers and suppliers. The feedback that they obtain helps them to see whether their products need to be modified to improve performance or convenience. A number of reports have been published, including that from Southampton, and they are available from the Department on request. The Southampton unit is currently engaged on the assessment of upper limb dressing equipment and garment fastenings.

I hope that my hon. Friend now accepts that the Department is aware of the problems that are associated with special clothing needs and that it is doing something about them. I hope that my hon. Friend will also accept the assurance that I have given him, even though I am unable at this stage to give him firm news about Fashion Services for the Disabled. I very much hope that the plans that are now being considered in order to continue the financing of that project will be successful. It is a most worthwhile project that has done very valuable work. I join my hon. Friend in commending Mrs. Thornton on the very valuable work that she has done. Not least for that reason, again I thank my hon. Friend most warmly for raising the subject and for giving us the opportunity to have this short debate.

Question put, and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at one minute past Four o'clock am.

House of Commons

Thursday 22 October 1987

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

LONDON REGIONAL TRANSPORT BILL *(By Order)*
Order for consideration read.
To be considered upon Thursday 29 October.

FELIXSTOWE DOCK AND RAILWAY BILL *(By Order)*
Order read for resuming adjourned debate [23 July.]
Debate to be resumed upon Thursday 29 October.

LONDON DOCKLANDS RAILWAY (BECKTON) BILL *(By Order)*

TEIGNMOUTH QUAY COMPANY BILL *(By Order)*

YORK CITY COUNCIL BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

KEBLE COLLEGE OXFORD BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

SELWYN COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

HAMPSHIRE (LYNDHURST BYPASS) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Orders for Second Reading read.
To be read a Second time upon Thursday 29 October.

BRITISH RAILWAYS (LONDON) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Order for Second Reading read.
To be read a Second time upon Tuesday 27 October.

BILL PRESENTED

ABERDEEN HARBOUR ORDER CONFIRMATION

Mr. Secretary Rifkind presented a Bill to confirm a Provisional Order under section 7 of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act 1936, relating to Aberdeen Harbour; And the same was read first time; and ordered to be considered upon Wednesday 28 October and to be printed. [Bill 16.]

Oral Answers to Questions

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Poultry Industry

1. **Mr. Strang** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met representatives of the Agricultural and Allied Workers National Trade Group to discuss the poultry industry; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. Donald Thompson): I have agreed to meet a delegation from the Agricultural and Allied Workers National Trade Group on 18 November to discuss the poultry industry.

Mr. Strang: Is the Parliamentary Secretary aware that we are looking forward to the meeting with the delegation next month? Since we asked for the meeting, poultry and other agricultural workers in tied cottages have been hit by a bombshell from the hon. Gentleman's counterpart in the Department of the Environment in respect of the proposals for the private housing sector. Is the hon. Gentleman aware that assured agricultural occupancies, which the Department of the Environment intends to phase in as an alternative to the security offered by the Rent (Agriculture) Act, will mean that the farm worker will have less security, that he will be subject to market rents and that his family will have no statutory right to remain in their cottage? Is the hon. Gentleman aware that this scandalous proposal is wanted by neither the National Farmers Union nor the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers? Will the hon. Gentleman use his powers as an Agriculture Minister to resist that proposal?

Mr. Thompson: I am glad that the hon. Gentleman has taken the unions under his wing. I discussed this matter when I met members of the union in Yorkshire. I am sure that what the hon. Gentleman has told me will be expanded upon on 18 November when his colleagues see me.

Mr. Hunter: I hope that great caution will be exercised in dealing with the poultry industry storm damage claims which are likely to reach my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary and my right hon. Friend the Minister. Surely responsible farmers will have been adequately insured. Farmers were not the only ones to have suffered from the storm. Surely they should not receive preferential treatment.

Mr. Thompson: I am sure that my hon. Friend's points will be echoed repeatedly this afternoon and in the weeks to come. I agree with the gist of his comments.

Mr. Haynes: Is the Parliamentary Secretary aware that there is poultry farming in my constituency? I want to know what is going on in his Department. Apparently it has been stated that finance for research establishments will be cut. There is one such establishment in Nottinghamshire which helps the poultry industry in my constituency. I want to know what is happening in respect of the reduction in employment in poultry farming in my constituency and others.

Mr. Thompson: I detect a note of concern in the hon. Gentleman's question. I should be delighted if he would talk to me in the Ministry, when we can discuss the whole aspect.

Dairy Industry

2. **Mr. Knox** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he will next meet the president of the National Farmers Union to discuss the dairy industry.

The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. John MacGregor): I hold frequent meetings with the president of the National Farmers Union, when a wide range of subjects is discussed.

Mr. Knox: Is my right hon. Friend aware that there have been shortages of milk for processing this summer? With further cuts in output due in the months ahead, is he satisfied that the supply of fresh milk and milk for processing will be adequate in the future?

Mr. MacGregor: Yes. I am aware that there were some problems during the seasonal trough in August and September this year in meeting some processors' requirements, but I do not think that that relates to the level of quotas as a whole. As my hon. Friend knows—I am sure that he would agree—it was necessary to scale down the quotas in December to bring supply and demand more into balance. The problem does not relate to the quotas as such. However, there is a problem in milk marketing, and I am discussing it with the milk marketing boards.

Mr. Colvin: My right hon. Friend will be aware of the controversy that surrounds the use of hormones in milk and meat production. Is he aware that while our farmers are implementing the EEC regulations on this matter, farmers across the Channel are not? Therefore, when my right hon. Friend next goes to Brussels, will he put the control of the use of hormones on the agenda to try to ensure that our continental colleagues play the game?

Mr. MacGregor: I am glad to tell my hon. Friend that I raised this very matter at the Agriculture Council earlier this week, when we were informed by the Commissioner that the Commission would be having further talks with third countries to try to solve the problems that face us on this matter. Indeed, the specific point raised by my hon. Friend was the very point that I put to the Commissioner. I asked him to give me an assurance that, whatever happens on 1 January, the introduction of the ban on implants would apply evenly across all member states, and he gave me that assurance. One other Minister in particular—from the country to which I think my hon. Friend refers—indicated that he would be in a position to do that, too. I entirely agree with my hon. Friend on this point.

Dr. David Clark: Is the Minister aware that many food manufacturers are suffering from a shortage of milk products in their processes and that, as a result, they are suffering redundancies and factory closures. Does the Minister intend to take any action on this matter?

Mr. MacGregor: I suspect that the hon. Gentleman is confusing two points. There is the point that my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, Moorlands (Mr. Knox) raised, which I have touched upon, which caused temporary difficulties a short while ago. Let me go more widely. If the hon. Gentleman has in mind the possible closures of creameries and so on because of the reduction in supply, I am sure he will recognise that the reduction in quotas is bringing supply and demand more into balance, as would happen anyway in a free market system. We do not take special compensatory measures to assist processing industries in other products and other parts of the economy where supply and demand are being brought into balance and where the necessary adjustment needs to take place. That is what is happening in this case.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: I appreciate the details that the Minister has given on this issue. However, will he accept that in parts of Scotland where self-sufficiency exists in the milk industry the further reduction in the milk quota will not only close down creameries and cheese-making plants but will have an adverse effect on farming in general, given that farmers in some parts of Scotland have little alternative? Will he examine the possibility of a more flexible approach to areas that have achieved such a level of self-sufficiency?

Mr. MacGregor: I think that we have to distinguish between individual difficulties that arise from time to time in different parts of the United Kingdom—I can assure the hon. Lady that the problems arise in regions of England as well as in Scotland—and the overall position on the level of quotas and supply and demand generally. Perhaps the hon. Lady has in mind the first aspect in particular. As I have said, I am discussing the problem with the milk marketing boards. We are faced with very complex issues in trying to make the system operate properly, but I agree that it is desirable to try to ensure that where supplies are available they ought to be able to go to processors. However, this is a complicated matter.

Dairy Industry

4. **Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has about the level of dairy farmers' incomes in relation to previous years.

Mr. MacGregor: Average dairy farm incomes in England and Wales increased significantly in real terms in each of the last two production years. Provisional information for 1987 will be published in the annual review White Paper early next year.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: It is good but modest news to hear of the increases, as my right hon. will surely agree. Will he also agree that the modest increases have been swept away, not only by last week's hurricane, but by the persistently bad weather throughout the year? Therefore, will he undertake, as a matter of extreme urgency, to identify, with the National Farmers Union, those who, without financial aid, will face bankruptcy?

Mr. MacGregor: With regard to my hon. Friend's introductory remarks, the increases in the past two years,

on average and taken across the board, have been quite significant. I am, of course, very sympathetic in relation to the losses to farmers and others as a result of storm damage, and so on. The long-standing position, however, is that farmers normally bear the cost of bad weather. The vast majority of them insure against such costs and I see no reason to depart from the principle that the Government do not compensate in situations of this kind. Nevertheless, in my hon. Friend's part of the world some farmers have lost a very large number of trees and the environmental impact has been considerable. In those cases, the Forestry Commission is giving advice to farmers and forestry grants are available. In addition, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment stated yesterday, I am discussing with the commission whether any additional grant can be made available in the circumstances.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: Does my right hon. Friend accept that although dairy incomes may have increased on average, those of smaller dairy farmers have plummeted drastically? Is he aware that one such farmer on a county smallholding in my constituency has been able to keep the wolf from the door only as a result of family income supplement and child benefit? Will my right hon. Friend consider the position of smaller dairy farmers, especially in relation to quotas? Is he aware that no further reductions in quota can be tolerated if we are to retain the smaller farmers of this country, particularly in the north-west of England?

Mr. MacGregor: As my hon. Friend knows, when quotas were introduced special arrangements were made to assist smaller producers both in terms of the quota and in other ways. I am anxious that there should be as much flexibility as possible within a quota system. That is why I fought hard to bring back the quota leasing system—not the transfer or purchase of quota—which has been successfully achieved for this year and is once again available to producers. I hope that this will assist small producers who are particularly pressed.

Food Labelling

6. **Mr. Pike** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent representations he has received regarding the labelling of food.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I regularly receive comments and inquiries from many sources on a wide range of labelling matters. Most recent representations have been on various aspects of the EC proposals for the amendments to the food labelling directive, and of our guidelines for a voluntary system of nutritional labelling.

Mr. Pike: When will the Minister be able to announce the Government's view on the irradiation of food? If the Government decide in favour of allowing irradiation, will he give an assurance that labelling instructions will make it clear to the consumer whether a product has been irradiated?

Mr. Thompson: I have had much correspondence on the lines of the hon. Gentleman's question. We are currently considering all kinds of representations as well as the advice of the advisory committee on the wholesomeness of irradiated foods. We are also considering a method of detecting irradiation, as without such a system, even with labelling, it will be difficult to prove whether a product has been irradiated.

Mr. Key: Is my hon. Friend aware of the growing concern in the British bee-keeping community about the inadequacy of the 1976 honey regulations to cope with imports, which are not in the interests of consumers or producers?

Mr. Thompson: I was made aware at lunch time by my hon. Friend of the concern of British bee keepers. I fully understand my hon. Friend's difficulties, but I believe that this long-running and complicated saga can best be progressed by correspondence.

Mr. Cryer: I have already been in correspondence with the Minister about this. Does the hon. Gentleman accept that people who are allergic to flavouring in foodstuffs require additional labelling to warn them of the dangers? The Ministry has persistently refused to require this, partly through inertia and partly, it seems, through fear that the Common Market will say that it is fobidden. Will the Minister assure us of his determination to help people who need protection in this respect, and will he ensure that there is proper and adequate labelling of foodstuffs?

Mr. Thompson: We have helped the hon. Gentleman's constituent — I think that he received the last letter yesterday—by, this year alone, spending £300,000 on a scheme to find out exactly what people are allergic to. It was an extensive scheme.

Mr. Cryer: Why does the hon. Gentleman not help my constituent in Bradford, South?

Mr. Thompson: Many of us are allergic to the hon. Gentleman.

We have spent £300,000 on that aspect alone. What we have learnt must be translated into labelling. We are doing our best not to follow Europe but to lead Europe on such a complicated but important issue.

Mr. Simon Coombs: Is my hon. Friend aware of any restriction or problem with European Community law which prevents the Government from putting forward the finalised nutritional guidelines for fats and other nutrients? If he is not presently aware of any such problem, will he tell the House when he proposes to be so?

Mr. Thompson: Discussions are still going on in Europe on the fats issue and fats regulations. We have recently published our guidelines on nutritional labelling, which will knit into forthcoming European directives. We hope that, by being first in the field, we can again lead Europe.

Mr. Ron Davies: I press the Minister on the matter of irradiation. Is it the Government's view that labelling will have to be introduced but that, to make such labelling effective, there will have to be a system of tests to allow for independent analysis of products which might or might not have been irradiated? If that is the case, will the Minister give an assurance that before the Government allow any irradiated products to be distributed such tests will be available, and that, unless they are available, approval for irradiation will not be given?

Mr. Thompson: The hon. Gentleman has summed up all the difficulties that we presently have with regard to irradiation and people's fears of it. As he said, if we are to label products, there must be some way of testing

whether irradiation has occurred. When we have considered all the representations that we have had, I am sure that we shall be able to consult even further and come up with a scheme that is acceptable to the House.

Common Agricultural Policy

7. **Mr. Grocott** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to seek to reform the common agricultural policy.

Mr. MacGregor: The Council of Ministers is currently considering a wide range of Commission proposals for the further reform of the CAP.

Mr. Grocott: Will the Minister confirm that the figures that his Department has supplied show that the direct costs of the CAP to the taxpayer are about £2·5 billion this year, which is £44 for every man, woman and child in the country? Does he agree that it is just the tip of the iceberg? The figures do not include administrative costs or the hugely inflated food crop costs that result from intervention. When will the Minister stop mouthing about reforming the CAP and take the burden of costs off our backs?

Mr. MacGregor: The hon. Gentleman is quoting—the figure is not as high as he suggests—the figures in the public expenditure White Paper for the cost of the CAP. If one takes the matter more broadly, the costs across the Community and to the taxpayer are much higher than that. One of the problems that we face, and one of the matters that I constantly point out, is that we are spending £250 million a week across the Community as a whole simply for the storage and disposal of surpluses. I do not need any pressing from the hon. Gentleman to get on with reforms of the CAP. That is precisely what we have been doing. The United Kingdom Government have been much in the forefront.

I could list many of the changes that have already taken place over the past two or three years. The whole point of the current discussions in the Agriculture Council is to introduce stabilisers which will put further budgetary discipline into the CAP and bring us closer to the market place. Again, the United Kingdom, together with the Commission, is pressing for the changes which we see as essential for a successful outcome to the December summit.

Mr. Ralph Howell: Is my right hon. Friend aware that there is widespread concern at what is so far known of the stabiliser proposals being formulated in Brussels? Will he tell the House the position that he has adopted? Is he aware that many people think that the proposals will neither curb production nor cut expenditure on agriculture?

Mr. MacGregor: The proposals will help us to cut expenditure, particularly expenditure that is directed at the wrong areas. I have always taken the view that it is in farmers' own interests that spiralling costs are controlled. They may then have some stability for the future. It is as much in farmers' interests as in the interests of taxpayers and everyone else that we get on top of the matter.

As for our general approach, we support the introduction of stabilisers to produce better budgetary discipline. However, I am clear that they should not discriminate against British interests and that they should apply to all sectors. Some sectors are still excluded and although we do not normally produce in them—they include Mediterranean products—I am as keen to introduce stabilisers for such products as for any others.

Mr. Geraint Howells: Will the Minister inform the House of the latest developments on the EEC sheepmeat proposals?

Mr. MacGregor: Yes. We had a discussion on Tuesday about the stabiliser aspect of the sheepmeat proposals. I stated that I am critical of them as they stand at the moment because they discriminate against the United Kingdom. We have not yet discussed the wider proposals of the future of the sheepmeat regime, which I expect to discuss at the next Council meeting or shortly after.

Mr. John Greenway: Does my right hon. Friend recognise the widespread hostility towards milk quotas, and the fact that they have created a situation in which young dairy farmers find it impossible to get into dairy farming? As we address the question of the reform of the CAP, will my right hon. Friend confirm that no more quotas will be introduced?

Mr. MacGregor: On dairy quotas, if we could have tackled the problem of spiralling costs in another way I should have liked to do so. However, the plain fact was that we could not and the quotas have big disadvantages, one of which my hon. Friend has mentioned. The vast majority of British dairy farmers now believe that the quota system has given them a stability that they could not have achieved in any other way. We have made it clear that we believe that the quota system should be continued after 1989, and that has the support of the majority of British farmers.

Mr. Hume: Does the Minister agree that the proposals for the reform of the common agricultural policy, to which he has referred, will have a serious impact on regions that are heavily dependent on agriculture, and that those regions already have high unemployment, such as Northern Ireland and the highlands and islands? What has he brought forward to cushion the impact of those proposals?

Mr. MacGregor: I beg the hon. Gentleman to understand that if the costs of the CAP continue to rise as they are doing even more drastic measures will have to be taken, which will certainly not be in the interests of our farmers. Therefore, it is necessary to reform the CAP.

I should like to mention one point on which I am acutely conscious of the problems in the less-favoured areas. In the sheepmeat regime there is a proposal to place a ceiling on the limit for payment of ewe premium which would adversely affect sheep producers in, for example, the less-favoured areas. I have stated my strong opposition to that.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: Has my right hon. Friend made any progress in persuading the other EEC Ministers that the only way to limit an otherwise open-ended budget and to ensure that the money goes to the producers rather than to the storers of the food is to have quotas across the entire spectrum of agricultural output? Otherwise, there will be a knock-on from one aspect of production to another when the squeeze comes on.

Mr. MacGregor: I know how much my hon. Friend studies these matters. However, there are grave difficulties in going down the quota route in other sectors, for

example, cereals, in which they would be almost impossible to administer, quite apart from other difficulties.

My hon. Friend has made an interesting point about the dairy industry. One of the reasons for the further changes in quotas in December was to reduce the amount of stocks in intervention—the precise storage point that he makes. I am sure he will be glad to know that as a result of that change in December stocks in intervention are decreasing markedly.

Dr. David Clark: In the efforts to reform the CAP, which has the support of Labour Members, will the Minister assure the House that he will not bargain away the sheep variable premium and that he will not close his mind to the direct income support, which would be a great help to the smaller and poorer farmers in Britain?

Mr. MacGregor: If, by direct income support, the hon. Gentleman means the direct income aids which are currently being discussed in the Community — we discussed that on Tuesday—I must advise him that, for a variety of reasons, most member states were opposed to the present proposals, which, in their present shape, do not make sense, not least because there is nothing in them to prevent increased production arising as a result of the direct income support. That would run contrary to the major aims of reform. I do not think that the proposals in their present form are acceptable, or will be of much benefit, to the United Kingdom.

We have not yet embarked on detailed negotiations on the sheepmeat sector, but I can assure the hon. Gentleman that it would be absolutely my intention in our general approach to resist measures which would discriminate against United Kingdom interests and to favour those which would allow free but fair competition and enable us to capitalise on our natural production advantages in sheepmeat.

Council of Fisheries Ministers

8. **Mr. Wallace** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how often the European Council of Fisheries Ministers has met since 24 July; and if he will make a statement on the outcome of the meetings.

The Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. John Selwyn Gummer): The Fisheries Council met once—on 29 September. I issued a press notice on the outcome of the Council's meeting, of which I have placed copies in the Library of the House.

Mr. Wallace: Will the Minister confirm that one of the issues giving rise to concern among EEC Fisheries Ministers is flag registration? Will he make it clear that that is of considerable concern to the industry because it appears to undermine much of the fabric of the common fisheries policy? What steps do the Government intend to take to counteract this growing trend, and when do they propose to take action?

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right. This is of great concern to ourselves and to other Governments. We have already taken what interim measures we have been able to take, as he knows, and we have had long discussions with the industry to discover how best we can proceed. He will be pleased to see in the Transport Bill measures which we hope will ensure that ships which are registered as British are indeed British. The Commission has known about the difficulties and we have asked it to do something about them for some time. The fact that it has not been able to do so is of considerable concern to us, because this should have been able to be done on a Community level as it undermines the whole basis of the division of quotas, which is the foundation of the common fisheries policy.

Mr. Harris: When my right hon. Friend next meets the Fisheries Ministers, will they look at the question of the precautionary TACs, which are not always based on scientific evidence, and which result in such madness as we saw this summer of a complete stop on cod fishing by certain boats, although there were masses of cod in the English Channel?

Mr. Gummer: I believe that our first priority in the fisheries industry is to protect the stock for future generations. That sometimes means that we take measures which, in the event, turn out to be more draconian than was necessary. I would prefer to be harshly judged because I was too concerned about conservation than to be blamed for the destruction of whole species. As we have seen with herring, we can fish out whole species. Therefore, if more fish are around, we want more for Britain, but if the choice is between conservation for the future and destruction for present gains, I would always vote for conservation.

Dr. Godman: I believe that the Ministers agreed to a research and development programme budget for the next few years, and that will be greatly welcome to all in the fishing industry. Given that the programme will deal, among other things, with the management of stocks, will the Minister seriously consider the possibility of creating a multi-disciplinary research and development team to examine the extension of TACs from one year to three or four years?

Mr. Gummer: I am sure that the House will want me to welcome the hon. Gentleman to his new position.

The Council's decision was welcomed by us. I hope that the hon. Gentleman is also pleased that the United Kingdom, alone, managed to win the battle to ensure that this new research and development was under the control of the Council and was not fixed under some sort of advisory committee under the complete control of the Commission. We felt that that was right, and we won the support of our colleagues for it.

On the multi-disciplinary approach, it would be good if we could have a longer-term programme for TACs, but from my two and half years' experience of negotiating in the Community I think that we must make the present system of year-by-year consideration work more effectively and with fewer hiccups before we can look as far forward as the hon. Gentleman would like.

Sugar Beet

9. **Mr. Alexander** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what success he has had in obtaining an increase in sugar beet quotas in the European Economic Community.

Mr. MacGregor: The European Commission has proposed continuing existing quotas unchanged for the next three marketing years. In view of the large structural surplus, which has to be sold on world markets at low prices, there could be no justification for increasing the Community's sugar beet quotas.

Mr. Alexander: Is not the position of the British sugar industry increasingly unsatisfactory? Is it not faced, on the one hand, with no increased quotas, despite proven need, and, on the other hand, with increased levies to assist countries that are already in surplus production? Is this not grossly unfair, and what can my right hon. Friend do about it?

Mr. MacGregor: I well understand what my hon. Friend is pressing, and I very much understand his local interest, but he also has to look at it from the overall Community point of view. We are exporting to world markets substantial quantities of sugar which go to third countries at subsidised prices, the subsidy being paid through the levy, so I do not think that it will be possible to argue for an increase in quotas overall. I have to tell my hon. Friend that, realistically, a change in the distribution of A and B quotas between member states would not be satisfactory. Under the levy proposals of the Commission, which are being attacked by many other member states, about which we will have a battle, we pay 6 per cent. of the cost of the levy, whereas we have 9 per cent. of the quotas. So, it is not an unfavourable situation. It is a fair one, and I am determined that it should continue.

Mr. Curry: Does my right hon. Friend not agree that the only circumstances in which the United Kingdom would have an increased quota would be if there were a general increase in EEC quotas, and that such an increase in quotas would be disastrous both for the EEC budget and for Third world developing countries that depend upon the world market for their sugar?

Mr. MacGregor: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. That is a fair and realistic summary of the situation.

Tenant Farmers

10. **Mr. Beith** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent discussions he has had with tenant farmers; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Gummer: My right hon. Friend the Minister and I meet tenant farmers regularly and discuss a very wide range of subjects of mutual interest.

Mr. Beith: If a landlord gets planning permission, encouraged by the Government, for building or tree planting on his land, what will the Minister do if the tenant loses his security of tenure? Surely there is not much "alluring" for the tenant farmer in the Government's package?

Mr. Gummer: I think the hon. Gentleman will agree that that, as a summation of the effect of ALURE on the tenant farmer, is a rather narrow and prejudiced point of view. We are looking at this with the industry at the moment, which is discussing closely what should be done and how the division between the various responsibilities should be seen in the light of diversification and other changes. From the reports that I have, it seems that the industry is coming to an understanding on this matter, and I am looking forward to hearing from it. If we can get an industry-agreed solution to those problems, we shall be very pleased.

Mr. Heddle: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the tenant farmers whose land is blighted by coal mining subsidence suffer considerable consequential losses? What does he propose to do, and will he take steps to persuade his ministerial colleagues to implement the recommendations of the Waddilove report?

Mr. Gummer: Obviously the recommendations of the Waddilove report are a responsibility of other Ministries. I understand that they are looking at those recommendations carefully at the moment, and I have certainly made clear to them the particular damage of which my hon. Friend speaks. It is not limited to tenant farmers. There is no doubt that the whole question of subsidence is one that has now been thrown into great prominence and that farmers need to be properly protected.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Is it not true that the Minister has received repeated representations from tenant farmers in Scotland, Wales, Cumbria and Yorkshire about contaminated lamb and the blighting of land in those areas following Chernobyl? To talk in the European Communities of raising the becquerel limit from 1,000 to 5,000, and thereby derestricting those areas, is just cheating one's way around the problem. What will he do to resolve the problem of blighted land in those areas?

Mr. Gummer: I am not sure whether those are not two parts of a totally different question. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland has no doubt received such representations, as has my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales. I have received representations from farmers in Cumbria. The hon. Gentleman may like to throw around words such as "cheat" and the rest of it, but some of us are trying to face the difficulties. After the Chernobyl incident scientists recommend a figure, and they are now recommending a different one. Politicians have to try to decide what is right between these figures, and I can assure the hon. Gentleman that I am trying to make the decision on scientific grounds and on no other. He can say "cheat" as often as he likes, but if he does so he tells untruths.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the House to listen to answers, or to carry on conservations outside the Chamber.

Fishing Industry

11. **Mr. David Porter** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the implications for the British fishing industry on his announcement about freezer trawlers.

Mr. Gummer: The choice between the many deserving applicants for the new licences for their freezer trawlers which I announced in January was not an easy one, but the Fisheries Ministers concluded that it would best serve the United Kingdom interest, including that of the fishing industry, to allocate licences in respect of one vessel each to Boyd Line Management Services, Associated Fisheries and Lunar Fishing.

Mr. Porter: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for that reply. Given the increasing prosperity of the Scottish fishing industry, would it not have been more appropriate to grant a greater proportion of the licences to the English fishing industry, which needs all the support that it can get?

Mr. Gummer: That was not the view that I received when I went to Peterhead and Aberdeen recently. On that occasion it was suggested to me that we had got things the

wrong way round. *[Interruption.]* If any Opposition Member thinks that it is a junket to go to Peterhead or Aberdeen, it is clear that he has not been to either place at 7 o'clock in the morning.

My hon. Friend is right when he suggests that it is not easy to make distinctions when it comes to deciding how we should offer out the licences. There is no doubt that many parts of the English fishing industry have suffered disproportionately as a result of the loss of distant water fishing, and it seems right that two of the three licences should go to the English fishing industry.

Dr. Godman: Is the Minister confident that the granting of these freezer trawler licences does not disrupt the growing reconciliation between fishing effort and available stocks?

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman is right to raise this matter. We have granted the licences because we are concerned that in some areas we do not fully fish the quota that is provided for us. Unless we are able to provide the means to do that, other countries will be able to refer to our quotas in some areas and say, "As you have not fished them, perhaps you should relinquish them." As the common fisheries policy is of great help to us, as a part of the Community, and individually as the United Kingdom, I am concerned that there should be no opening for that sort of assertion. It is for that reason that these proposals were put forward. They are designed to make us more able to match fishing effort to fishing opportunity. They are based upon the principle that if in future we find that the gap widens, we shall be able to make further allocations of licences if that seems appropriate.

Oats (Co-responsibility Levy)

12. **Mr. Michael Brown** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to exempt farmers who grow oats from paying the co-responsibilty levy.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Community rules require co-responsibility levy to be paid on oats. We shall ensure that the case for exempting oats is fully considered in the forthcoming review.

Mr. Brown: I thank my hon. Friend for that helpful reply. Will he tell the House whether oats are currently in surplus?

Mr. Thompson: Supply and demand for oats are broadly in balance. There would seem to be scope for growing more high-quality milling oats in this country.

Mr. Tony Banks: Does the Minister recall the advertising slogan that was used by the Scottish Co-op:

"Mrs. McCrindle gets her oats at the Co-op"?

Where does the Minister get his oats?

Mr. Thompson: I know that Scotsmen in the House had enough oats yesterday to keep us up until early this morning. I hope that they have fewer oats next week.

Bridleways

13. **Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what discussions he has had with the chairman of the National Farmers Union about bridleways across farming land.

Mr. Gummer: I met the deputy president of the National Farmers Union on 13 October, when we discussed, among other things, the question of access to the countryside.

Mr. McNair-Wilson: May I urge my right hon. Friend to consider setting up an inquiry into the current network of bridleways? May I suggest to him that there should be an expansion of the bridleways to meet the huge increase in riding as a leisure pursuit, so as to take riders off busy country roads and lanes and to assist farmers who find that the lines of some traditional bridleways are detrimental to good agriculture?

Mr. Gummer: I am sure that my hon. Friend is right to stress the need to accept within the countryside the demands of access, which very often run counter to some of the demands of conservation and agriculture. The Ministry tries hard to bring those different demands together. In the meantime, we are discussing with others how best to help gain access to bridleways in the environmentally sensitive areas where we are directly responsible. My right hon. Friend the Minister is discussing with the Countryside Commission how best to continue to try to produce better access to the countryside for the rider and the pedestrian.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before we start on Prime Minister's Question Time, may I appeal to the House for less noise at Prime Minister's Question Time. It is my asessment that noise has increased since we returned after the general election. I do not think that that is good for the reputation of the House and it is not in line with our traditions.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 22 October 1987.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. Taylor: Will my right hon. Friend take time during the course of her busy day to reflect on the fact that the vast majority of British shareholders behaved with great steadiness and maturity during the recent ups and downs in the stock market? In fact, they probably behaved with more steadiness than many of the professionals.

The Prime Minister: As my hon. Friend is aware, the problems began on Wall street and since then there have been very considerable swings in stock markets all around the world. The United Kingdom has been swept up in that and share prices have fallen, although only to levels seen earlier this year. The *Financial Times* 30 share index was 1,407 when I came into the Chamber. I remember a time under a Labour Administration when it fell to 147.

Mr. Kinnock: Following the statement by the Secretary of State for the Environment yesterday, is it not clear that before local authorities can qualify for help to defray the cost of last week's severe storm damage they must use the product of a penny rate, must claim what insurance they

can and must spend any contingency funds that they have, even before winter really starts? Will the Prime Minister respond to the genuine case made for greater assistance by both Conservative and Labour-controlled councils in Wales and southern England and instruct the Secretary of State for the Environment to ensure that the stricken areas and families are given real help, commensurate with their very real needs?

The Prime Minister: I listened to the statements made by the Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Wales yesterday. It seems reasonable to me to expect local authorities to make contingency plans for unexpected events and reasonable that they should bear the product of a penny rate to meet those contingencies. Over and above that, they get, as they did under the previous Administration, 75 per cent. grant, and the further 25 per cent. local authority contribution does not rank for loss of grant.

Mr. Kinnock: What future arrangements should the local authorities make for the contingency of a hurricane in Britain?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman is aware that when disasters come they rank under the Bellwin rules for help, provided that the local authority first bears the product of a penny rate. If the right hon. Gentleman is concerned that if we get another hurricane and local authorities have already spent the product of a penny rate, I can tell him that the Bellwin penny rate for emergencies lasts for the financial year. Once the product of a penny rate has been spent on emergencies that qualified under Bellwin, any other emergencies that qualified under the rules would attract a 75 per cent. grant and the 25 per cent. local authority contribution would not cause grant loss.

Mr. Nelson: Will my right hon. Friend acknowledge that, in addition to the splendid work of the local authorities and emergency services, the Dunkirk spirit was evident among many ordinary people who, tirelessly and without thought of thanks, worked to relieve the plight of their neighbours and their community? Is she aware that most of my constituents are greateful for the prompt and substantial financial assistance offered by the Government to repair much of the damage? However, will she bear in mind that many individuals who face enormous bills for the cost of tree clearance and repair are not, and cannot be, covered by personal insurance? What relief can the Government offer them?

The Prime Minister: I join my hon. Friend in thanking the emergency services and the many volunteers who acted with splendid speed when the disaster occurred. On my hon. Friend's second point, most people are insured and there is no way in which we can make equal those who are not insured with those who are. It would be irresponsible to do so.

Q2. **Mr. Beith** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 22 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Beith: Will the Prime Minister find time today to consider under what constitutional principle she regards it as appropriate to find a place in the Cabinet for the person whom she appoints as chairman of the Conservative party and to combine the job of chairman with a ministerial post in which conflicts of interest would be impossible to avoid?

The Prime Minister: I have made no decision about the question raised by the hon. Gentleman, which I am not quite sure is within my ministerial responsibilities. He must wait, because I have not yet made up my mind.

Mr. Kilfedder: Is the Prime Minister aware of the deep resentment felt by the vast majority of Ulster people, in particular by legal practitioners of all religions in Northern Ireland, at the constant demand for the introduction of three-judge courts in Northern Ireland as a barter for the approval by Dublin of the extradition Bill? Will the right hon. Lady make it absolutely clear to Dublin that the judiciary in Northern Ireland is fair and impartial and ranks among the best in the Western world and that the judges, who face death daily, deserve the support of the community?

The Prime Minister: I fully agree with what the hon. Gentleman has said. The future of courts in Northern Ireland is a matter for the United Kingdom Government and is not a bargaining factor.

Mr. Morgan: Does the Prime Minster accept that the cancellation of the BP advertising programme means that the Government now take the view that the small investor should stay out of the BP share sale?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman must understand that there is little I can say about an issue—*[Interruption.]*—which is a matter of the prospectus, a copy of which has been placed in the Library. Investors must decide for themselves whether to apply. The hon. Gentleman is fully aware of the legal position and knows that that is the limit of what I can say.

Q3. **Mr. McCrindle** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 22 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. McCrindle: Following the recent announcements by the Home Secretary with regard to the possession and use of knives and other weapons and the restrictions on certain types of firearms, will the Prime Minister accept that that is seen as a major contribution to law and order, which is bringing reassurance to the police and the public, both of whom would welcome other measures of similar severity?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend. Further measures dealing with guns and the carrying of knives have been widely welcomed across the political divide and I hope that they will pass speedily into legislation.

Mr. Caborn: Will the Prime Minister request that the Attorney-General makes a statement on the withdrawal by the Director of Public Prosecutions today of the charges against the three accused in Lambeth magistrates' court of kidnapping offences against the African National Congress? As the right hon. Lady will know, there have been reporting restrictions, and around the world we have seen headlines such as

"People in high places linked to ANC kidnap trial".

The people in high places are two Members of this honourable House — and I believe that a statement should be made to clear their names — and a former Member.

I ask the Prime Minister first to give her observations, and, secondly, to call upon the Attorney-General to make that statement to clear Conservative Members and restore their good name.

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman is aware that prosecutions are not a matter for me. I shall call the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General to what the hon. Gentleman has said, but whether he responds is wholly a matter for him.

Q4. **Mr. Hunter** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 22 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Hunter: With regard to education and the Government's welcome and radical election commitments, may I ask my right hon. Friend to comment on the proposition that they should be introduced as quickly as possible and in their entirety, so that children may benefit from better education and the educational establishment is challenged — *[Interruption.]* — to provide a better service than has often been the case hitherto?

The Prime Minister: We shall do our best to introduce that Bill fairly quickly, so that it can be given its Second Reading and go into Committee, preferably before Christmas. I believe that many people are assuming that some of what we are proposing is already legislation, and are wanting to take advantage of it. We are having to point out that it will take time to go through the House.

I noticed the cries from the Opposition as my hon. Friend put his question. Judging by the performance at the last election, what they oppose during one Parliament they will agree to when they have lost the next election.

Q5. **Mrs. Michie** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 22 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Lady to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mrs. Michie: Will the Prime Minister take time to consider the plight of the fishing industry in Scotland, and the lack of grant for building new boats? In particular, is she aware that the Scottish fishing industry has not been given grant approval for two boats to be built at the excellent Campbeltown shipyard in my constituency? If that does not happen, the men will be out of work.

The Prime Minister: I am very grateful to the hon. Lady for letting me know of her special concern. She will know that we have made record sums available for vessel construction and improvements: £13·8 million last year and £17·5 million this year.

With regard to the two applications, there is an unprecedented demand for grants, and we have had to have a system of priorities. I understand that one of the applications referred to does not come within any of the priority categories, and cannot be assisted at this time. The second falls within one of the categories and is under consideration by the Sea Fish Industry Authority, which administers the grant scheme on behalf of Fisheries Ministers.

Q6. **Sir John Farr** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 22 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Sir John Farr: I congratulate my right hon. Friend on the firm and resolute attitude that she took at the Prime Ministers' conference in Vancouver, and in particular on resisting the wrongful call for sanctions against South Africa. Will she further recognise that the advice offered to her by the leaders of certain central African countries which have run their own economies into the ground should be—and rightly was—disregarded?

The Prime Minister: I shall be making a statement about the Commonwealth conference in a moment. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his support. Since the conference I have received a message through our ambassador from Mrs. Suzman, who asked him to say that she remains convinced that it would do enormous damage in South Africa to put large numbers of people out of work, and that she is certain that the sanctions so far imposed have tended to harden white attitudes and to make the task of people like herself, who have been fighting apartheid for years, more difficult.

Q7. **Mr. Ashley** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 22 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer the right hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Ashley: With reference to the glittering success of our economy, which was described so eloquently by the Prime Minister at Blackpool, could she explain to the House why the Minister for Social Security and the Disabled has written to me to explain that the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 cannot be implemented because of lack of funds?

The Prime Minister: We had a number of questions on this subject before the House rose for the summer recess, and I told the right hon. Gentleman that we were anxious to implement the Act, if we could agree with the local authorities on something that was of a reasonable cost. I am afraid that it will not be implemented yet, but, as the right hon. Gentleman is aware, our record with regard to help for the disabled is quite outstanding. Spending on benefits for the long-term sick and disabled has risen by 75 per cent. in real terms over the last eight years.

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (Vancouver)

3.30 pm

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Vancouver which I attended, accompanied by my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary. Texts of the statements issued at the meeting have been placed in the Library of the House.

The discussions covered two main issues: Fiji and South Africa. The resignation of the Governor-General of Fiji was announced during the meeting. Heads of Government agreed a statement in which they acknowledged that, by Commonwealth convention, Fiji's membership of the Commonwealth lapsed with the emergence of a republic. They went on to express their sadness at developments there and to call for a resolution by the people of Fiji themselves of the island's problems. They offered the Commonwealth's good offices towards such a resolution. They made it clear that they would be willing to consider an application from the republic of Fiji to renew its membership of the Commonwealth, if circumstances so warrant.

In my speech at the opening ceremony of the meeting, I had set out our belief that the Commonwealth should not turn its back on Fiji in its moment of greatest need. We worked hard at the meeting to find a way to keep open the option of Commonwealth membership for Fiji. The outcome is therefore a satisfactory one. I hope that acceptable arrangements will be found in Fiji which preserve that country's tradition of democracy and enable it to make a successful application for renewed Commonwealth membership in due course.

Heads of Government also agreed a statement on South Africa. This reiterated the Commonwealth's determination to work for the total elimination of apartheid and confirmed our commitment to see this goal achieved by negotiation against the background of a suspension of violence on all sides.

Most Heads of Government repeated their support for sanctions against South Africa, and agreed a number of procedural steps, including a study to examine South Africa's relationship with the international financial system and the establishment of a Committee of Foreign Ministers. However, no specific additional measures or sanctions against South Africa were adopted.

The statement also underlined the importance of continued aid to black South Africans, as well as to the front-line states in order to reduce the latter's dependence upon South Africa. In both these respects, Britain's record is outstanding.

The statement represents no significant change from the position reached at the Commonwealth meetings in Nassau in 1985 and in London last year, although there is a growing realisation on the part of many Commonwealth countries, first that the change in South Africa will be a slow and long-drawn-out process and, secondly, that the momentum for change must come from within South Africa itself.

Britain, for its part, has faithfully implemented the limited measures to which we agreed at earlier meetings, as a signal to South Africa. We shall continue to do so. But where we disagree with other Commonwealth Governments is on the most effective means to get rid of apartheid.

We believe that sanctions only harden attitudes, as the recent elections in South Africa have shown. Moreover, so far as they do have an effect, the first to suffer are the black people of South Africa whose jobs and livelihoods would be put at risk, without any social security to fall back upon. They would also be very damaging to the front-line states which have themselves come to understand more fully the difficulty of applying sanctions.

I would draw the House's attention to three further measures discussed at the meeting. First, as regards trade, Heads of Government put their names to an important pledge to promote the liberalisation of trade. The unanimous support by all members of the Commonwealth — both developed and developing countries — for a strong and effective GATT and a positive outcome to the Uraguay round should significantly enhance the prospects for those negotiations.

Secondly, we discussed the special problems of the poorest and most heavily indebted countries, primarily in sub-Saharan Africa. The Commonwealth has declared itself firmly in support of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's initiative to help relieve the burden of debt in these countries.

Thirdly, the Commonwealth has decided to embark upon an imaginative and valuable project to help meet the educational needs of member countries. We agreed to create a Commonwealth institution to promote co-operation in distance education. There is much detailed work still to be done, but we in Britain have much to contribute with our experience of the Open university and the Open college.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government will be in Kuala Lumpur in 1989. I am grateful to the Canadian Government and particularly to Prime Minister Mulroney, who chaired the meeting, for the useful and productive work which was done.

The Commonwealth tolerates many points of view. The genuine differences within it over the best way to help get rid of apartheid should not obscure the very valuable contribution which the organisation continues to make to the well-being of its members.

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): May I first associate myself with the Heads of Government statement on Fiji and the view that was expressed this afternoon by the Prime Minister about the hope for the return of that country to democracy and the Commonwealth.

With regard to Southern Africa, the Prime Minister set store by the aid to the front-line states as a means of reducing their dependence on South Africa. Will she therefore tell us why bilateral aid to those countries has been cut by more than 40 per cent. by her Government since 1980? Does the Prime Minister's press conference statement about the African National Congress mean that she will forbid further contact between the Government and the ANC? Will she tell us why and when she changed policy and whether she told the Foreign Secretary and his Minister of State of that change?

The Prime Minister has rightly imposed sanctions against countries because of their aggression against others or because they sponsor terrorism. On that basis, why does she not strengthen sanctions against South

Africa? Could it be that in her view the South African attacks on the front-line states and the South African sponsorship of attacks on Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe do not count? The South African Government's gaoling, torture and killing of children in South Africa do not count as terrorism in her peculiar view.

Following the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting, is the Prime Minister aware that the white South African politicians and press see her as an ally of apartheid? And they are right. Does not the Prime Minister realise that it is now impossible to believe her declarations against apartheid when she systematically uses all her political power to protect it?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman quoted bilateral aid. An increasing amount of our aid goes through multilateral channels, through Europe, the World Bank and the special agencies. That fact must also be taken into account.

With regard to the fundamental issue of apartheid, Chief Buthelezi, the head of the largest black nation in South Africa, said on 5 September 1987:

"It is we Blacks who are paying the price for sanctions and disinvestment which have not had the effect they were designed to have."

Mrs. Helen Suzman said:

"The imposition of sanctions and other punitive measures such as disinvestment have not only been ineffective but actually counter-productive."

Mr. Alan Paton, author of "Cry, the Beloved Country", said:

"A second and lesser reason for the recent election results in South Africa"—

the first being security concerns—

"was the ill-advised sanctions campaign of the West."

Our policy—that we wish to get rid of apartheid as soon as possible—is the best one. The application of sanctions would increase oppression and delay the dismantlement of apartheid. The greatest dismantlement of apartheid is coming through industries there that are operating the very best codes of practice and constantly training more and more people to do more skilled jobs and managerial jobs.

With regard to the ANC, the right hon. Gentleman will recall that when Mr. Tambo attended a press conference in the House some time ago he said:

"We are going to step up the struggle. It is going to accelerate . . . The ANC embraces violence. We are going to intensify the struggle."

On a TV-am Sunday programme he said that the ANC would go to "every conceivable length" to destroy the apartheid system. He said:

"the escalated armed struggle cannot avoid the use of guns."

We disapprove of the use of violence to solve this problem. It will not go away, as my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary said very vehemently to the ANC when, in his capacity as President of the European Economic Community—only in that capacity—he saw the ANC.

I make it clear that the right hon. Gentleman, by the use of sanctions, wants us to throw as many black South Africans out of work as we possibly can, knowing full well that there is no social security and that they would go to deprivation and starvation. I do not regard such a policy as a barometer of social conscience.

Mr. David Howell (Guildford): Was not my right hon. Friend at Vancouver entirely right to condemn and criticise the role of the African National Congress? Was not the ANC an organisation which notably failed to condemn the monstrous atrocity of necklace burning? Would not the Opposition and others who want to see the apartheid problem defeated and overcome do better to listen to the voice of the Inkatha movement which represents millions of black South Africans who want more prosperity and more investment rather than sanctions and lectures?

The Prime Minister: Yes. I believe that the way we are going is the way that will get rid of apartheid fastest. I agree with my right hon. Friend that violence is not the way to solve this problem and we condemn it wherever it occurs on all sides. When there are incursions into other states, we are the first to condemn them. We help the front-line states with their security measures. We condemn violence and we want genuine——

Mr. Bernie Grant (Tottenham): What about Botha's violence?

Mr. Speaker: Order. it is no good shouting across the Chamber like that.

The Prime Minister: We condemn violence. We help the front-line states with their security against any incursions. We approve of the negotiating concept by the Eminent Persons Group which involves genuine negotiations against the background of the suspension of violence. I notice that Opposition Members approve the violence practised by the ANC and others.

Mr. David Steel (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): In her statement, the Prime Minister said that the Commonwealth tolerates many different points of view. Does she accept that they find it difficult to tolerate her rejection of the findings of the Eminent Persons Group which she herself helped to appoint? Does she accept that they find it difficult to accept the offence she gave not only to the new Commonwealth countries but to our old Commonwealth friends, Australia and New Zealand and specially her host, Canada, whose trade figures she disgracefully abused by not quoting the up to date figures?

Does the right hon. Lady also accept that she also caused offence by the use of the Downing street press machine to give distorted briefings on what was going on in the meeting? Is she aware that she left the clear impression that if she were left to organise the coffee break, as a matter of principle it would be 48 coffees and one tea?

Does the right hon. Lady also recognise that this meeting represented a defeat for British diplomacy, a defeat for what her Ministers have been doing in dialogue with the ANC, and, above all, the abandonment of British leadership in the Commonwealth?

The Prime Minister: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman did not observe that I endorsed the negotiating concept defined by the Eminent Persons Group. The negotiating concept was genuine negotiations with people of all views and opinion from all ethnic races and colour in South Africa, against a background of the suspension of violence. That was specifically endorsed by me a moment or two ago.

The trade figures to which attention was drawn were published by the International Monetary Fund.

Mr. Steel: They were not for 1987.

The Prime Minister: Does not the right hon. Gentleman realise that we do not yet have the figures for 1987 because the year is not over? Of course we do not have those figures. The figures which we had were not British figures — they were published by the International Monetary Fund. Some people could not stand the fact that they were accurate.

Mr. John Marshall (Hendon, South): Does my right hon. Friend agree that many of the countries that criticised our attitude to South Africa have been criticised for their internal policies by Amnesty International? Did my right hon. Friend discuss with her colleagues the role of British aid and compare it with the role of Russian aid in Africa?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is right. The Commonwealth contains many different kinds of countries, not all of them famed for human rights. As my hon. Friend knows, there are four military Governments in the Commonwealth. Amnesty International has sharply criticised some of those countries.

It is noticeable that even those countries which said that they believed in sanctions did not impose a single extra sanction. They were aware — although they refused to acknowledge it in the communiqué—of the considerable British help given to the front-line states in respect of security matters and aid and to places not in the Commonwealth, such as Mozambique, where we help to alleviate food problems. Those countries were aware also, because this was mentioned during the debate, that Britain gives aid to projects such as the Limpopo and the Nkala railway lines so that the front-line states have an alternative route to the sea and do not have to transport goods through South Africa. Those countries were aware of those facts but refused to acknowledge them in the communiqué.

Mr. Michael Foot (Blaenau Gwent): Were the Canadian trade figures which caused such offence to the Canadian Prime Minister issued directly on her authority? Does not the right hon. Lady think that it would be better to save such methods for internal use in this country rather than to take them across the Atlantic? Does the right hon. Lady claim that her views on violence coincide with those stated by the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office — the right hon. Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker)—following her meeting directly with the representatives of the ANC?

The Prime Minister: I am surprised that the right hon. Gentleman objects so strongly to straightforward IMF trade figures. I was prepared to have our figures published in that way, but there is no earthly reason — [HON. MEMBERS: "Out of date."] They are not out of date. There were 1984, 1985 and 1986 figures, but the 1987 figures are not yet available, for obvious reasons. The first Commonwealth meeting on sanctions was at Nassau in 1985 and the second was in London in 1986. I have made perfectly clear the way in which my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary saw the ANC. I have made it perfectly clear that we condemn an organisation which practises the violence practised by the ANC.

Sir Ian Lloyd (Havant): My right hon. Friend will be aware that she enjoys massive support throughout the country from those who are not only strenuous opponents of apartheid but friends of South Africa. Can my right hon. Friend explain why so many of the heads of the Commonwealth who met in Vancouver do not seem to recognise that the battleground has changed and that it is no longer a controversy over the merits of apartheid, which are defended only by a lunatic fringe, but a controversy over how that system can be usefully, properly and constructively removed from South Africa without causing immense damage to the economy, which must survive that process?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend. The only way of getting higher standards of living, education and housing for all the people of South Africa is by improving the industries and commerce there. There is no way in which one can do that by creating an economic wasteland in South Africa. Some Labour Members would like to create an economic wasteland and cause unemployment among black South Africans by sanctions. That is not our way and not our policy.

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): The Prime Minister has said that she sees these very limited measures as a signal to South Africa. Will she specify what further action she is signalling to South Africa, so that the South Africans are in no doubt about the signals that she is sending?

The Prime Minister: The word "signal" was the one used in the communiqué issued after the Nassau conference, and they were signals. The right hon. Gentleman will have seen that a number of people in South Africa, including Mrs. Helen Suzman, I believe, and Chief Buthelezi, believe that the sanctions have not gone further to meet their objective but have actually been counter-productive.

The right hon. Gentleman asked me what further signals this country gives. First, there is the help that we give to train the armed forces of Zimbabwe, through the British armed forces there. Secondly, there is the help that we give to train some of the Mozambican forces in the same way. Thirdly, there is the £15 million we have allocated to Mozambique which is greatly in need of help in its own country. I note that the Soviet Union tends to send arms, whereas we tend to send food. Fourthly, there is the aid that we give other front-line states, and, fifthly, the aid that we are giving specifically to build alternative railway lines so that there are other transport routes that the front-line states can use, which means that they do not have to get their imports and exports through South Africa. I thank the right hon. Gentleman for letting me make that clear.

Sir Fergus Montgomery (Altrincham and Sale): Could my right hon. Friend again reiterate that her views on sanctions against South Africa coincide with those of Mrs. Helen Suzman? Is it not important to take on board the views of Mrs. Helen Suzman, who has done more to oppose apartheid in South Africa than any hon. Member in any of the opposition parties?

The Prime Minister: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Mrs. Suzman and a number of others — indeed, many others — have been fighting apartheid in South Africa for a very long time. When Chief Buthelezi, Mrs. Suzman and Mr. Paton are saying the same thing—that sanctions against South Africa are counter-productive—I think that we should take note of their views.

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland) *rose —— [Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Maclennan: On the subject of the 1986 figures for trade with South Africa, does not the Prime Minister recognise that Britain's trade with South Africa constituted only 26 per cent. of our trade with Africa as a whole and that it might be wise to bear in mind, for British interests, views on sanctions of other African countries with which we trade? Does the Prime Minister envisage — and would she welcome — an increase in Britain's trade with South Africa, to take the place of any diminution in trade that flows from the extension of sanctions by other countries?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman asks me to take note of the views of other African countries on sanctions. May I ask him to take note of the fact that, in spite of those views, none of the countries has seen fit to impose any extra sanctions as a result of the meeting? It was a talking communiqué. Even the countries that believed in sanctions have not imposed them — for the very understandable reason, which those countries were the first to admit, that sanctions would damage the people in their own countries. We understood that, and I would ask them to understand our views on sanctions.

Let me deal with another point concerning the people from those countries. Certainly, we have good civil trade with South Africa. The fact is that South Africa has the best-run and most prosperous economy in the whole of Africa. On its economic results — [HON. MEMBERS: "Disgraceful".] On its results, it is the best economy in Africa — a fact which is recognised by many black Africans, of whom 1 million— *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

The Prime Minister: That fact is recognised by many other black Africans, of whom 1 million go to South Africa for jobs—which are better, and better paid—and remit the money to keep their families in other south African countries.

Mr. Nigel Forman (Carshalton and Wallington): Is my right hon. Friend aware that many Conservative Members welcome the less publicised parts of her statement, particularly the Commonwealth stand against a return to protectionism? Will she say a little more about the ideas that she and her Commonwealth partners have to see that this scourge does not affect agriculture and non-tariff barriers any more than it already does?

The Prime Minister: We have issued a whole separate part of the communiqué on that matter. My hon. Friend is quite right: agriculture played a considerable part in the discussions. People in Commonwealth countries can often export only food to pay for other imports. They were grateful for our stand in the European Economic Community when some countries wanted to put a tax on oils and fats, which would have been devastating to exports from some Commonwealth countries. They very much support President Reagan's initiative in the Uruguay round that all subsidies on agriculture should be reduced to nothing over a period of 10 years. I do not think that that is possible, but I believe that we have steadily to reduce subsidies on agriculture so that supply and demand become more interbalanced. It was very much a discussion based on agriculture and the future of subsidies.

Mr. Bernie Grant: The Prime Minister claims to condemn violence on all sides. As she has mentioned the ANC, will she condemn here and now the violence perpetrated by the Botha Government against black men, women and children in South Africa, Angola and Mozambique?

The Prime Minister: We have never failed to condemn such violence and I gladly reiterate that in response to the hon. Member.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): Is it not a fact that, following the tightening of mandatory sanctions against South Africa by the United States, the Botha regime was swept back into power, the opposition party became even more reactionary, legislation to dismantle apartheid stopped and there have been even more arrests without trial?

The Prime Minister: My hon. and learned Friend is correct. That is what has led a number of people in South Africa to say that sanctions and other punitive measures such as disinvestment have been not only ineffective but actually counter-productive. Before that, a number of changes were being made, including abolition of the pass laws and the repeal of the Mixed Marriages Act. The influx laws and enforced removals were abandoned. There were many moves in the right direction, including that of no apartheid in sport. If one wants further progress in the right direction, towards the dismantling of apartheid, one must welcome changes which achieve that. One must encourage further moves in that direction and not try to put on further punitive sanctions which would hit those whom we are trying to help.

Miss Joan Lestor (Eccles): Is the Prime Minister aware that many people here and abroad will be astounded and appalled that she has spent no time at all at the Dispatch Box condemning the violence and the murder and torture of large numbers of children by the South African regime? May I remind the Prime Minister, who is so proud of her stance as the only person against sanctions, that before the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference in Lusaka and before the Lancaster house discussions which gave way to the independence of Zimbabwe she stood alone in supporting the racist proposals of Bishop Muzorewa and at the 11th hour was forced by the rest of the Commonwealth to change her mind? Does she not believe that she will also have to think again about sanctions?

The Prime Minister: I do not think that the hon. Lady can have been listening to some of the answers given to questions. Yes, I wholeheartedly condemn violence against children and against other people. I wholeheartedly condemn any violence. We wholeheartedly condemn any excursions by South Africa into other states and we have tried to help defend those states against the incursions. We are prepared to condemn violence and we do so wherever it occurs. Why does the hon. Lady not also condemn the violence of the ANC and the horrible device of the necklace?

Mr. John Carlisle (Luton, North): Does my right hon. Friend accept that Conservative Members consider that she was splendid in isolation? Will she also accept that the British people are angry that a British Prime Minister should be so insulted and pilloried by a bunch of Third world leaders who cannot tell us anything about the basis of human rights? Since such leaders are in receipt of

[Mr. John Carlisle]

substantial amounts of taxpayers' money, would it not be a good idea to take aid from them and to give it to the black South Africans whom they purport to represent?

The Prime Minister: British aid to southern Africa has been about £750 million over the previous five years. We shall continue to give aid. We give it to countries such as Zimbabwe—of course we do; it would not be a free independent country without the action that was taken by the Government right at the beginning. I hope that some people will recognise that fact. We continue to give aid to Mozambique, and we continue to give much of the aid that I have already mentioned. Yes, I find it a little difficult—not the argument or the debate—when they refuse to put into a communiqué an acknowledgement of what they know to be considerable aid, although many of them came up to me afterwards and thanked me for it.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Is the Prime Minister at all aware of the feelings of many people in this country who, for many years, have genuinely been opposed to apartheid? They regard her performance in Canada as wretched and humiliating. It reminds one of Chamberlain's performance at Munich. Will the Prime Minister explain to the House the precise role of her chief press secretary? If Mr. Ingham is only a civil servant why, time and again, as at the Commonwealth conference, does he behave like some kind of bullying deputy Prime Minister? Is it not time that Mr. Ingham behaved as a civil servant, and should he not be told so by the Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: With regard to the hon. Gentleman's latter point, the briefings that are given by the press office are excellent. It was because of their excellence that some people objected to them.

With regard to what the hon. Gentleman said about apartheid, the hon. Gentleman, like many other Opposition Members, made a fundamental mistake. He said that if one is against apartheid, one must be for sanctions. That is a totally false link. If one is for sanctions, one will prolong apartheid. That is perfectly clear from what has happened. We are against apartheid. We are against sanctions. We believe that we, and not the hon. Gentleman, are going the right way for the faster dismantlement of apartheid.

The hon. Gentleman condemned a number of matters. I wonder why he does not condemn what was said in Vancouver by Mr. Makatini of the ANC. When talking about ANC violence, he said:

> "The violence could include attacks on British and other Western companies refusing to disengage and hasten the collapse of the apartheid system."

Does the hon. Gentleman approve of that?

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): In regard to sanctions, does my right hon. Friend find it astonishing that, in view of the universal condemnation of apartheid, hundreds of thousands of pounds of taxpayers' money was spent by the previous Labour Government on promoting trade with South Africa, without a peep from any Opposition Member?

The Prime Minister: Yes, that is correct. The previous Labour Government refused to impose anything like comprehensive sanctions because of the damage and harm they would do to employment in this country.

Mr. Robert N. Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby): The Prime Minister has argued that sanctions against South Africa would harden attitudes and would be counter-productive. Will she tell us whether the imposition of sanctions against Libya was counter-productive? Did encouragement of the boycott of the Moscow olympics harden attitudes in the Soviet Union? What is the difference? Is the real difference that sanctions against South Africa would harm the Prime Minister's business friends' purses?

The Prime Minister: I do not think that sanctions worked in any of those cases, any more than they worked in Rhodesia. With regard to hardening opinion in South Africa, I gave the evidence, and shall do so again, of Chief Buthelezi, who is chief of the 6 million Zulus, and the evidence of Mrs. Helen Suzman, that they actually harden attitudes, which is the reverse of what is intended.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): The very strength of the Prime Minister's denunciation of sanctions has led many people to suppose that she supports the South African Government and all that they stand for. That is not true, is it? Will my right hon. Friend go to South Africa and tell them that they must change?

The Prime Minister: It is because I held the view that apartheid is a detestable and repugnant system that I asked my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary, along with some heads of Government, to go on our behalf to South Africa to make these things clear. Apartheid is utterly detestable and repugnant and must go as soon as we can do anything which will have that effect, and I do not believe that sanctions would. My hon. Friend asks me to go to South Africa. I do not think that it would be productive for me to go at the moment. If the time comes when I think that a visit would help to dismantle apartheid, I shall go.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): With what object in mind and for what conceivable purpose did Mr. Bernard Ingham give such briefings, excellent or selective, to the press? Why did he do so, other than to discredit the Canadian Government, the Prime Minister's hosts? What was the purpose of doing it?

The Prime Minister: Mr. Ingham would have held briefings on what was going on at the Commonwealth meetings. They are perfectly customary. He would have been responding to questions and giving information on the matter of sanctions. There is nothing wrong in giving appropriate facts.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We have a busy day ahead of us, with business questions and an important debate. I shall allow questions to continue for a further five minutes. I ask hon. Members not to repeat questions which have previously been dealt with.

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): Further to my right hon. Friend's correct points about the horrible crime of necklacing, which we all admit is dreadful, there have been few cases of necklacing, in comparison with the large number of people who have been killed by the South African authorities since 1976 and during the emergency in the past two years. I fully agree with my right hon. Friend that sanctions are unworkable and bring about counter-productive effects, but, if we do not have them,

how are we politically to get the South African Government to change and to negotiate around the table with all the parties concerned?

The Prime Minister: I agree that getting negotiation, against the background of the suspension of violence, is the acid test of how to get the dismantlement of apartheid. I do not think that there is any doubt as to what is the right formula — genuine negotiations with people genuinely representing all the peoples of South Africa. I do not speak for them, but I understand that the South African Government insist, for reasons which I understand, on the suspension of violence — that is reasonable — to get all parties together. Therefore, we fully support the negotiating concept which was defined by the Eminent Persons Group, and which I still believe is the right one.

Mr. Peter Pike (Burnley): Although the Prime Minister says that she continues to condemn apartheid, will she accept that many people are appalled by her dictatorial and arrogant attitude, which tends, rightly or wrongly, to give the impression that she still supports the South African Government? Will she accept that she is out of step with the Commonwealth, the Economic Community and her own Foreign Secretary? Will she clearly state that she recognises that, to achieve any peaceful solution to the problem in South Africa, the ANC must be involved in discussions and that Nelson Mandela must be released at the earliest possible date?

The Prime Minister: I make our approach perfectly clear. We believe that apartheid is totally and utterly repugnant and detestable. We, along with many other people who have fought apartheid in South Africa for a long time, believe that sanctions would be not only ineffective but counter-productive. Yes, we believe that there must be negotiations. The hon. Gentleman will be aware that we called for the release of Nelson Mandela. There will have to be the unbanning of the ANC, together with a suspension of violence. I believe that that is the difficult part.

Mr. Andrew McKay (Berkshire, East): Does my right hon. Friend agree that those who support sanctions are naive because sanctions have never worked before, and that they have a callous indifference to the black people of South Africa who will be the first to be hurt?

The Prime Minister: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Those who talk about more sanctions do not necessarily consider their effect in South Africa. If they worked at all, such sanctions would work by turning hundreds of thousands of black South Africans out of work, with no social security to fall back on, and would commit them to deprivation and many to starvation. That is not the right way to proceed. The only way to achieve opportunity for more and more black South Africans is to have an expanding and flourishing economy.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): About ten minutes ago the Prime Minister said that the South African economy was in good shape. In view of the fact that she is a stickler for figures and wants them to be up to date, does she recall that only last year that same South African economy was $21 billion in debt, that South Africa was one of the leading African countries to be in debt, that it was rescued by 32 international banks and that National Westminster bank, Barclays bank and Standard Chartered bank from this country took part in that rescue? As a result of that rescue and the writing off of those bad debts the Government whom the right hon. Lady heads allowed those banks, via the Inland Revenue, to have a rake-off from the taxpayer.

The Prime Minister: I said that the South African economy is the most flourishing economy in Africa, which it is, and 1 million black Africans agree with me because they go to South Africa to work. However, the hon. Gentleman seems to prefer a wasteland economy and many black South Africans being out of work, deprived and starving. That is what his policy would lead to and we reject it.

Mr. Andrew Hunter (Basingstoke): While unreservedly applauding my right hon. Friend for the stand that she took in Vancouver, I ask her to consider this. She rightly stresses that a fair and just solution will emerge from within South Africa. If that is the case—I believe that it is—surely a platform should be provided for those black moderate leaders, from among whose ranks will come the first black president of South Africa so that more attention could be given to them, to men like Gatsha Buthelezi; and Lucas Mangope who for some reason incur the wrath of Opposition Members. Those men should be encouraged rather than the men of violence, the extremists and the murderers.

The Prime Minster: I agree entirely with my hon. Friend that the way in which Chief Buthelezi; and the Zulus have rejected violence should find a response from the South African Government, as should Mr. Mabuza, the head of the black South African Swazis. Their stance has commanded support from us all and that is one reason why we are constantly encouraging the negotiating concept. However, that demands the rejection of violence by the ANC.

Business of the House

4.13 pm

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the business for next week:

MONDAY 26 OCTOBER—Opposition Day (1st Allotted Day). Until about seven o'clock there will be a debate entitled "The need for increased control over the possession and use of firearms". Afterwards there will be a debate entitled "The inadequacy of consultation on the Government's education proposals". Both debates will arise on Opposition motions.

Motions on financial assistance and grant schemes for fishing vessels and fish farming. Details will be given in the *Official Report*.

TUESDAY 27 OCTOBER and WEDNESDAY 28 OCTOBER—Debate on a motion to approve the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1987 (Cm. 101).

At the end of Wednesday, motion on EC document relating to radioactivity levels in food and water. Details will be given in the *Official Report*.

THURSDAY 29 OCTOBER—Resumption of the adjourned debate on Second Reading of the Scottish Development Agency Bill.

FRIDAY 30 OCTOBER—Debate on renewable sources of energy, on a motion for the Adjournment of the House.

MONDAY 2 NOVEMBER—Second Reading of the Social Security Bill.

[*Debate on Monday 26 October 1987*
Fishing Vessels (Acquisition and Improvement) (Grants) Scheme 1987 (S.I., 1987, No. 1135)
Fishing Vessels (Financial Assistance) Scheme 1987 (S.I., 1987, No. 1136)
Fish Farming (Financial Assistance) Scheme 1987 (S.I., 1987, No. 1134)
Debate on Wednesday 28 October
Relevant European documents:
7183/87 *Radioactive contamination of food, feeding stuffs and drinking water*
Relevant Report of European Legislation Committee
HC 43-ii (1987-88) para 1]

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): I am grateful to the Leader of the House for that statement. However, the House has been led to expect that the Government will arrange a full-scale debate on Scottish economic affairs in the near future. Will he now inform us when that debate will be held because delay in arranging it will encourage the belief in some quarters that the Government's interest in Scotland and in its people is proportionate to their low representation in that country?

In the wake of the recent severe storms in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and as the Government's response to the immediate and long-term needs of those areas has so far been grossly inadequate, will the Leader of the House arrange for further statements next week from the relevant Secretaries of State? Will he ask them especially to specify the arrangements for providing longer-term revenue and practical support to those stricken areas as the full cost of the damage to communications, hospitals, schools and private property becomes known?

Will the Leader of the House say when we may expect the Chancellor's autumn statement?

Will the right hon. Gentleman arrange for a statement to be made about the Government's attitude to space research? There is deep and justified concern in the scientific and technical community about the Government's lack of foresight in the matter of space research and related issues. Before any final decision is taken in November about our contribution to the European space programme, will the right hon. Gentleman ensure that the House has a chance to register its views?

As the Government's own Social Security Advisory Committee last week urged the Government not to proceed with the social fund as planned, and in view of the huge loss of income that will be inflicted on people such as those who care for the chronically sick at home or on pensioner couples who are disabled, will the Leader of the House arrange for an immediate debate on those proposals so that the Government may further consider whether they really want to inflict greater poverty and insecurity on those in need?

In the light of exchanges in the House yesterday about security in the Commons, and the difficult position in which you, Mr. Speaker, can be placed under the present informal arrangements, will the Leader of the House arrange for a debate so that the House can consider how the security of this palace could be improved by establishing a security clearance procedure for all who work in it, other than those who are elected?

In view of the serious constitutional implications that would arise if the same person were to be appointed Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and chairman of the Conservative party, will the Leader of the House, who, I understand, has some reservations about that, ensure that that issue can be debated in the House in the near future?

Mr. Wakeham: In answer to the last question, the Leader of the Opposition should not believe everything that he reads in the newspapers. I can give him the clear undertaking that I shall not arrange a debate on matters concerning the Prime Minister's position as leader of the Conservative party.

On the other matters that the right hon. Gentleman raised, the right course of action is to complete the Second Reading of the Scottish Development Agency Bill next Thursday. That is an important measure which is designed to enable further assistance to be given to Scotland, but which seemed to meet with some opposition yesterday from Members opposite. We shall see how we get on with that and consider the other matters through the usual channels.

I cannot promise a further statement on the storms, but when my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has further information on the extent of the damage and on the cost to the local authorities, he will have to consider how best to proceed.

On the autumn statement, the Leader of the Opposition is quite right that this is the season of the year in which autumn statements normally come. However, I can give him no more information other than that it is on its way.

On space research, the Government have already decided not to increase our civil space expenditure above the current level of over £100 million a year. They are considering further draft proposals from the European

Space Agency. I shall refer the right hon. Gentleman's point to my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster who will no doubt find an opportunity to report to the House as soon as possible.

I cannot promise a debate on the social fund, but I imagine that with a little ingenuity some of the points that hon. Gentlemen wish to make can be dealt with in the Social Security Bill debate on Monday.

I am sure that the House will want an opportunity to deal with matters relating to the security of the House and the issuing of passes. I shall have discussions through the usual channels to find the best way to proceed on that important matter.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): Will my right hon. Friend consider having a debate on the way in which the House operates, its programme and the management of its business? Is he worried that the usual channels can work only if there is a genuine two-way process? If one party to usual-channel agreements fails to meet its commitments, the workings of the House will inevitably break down and there will be little future for the usual-channels. Will my right hon. Friend give an undertaking that if other parties cannot hold to commitments made, we might withdraw all privileges and agreements and take our gloves off?

Mr. Wakeham: I have had a little experience of dealing with matters through the usual channels and I believe that matters are best left discussed through the usual channels. But that is not to say that I do not recognise my hon. Friend's point and the concern that he and some of my hon. Friends feel on the matter. I think that it is best to proceed through the usual channels and see how we get on.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Has the Leader of the House read paragraph 57 of the second report of the Select Committee on Procedure on the use of time on the Floor of the House and the time given by the House for private Members' Bills? Has he noted our recommendations which would provide for an increase in the time allotted for private Members' Bills, and that we are to debate at least three important private Members' Bills this Session, including one on official secrets reform? Will he give an assurance that a debate will take place on the report so that our resolutions can be approved by the House, the changes instituted and those who are moving these Bills benefit, as, indeed, will the country?

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot comment on any of the private Members' Bills this Session because I have not read any of them. Indeed, I believe that they have not yet been published. However, I can certainly have discussions through the usual channels about the report to which the hon. Gentleman refers.

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): Will my right hon. Friend secure from my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, an early statement on one aspect of the hurricane damage not covered by yesterday's statements – the plight of the east Kent fruit farmers? Does my right hon. Friend understand that many small farmers have lost complete orchards of trees uprooted in the storm and that the losses they have suffered from that and from other damage to buildings, cold stores, crops and so on mean that many families are on the edge of bankruptcy? Will he consider what special assistance might be available and, in particular, will he bear in mind the precedent set by the east coast flood disasters in 1953 when acreage payments were made to help farmers?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise the strength of the matter raised by my hon. Friend and I shall certainly refer it immediately to my right hon. Friend the Minister.

Mr. Allan Roberts (Bootle): Before the debate on security in the House will the Leader of the House prepare a report for the House on the gun club and the shooting range in the Palace of Westminster? Will he tell us who the members are, what type of guns are used, how the guns are brought in and out of the Palace of Westminster, and whether or not research assistants are allowed to have guns and to be members of that club? In the light of the Government's concern about firearms in the community, will he state categorically that the use of the Palace of Westminster for firearms, shooting and rifles is an abuse and that the club should be closed down?

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot accept that at all. I have looked at this to ensure that adequate security precautions are taken in this activity, which has been going on for many years in the House. Obviously, one would be extremely worried if there were any abuses and I shall certainly look at the matter again to see whether anything needs to be done.

Mr. Anthony Nelson (Chichester): Has my right hon. Friend seen early-day motion 15, calling for an experiment in the televising of our proceedings in this House?

[That this House approves in principle the holding of an experiment in the public broadcasting of its proceedings by television; and believes that a select committee should be appointed to consider the implementation of such an experiment and to make recommendations.]

Is he aware that the call for a Select Committee to be set up on this subject has now received considerable support from hon. Members on both sides? Now that the House has returned, will my right hon. Friend give an assurance that the House will have an early opportunity to debate and vote on this matter?

Mr. Wakeham: My hon. Friend asked me a similar question before the summer recess and I gave him an undertaking then that there would be an early opportunity to debate the matter. I am considering how best to proceed.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): Will the Leader of the House look at the report of the Select committee on Home Affairs produced before the general election on the workings of the Boundary Commission? In particular, it dealt with the point that under the present rules, whatever else is wrong with the procedures, at every redistribution a further 28 to 30 new Members of Parliament will be created outside the control of the House. Is it not time that we debated that, particularly as, for example, Yorkshire is beginning the procedures for local government boundary changes which are the foundations of the parliamentary changes which will arise in seven to nine years' time? Unless we act quickly that process will begin and, again, it will be too late to do anything about it.

Mr. Wakeham: The right hon. Gentleman raises an important point. Speaking from memory, I believe that the Government have not yet replied to the Select Committee

[Mr. Wakeham]

report. I am sure that they will do so shortly and when that reply has been given, we shall consider how best to proceed.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): May I draw my right hon. Friend's attention to the serious danger of great public disorder in Northolt where Ealing council has, without proper consultation with the local community, granted planning permission for a mosque on an industrial site which has always provided jobs. In view of the serious threat of disorder, may I ask for an early statement on the procedures that should be followed by public bodies to ensure proper consultations with local communities before embarking on such a plan?

Mr. Wakeham: Certainly I shall refer that to my right hon. Friend with responsibility for these matters to ensure that any appropriate steps are taken.

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): Is the Leader of the House aware that conductive education can transform the lives of severely disabled children and others, as has been proved at the Peto Institute in Hungary where hundreds of British children are being sent? In view of the fact that next Thursday about 1,000 families are to lobby Parliament for adequate Government funding for conductive education in Britain, may we have a statement next Thursday or a debate, please?

Mr. Wakeham: I shall refer the matter to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): When are the Select Committees likely to be established in this Parliament, because many hon. Members attach great importance to them?

Mr. Wakeham: My hon. Friend is right, and I am one of those who attach considerable importance to Select Committees. Work is under way and we shall get on just as quickly as we can.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): Will the Leader of the House give urgent consideration to the position in and conditions of Scottish prisons? It would be to the advantage of all if there were an early debate on that subject. To return to the lost debate on the Scottish economy, we were confidently led to expect such a debate, and I think that the loss of the debate was in large measure due to the incompetence of the official Opposition. Does the Leader of the House accept that this impasse in Scottish business will continue until we have a proper Scottish Parliament?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not believe that the way to get a proper Scottish Parliament is by conducting business in a disorderly fashion. The best we can do is to proceed with the debate next Thursday, as I said to the Leader of the Opposition. It is unfortunate that a debate that some people had expected will not now take place.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): May we expect a statement soon on the funds available to our hospital services? It may well be true, as a junior Minister said, that there is no crisis or problem whatever and that the hospitals in Birmingham are untrue to say that people are being turned away from dialysis and cancer care. If the lie could be given to that, it could be given only by a Minister saying where the money is being wasted, where it has gone and why the hospitals should or should not have any more. The time has come for an early statement so that the people of Birmingham may be assured on whether there is or is not sufficient money.

Mr. Wakeham: I well understand the point that my hon. Friend raises. When the autumn statement is published he will have more information as to the Government's proposals in this direction.

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): Following on the question by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark), there is a serious under-funding in the Northern regional health authority of £5 million. That comes to £1·15 million for the South Tees health district, caused by an under-funding of price and pay inflation, and leads to a threat of closure of the Carter Bequest hospital in Middlesbrough. Does the Leader of the House not feel that an early debate on under-funding would be in the interests of the House and the nation?

Mr. Wakeham: An early debate would be helpful, but I cannot promise one immediately, certainly with the autumn statement in mind. This was the subject of many exchanges at the Dispatch Box where the substantial increases in funding that have occurred under the Government have been put forward by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services, and others. No doubt the debate will continue in much the same way in the forthcoming months.

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): Might I, in a kindly fashion, nudge the memory of my right hon. Friend about his assurance to give prime time for debate of the number of outstanding Procedure Committee reports—not just one, but a number of them? I believe that those reports contain recommendations that the Government would like adopted. If that is to be the case, could they be adopted early, rather than late, in the Parliament? As for the appointment of Select Committees, the Procedure Committee is dissimilar to some of those that deal with Departments. It could be appointed by the Government quite early and quickly, and might also be of assistance to you, Mr. Speaker. Could that be done as soon as possible?

Mr. Wakeham: I will do everything I can to enable my hon. Friend to continue to address me in such a courteous way.

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): In view of the onerous burden that we have heard is placed upon the usual channels, not least in respect to Select Committees, will the Leader of the House consider making time available next week for a debate that will allow the House to determine a different method for appointing its Select Committees other than through the usual channels?

Mr. Wakeham: I have a feeling that that intervention may have been well meant, but that it may not assist us in the matter.

Sir Geoffrey Pattie (Chertsey and Walton): Will my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House arrange for a statement when a final decision has been taken on the British National Space Centre plan?

Mr. Wakeham: I will certainly refer that matter to my right hon. Friend the Minister concerned.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): In answer to the Leader of the Opposition on the question of space, the Leader of

the House said quite clearly that the Government have decided against extra funding. In the light of the recommendation in the Report of the Advisory Committee on Science and Technology under Sir Francis Toomb's that we either double funding or that we get out altogether, it should not just be referred to other Ministers before the House has any input. The Minister with responsibility for the subject seems to be nodding. Surely the House should have an input into space decisions before they are taken rather than being told after the event when it can do nothing about them.

Mr. Wakeham: Those are matters that I obviously must refer to the Minister concerned. It is for him to consider when is the right moment to come to the House to report.

Mr. David Madel (Bedfordshire, South-West): Will my right hon. Friend ask my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science to make an early statement on two matters? First, where a local education authority is trying to close a secondary school, what will be the Department's attitude if parents and Governors take a consultative vote as to whether they want to opt out of the system? Secondly, a number of school pupils have to make field trips as part of the new GCSE courses. Is it unlawful, as I think it is, to charge for those trips? May we have a more general statement as to what schools may or may not charge for, because there is quite a bit of confusion?

Mr. Wakeham: I shall certainly refer the matter to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. However, it seems to me that those are matters that are directly relevant to the debate on Monday. If my hon. Friend was to catch your eye on Monday, Mr. Speaker, he could elaborate further on those points.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Will the Leader of the House reflect on the tradition of debates on the Scottish economy? While the debate on the Second Reading of the Scottish Development Agency Bill was interesting, there is a need to debate the Scottish economy as a whole, particularly in relation to industries such as shipbuilding. In the answers to a debate on the Scottish economy, may we have a clear statement of why the Secretary of State for Defence has departed from his previous commitment to order three type 23 frigates per annum when he comes to debate the Defence Estimates next week? May we have a clear undertaking that a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs will be set up as soon as possible?

Mr. Wakeham: The Select Committee on Scottish Affairs will be set up as soon as I can arrange it, along with all the other Committees. With regard to the other points, I will refer the defence point to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence. I do not think I can add anything to what I have already told the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Michael Latham (Rutland and Melton): Since Foreign Office Ministers were talking cryptically and glumly yesterday about further difficult decisions on Common Market spending, can we have an early debate on agriculture and, in particular, can we be told when we shall have details of the set-aside scheme?

Mr. Wakeham: There are some parts of the business next week that might enable some aspects of this to be discussed, but certainly I will refer the matter to my right hon. Friend.

Dr. Jeremy Bray (Motherwell, South): The Leader of the House is aware that 5 million people in Hong Kong have only a few years left under British rule. Those people are currently being consulted as to whether they wish to have direct elections in 1988. Will he arrange for the House, which has a responsibility in the matter under the Anglo-Chinese agreement, to debate the report of the Legislative Assessment Committee before the Governments of the United Kingdom and Hong Kong make up their minds on the matter?

Mr. Wakeham: I will have to give some consideration to that, but I cannot promise it in the next week.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): Will my right hon. Friend be much more forthcoming and specific to me, as an enduring Back Bencher, as to when the Select Committees will be reconstituted? I am sure that he is aware that some of the matters raised in the House this afternoon about some of the under-funding problems of the Health Service, resulting from its great success and the dedication of staff and nurses, is a matter that the Select Committee on Social Services would be keen to examine at an early date. Will he tell us specifically when the Select Committees will be re-established?

Mr. Wakeham: I wish that I could give my hon. Friend the information that he is perfectly entitled to have, but as it is not available to me I cannot tell him. All I can say is that I am working as hard as I can, along with many others in the House, through the usual channels to get them going as quickly as possible.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): Also on the issue of Select Committees, and in view of the reply of the Leader of the House to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas), can he give the House an assurance that the refusal of a few of his very limited Scottish Back Benchers to serve on the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs will not delay the establishment of that Committee?

Mr. Wakeham: Committees of the House are set up after selection by the Committee of Selection. That is the way we proceed and I do not anticipate that it will be done any differently this time to before.

Mr. John Marshall (Hendon, South): Will my right hon. Friend arrange an early debate on the return of capital punishment, about which many people feel strongly not only in the House but outside it?

Mr. Wakeham: I have a feeling that that subject will be debated in the House before long, if in no other way than because the Criminal Justice Bill is presently going through the other place and eventually will be coming here.

Mr. Robert N. Waring (Liverpool, West Derby): Is the Leader of the House aware of the great anxiety that exists about what the Social Security Bill will contain, particularly in respect of pensioners and the disabled? Therefore, will he give an assurance that that Bill will be available in the Vote Office by 9.30 tomorrow morning or that he will postpone the Second Reading?

Mr. Wakeham: I shall certainly see that the Bill is available as early as possible tomorrow morning. It will certainly be published tomorrow.

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): Did the Leader of the House hear the Bishop of Durham on lunch-time radio whining on again about the declining industries in the north-east, and further damaging the image and self-confidence of our region? Is it not high time that either

Mr. Speaker: Order. I did not quite hear what the hon. Gentleman was saying, but I hope that he was not criticising a Member of the other place.

Mr. Fallon: If you ask me to withdraw, Mr. Speaker, I shall do so, of course.

Is it not time that we had a debate on the north-east so that, rather than hear its critics whining on again about the region's problems, its elected representatives could draw attention to the strong economic recovery that is being promoted within it by the Government?

Mr. Wakeham: I did not hear the Bishop of Durham on the radio at lunchtime. I was busy thinking about what I would say in response to questions directed to the setting up of Select Committees. A debate on the north-east is important and I shall ascertain what can be done about that, but not next week.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Will the Leader of the House arrange for a statement to be made next week on the Settle-Carlisle line? The Leader of the House will be aware that there is an outstanding decision on the retention of the line, which this year is certainly breaking even, even if it is not profitable. It is one of the most successful of British Rail's provincial services and people use it in their many thousands. Surely the 22,000 objectors to closure deserve more than this lingering period during which the Government seem unable to produce a decision. They are looking to the Government to say clearly that the service will be retained, and we could do with such a statement next week.

Mr. Wakeham: I know that the hon. Gentleman is concerned about this issue, he having raised it before, as have some of my hon. Friends. I shall refer the matter to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport to see whether an appropriate statement can be made.

Mr. Tony Favell (Stockport): May we have an early debate on the proposed BCal-British Airways merger? The introduction of competition into road transport has brought enormous benefits. A near-monopoly of British skies by Lord King, who may be a merry old soul, will not bring cheaper fares to passengers.

Mr. Wakeham: I think that it would be quite improper for the House to debate the issue until the report of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission is received.

Mr. Bruce Grocott (The Wrekin): Given the comments of the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) about the problems of the Health Service in the west midlands, and bearing in mind that the chairman of the health authority for that area, a Government appointee, has made a statement that the Telford hospital, which is due to open next year, may have to be mothballed in part through lack of funds, is it not high time that we had a debate on the Health Service and the cash crisis that it faces?

Mr. Wakeham: I fully accept that a debate on the Health Service is something which many hon. Members would like, but I cannot promise it for next week.

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham): Will my right hon. Friend make time to have a debate on the spectrum of the issues that relate to emergencies such as last week's hurricane? Kent suffered the worst of the snow in January and the worst of the winds in October, and it is now said with some cynicism that all we need to complete 1987 is a plague of frogs. If that plague of frogs arrives, doubtless my right hon. Friends will still be talking about the product of a penny rate before a move is made. It seems that the time has come for these issues to be debated. In January I had to ask for a state of emergency to be declared because of the snow. These are serious matters in the south-east, which has been afflicted severely on two occasions and beyond expectations this year.

Mr. Wakeham: My hon. Friend raises a good point. There are lessons to be learnt and experiences to be shared between local authorities in the event of these emergencies, and I think that this would make a good subject for debate at the appropriate time.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): In a week that has seen the biggest crash on the British stock market—22 per cent.—without a statement being made in the House by any spokesperson of the party of popular capitalism, why can the Chancellor of the Exchequer be allowed to flit between BBC and ITV studios throughout two entire days to try to explain that there is plenty of confidence, without being called upon to defend the argument at the Dispatch Box? Not too long ago a Chancellor of the Exchequer, faced with such a collapse, would have been expected to answer questions on the subject. Yet the Leader of the House told my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition that he does not even know when the Chancellor of the Exchequer will present the autumn statement. What is happening? Has everyone on the Government Benches gone shy about popular capitalism?

Mr. Wakeham: I told the Leader of the Opposition that I was not in a position to tell him on what date the autumn statement would be made. I did not say that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not know when it would be made. I do not know whether he knows or does not know. I do not believe that it would be helpful or necessary for the House to have a debate on the goings on on the Stock Exchange. As I understand it, the price of shares is about what it was last April.

Mr. Spencer Batiste (Elmet): My right hon. Friend will recall that before the summer recess he was asked on a number of occasions whether there could be a debate on the space industry. Since then there have been speeches that have suggested that policy in this important area is under review. Given the considerable anxiety in the House on the future of this vital industry and the concern that it should not be jeopardised, can my right hon. Friend offer an early debate on the matter, certainly before the important meeting of Ministers in November at the European Space Agency?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise the importance of the matter, but I do not think that I can add anything to the answers that I have already given.

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): In view of the answer given by the Prime Minister earlier today, are we to have

a statement next week from the Attorney-General about the extraordinary events at the Old Bailey when the Crown case against the ANC kidnappers was withdrawn? Although a statement will be made by the Attorney-General, will it deal with whether the alleged criminals were working for the Crown? Secondly, will it assure us that if they were working for the Crown the sort of "Spycatcher" veil of secrecy will not be drawn over the operation?

Mr. Wakeham: I was sitting nearer to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister than the hon. Gentleman and I did not hear her say quite what he alleges. I heard her say that she would refer the matter to my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General, and that it was up to him, as he was the prosecuting authority, to decide whether it would be appropriate for him to make a statement, it being a matter entirely for him. That is what will be done.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): As someone who was present throughout the discussions on the Second Reading of the Scottish Development Agency Bill last night, may I assure the Leader of the House that the chaos resulted from a combination of the incompetence of the Government Whips and the fact that Scots Tory Members are reduced to a rump of 10? This brings us to the setting up of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs. Did the Leader of the House say earlier that it will be set up at exactly the same time as all the other Select Committees? Will he confirm that? Secondly, as three of the five Scots Tory Back Benchers have said that they will refuse to serve on that Select Committee, the only options before the Government and the House are to give the Committee a Labour majority, which would reflect the balance of parties in Scotland, to reduce the membership of the Committee to three members, or to import English Tory Members to sit on it, which would be as unacceptable to them as to us. May we have an absolute assurance from the Leader of the House that neither of the second two options would be accepted and put before the House?

Mr. Wakeham: I must tell the hon. Gentleman with all charity that the day that I accept his views on the way on which the House is run is the day that the usual channels will have gone for ever. I listened to him and I do not think that I have anything further to add.

BILLS PRESENTED

Employment Bill

Mr. Secretary Fowler, supported by the Prime Minister, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Secretary Walker, Mr. Secretary King, Mr. Secretary Baker, Mr. Kenneth Clarke, Mr. Secretary Rifkind, Mr. Secretary Moore, Mr. Peter Brooke, Mr. John Cope and Mr. Patrick Nicholls, presented a Bill to make provision with respect to trade unions, their members and their property, to things done for the purpose of enforcing membership of a trade union, to trade union ballots and elections and to proceedings involving trade unions; to provide for the Manpower Services Commission to be known as the Training Commission; to amend the law with respect to the constitution and functions of that Commission and with respect to persons to whom facilities for work-experience and training for employment are made available; to enable additional members to be appointed to industrial training boards and to the Agricultural Training Board; and to provide that the terms on which certain persons hold office or employment under the Crown are to be treated for certain purposes as contained in contracts of employment: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 17.].

Urban Development Corporations (Financial Limits) Bill

Mr. Secretary Ridley, supported by Mr. Secretary Walker, Mr. Kenneth Clarke, Mr. John Major and Mr. David Trippier, presented (under Standing Order No. 48 (Procedure upon bills whose main object is to create a charge upon the public revenue)) a Bill to remove the limit on the amount of grants that may be made to urban development corporations and to provide a new limit applicable only to the amounts for the time being outstanding in respect of sums borrowed by them and sums issued by the Treasury in fulfilment of guarantees of their debts: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 18].

Social Security Bill

Mr. Secretary Moore, supported by Mr. Secretary Walker, Mr. Secretary Fowler, Mr. Secretary King, Mr. Secretary Rifkind, Mr. Norman Lamont, Mr. Tony Newton, Mr. Nicholas Scott and Mr. Michael Portillo, presented a Bill to amend the law relating to social security and to make fresh provision in relation to welfare foods and for the remission of charges for services provided under the National Health Service Act 1977 and the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 and the payment of travelling expenses for the purpose of persons availing themselves of services provided under those Acts; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 19].

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Mr. Speaker: With the leave of the House, I shall put together the two motions relating to Statutory Instruments.

Ordered,

That the Customs Duties (ECSC) (No. 2) (Amendment No. 8) Order 1987 (S.I., 1987, No. 1125) be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the Customs Duties (ECSC) (No. 2) (Amendment No. 9) Order 1987 (S.I., 1987, No. 1218) be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Rydet.]*

Orders of the Day

Arms Control and Disarmament (Privileges and Immunities) Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

4.48 pm

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Geoffrey Howe): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to confer appropriate immunities on people engaged in verification activities under last year's Stockholm accord on confidence building and disarmament in Europe—the so-called CDE process—and to make similar provision for future arms control agreements.

The Stockholm conference concluded on 22 September 1986 with agreement on a substantial package of confidence and security building measures. The resultant accord provides for on-site verification and for observation of military activities. It also requires participating states to grant inspectors and observers the same privileges and immunities as diplomats receive under the Vienna convention.

The Bill accordingly gives observers, inspectors and their auxiliary staff suitable privileges and immunities as set out in the Diplomatic Privileges Act 1964. On that basis, inspectors and observers will enjoy, subject to certain exceptions, immunity from criminal, civil and administrative jurisdiction, and certain fiscal privileges. Auxiliary personnel will be given the more restricted privileges and immunities normally conferred upon so-called "administrative and technical staff" assigned to diplomatic missions. In particular, their immunity from civil and administrative jurisdiction will be confined to acts performed during the course of their duties.

In addition, we are taking advantage of the opportunity offered by the Bill to provide for comparable needs that may arise from future arms control agreements. Clause 1(2) accordingly provides for privileges and immunities to be conferred by Order in Council, to give effect to new arrangements overtaking the Stockholm document or to other arrangements or agreements in connection with arms control and disarmament. If we seek an example of such possible agreements, one need look, of course, no further than the INF agreement which is now in prospect.

The Bill will mean only a very modest increase in the number of people potentially entitled to diplomatic privileges and immunities. Observers will often be people already accredited here. In other cases, visits will be very short—usually about two or three days. The maximum number of inspections any country has to accept under the accord is only three per year. We are likely to invite observers to military exercises in the UK only once every two or three years.

The House might like to notice that the Stockholm accord was the first agreement of this kind to provide for verification through on-site "challenge" inspection. More important perhaps than that, it was the first solid sign after a number of barren years of real improvement in East-West relations. Moreover, Stockholm was only a stage in the continuing CSCE process. Work is being carried

forward in Vienna at this moment on a Western proposal for further negotiations on confidence building and a better balance of conventional forces throughout Europe. Those negotiations should actually get under way next year. So this is a sensible time for the House to take a broader look at the prospect for arms control, and, like many hon. Members, I welcome that opportunity.

In today's world, no war between the great powers can be limited. Modern technology has ensured that conflict of that kind—whether nuclear, conventional or chemical—would all too probably engulf entire continents. It is no longer enough—if indeed it ever was—to be able to win such a war, when winning would have so little meaning. We have to prevent it from happening at all. There are only two ways to do that without putting our freedom at risk. One way is to create such a climate of trust that war is inconceivable. We have not, alas, yet reached that point. The other way is to make the consequences of war so frightful that no potential adversary could contemplate starting one.

With a certain sense of antiquity, I recall that the first election in which I played any active part, albeit a very modest one, was just after I had joined the Army in 1945. How many of us engaged in that election would then have forecast that peace in western Europe would survive for 42 years? Why, indeed, has it done so, in spite of great tensions which in earlier ages would certainly have led to war?

I have no doubt that that peace has endured because we have enjoyed the protection of nuclear weapons. That is why I find so compelling Churchill's plea to the United States Congress:

"Be careful above all things not to let go of the atomic weapon, until you are sure, and more than sure, that other means of preserving peace are in your hands".

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): If the Secretary of State is so convinced that nuclear weapons have preserved the peace, can he explain why since the 1960s, when mutually assured destruction was possible, there has been a continuing increase in the yield, number and range of weapons? He must surely answer that question. Most of those initiatives have been by the West, not by the Soviet Union.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We have not been able until now to create a sufficient atmosphere of confidence to make it possible to move in the opposite direction. We find it so urgently necessary to try to make progress in the opposite direction because the stock of nuclear weapons on both sides has accumulated so much. None of that invalidates my central point. Every word of Churchill's statement deserves to be measured and weighed. His words are important:

"until you are sure, and more than sure, that other means of preserving peace are in your hands."

That is the purpose of the weapons.

I do not say that we shall need nuclear weapons for ever. However, sadly I do not believe that the day when we can safely cast them all away is even remotely in sight.

Mr. Denzil Davies (Llanelli): In view of what the Secretary of State has said, does he mean that the Government are not prepared to negotiate the weapons away, even through multilateral negotiations?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Although in an ideal world it would no doubt be desirable to achieve a state of affairs in which all weapons of all kinds, including nuclear weapons, could be cast away and plainly even the right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) would acknowledge that that would make sense only in a multilateral context—such a day, as I have said, is not yet remotely in sight. Therefore, Churchill's statement remains of the utmost validity. He said that we should be sure that we have some equally effective means of preserving the peace before we cast away the protection of all our nuclear weapons.

Having said that, there is of course enormous scope for reducing the total stock of such weapons. The current world stock of no fewer than 50,000 warheads is far beyond any remotely reasonable requirement. The same is true of conventional arms. Our attitude to arms control proposals will continue to depend, as it must, on whether we judge that they will make an effective contribution, not just to the maintenance of peace, but to our security.

Dr. Keith Hampson (Leeds, North-West): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the point is that the Opposition continually argue that they would take nuclear disarmament down to such a level that in the present context it would make Europe safe for conventional war?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: That is the anxiety. We believe that the retention of nuclear capability is an important part of our security for the foreseeable future because we do not want to make Europe safe for conventional war. In that spirit, we have approached the INF negotiations, which we hope are now moving towards a conclusion.

It is instructive to consider the history of the negotiations. It is 10 years since the Soviet Union, in 1977, introduced the SS20—an accurate mobile missile with three independently targeted warheads. It could strike all major targets in western Europe and put at particular risk airfields where key NATO aircraft were based. No comparable Western system existed or was under development. The Soviet decision to introduce it, following the earlier introduction of the Backfire nuclear bomber, was undoubtedly designed to alter the nuclear balance in Europe, and it did. It posed a threat to Western security that could not be ignored.

For that reason NATO responded, as it had to, with a decision in 1979 to deploy our own intermediate range systems, but from the outset we made it clear that we were willing to negotiate with the Russians for the removal of both sets of systems. Right from the start we were prepared to retrace our steps, provided that the Soviet Union was willing to do the same.

That carefully balanced "dual-track" approach was met with threats from the Soviet Union and howls of rage from the so-called peace movements. The Opposition Benches then claimed that it would destroy any prospect of arms control for the foreseeable future. The Russians sought to play to that gallery by withdrawing from negotiations in Geneva. They grossly overestimated the influence of those who argued for disarmament at any price. Above all they greatly underestimated the determination and resolution of NATO. The idea of a zero-zero outcome was formally proposed by the Americans, with Allied support, in 1981. Once again, the voices of doom from Opposition Members said that the Russians would never agree.

What has happened since then? The Russians have twisted and turned in an effort to preserve the superiority

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that they had established in these weapons. They laid out a formidable obstacle course for the West. They left the negotiating table when the first American deployment took place in 1983. When they returned, they tried to throw the British and French nuclear deterrents into the negotiators' pot and they tried to link the INF negotiations to SDI. Not until February this year did Mr. Gorbachev abandon those linkages. Only in July did he accept the proposal that elimination of these weapons should be global.

Meanwhile, NATO had also raised the issue of shorter-range — 500 to 1000 km — INF missiles in order to ensure that an INF agreement could not be circumvented by missiles of slightly shorter range. In April Mr. Gorbachev proposed elimination, without making it clear whether that would be global. In June the Allies agreed to elimination, on condition that it was global. The Soviet Union has since accepted that. Of course, important issues remain, such as the verification arrangements and the timing and phasing of the elimination of the systems involved. Secretary of State Shultz, whom I saw in London on Tuesday and shall see again on Saturday, is now in Moscow. He gave me no reason to believe that negotiations were not on course towards an agreement around the end of the year.

We must draw a clear conclusion from that history. That negotiation has driven the final nails into the coffin of unilateral disarmament. The House will have noticed the attempts of some Opposition Members to claim the INF result as the fruits of their labours. That is the grandest larceny that I have ever heard.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Will the Foreign Secretary clarify the statements—they may be rumours, or they may be accurate—about hiring nuclear weapons from the Americans? What is the position?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman asks whether the statements are rumours or accurate. They are of less substance than that. The idea that we will only be leasing or hiring Trident missiles is absolute nonsense. We shall buy them outright and they will remain ours. About every seven or eight years some of them will need servicing, and that will be done in the United States under the arrangements that the Government have already made public. There is no substance whatever in the proposition put forward. We shall continue to own the same number of missiles at all times. Of course, none of this affects warheads. They remain in United Kingdom hands at all times.

Mr. Denzil Davies: Does that mean that when the missiles go back every seven years to King's Bay, Georgia, for servicing we will get the same missiles back? Will they have numbers such as Maggie 1 and Maggie 2, or will we be given other American missiles?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The position is as I have stated it. About every seven or eight years some of the missiles will need servicing, and that will be done in the United States under arrangements that the Government made public as long ago as 1982. During that process the missiles will, of course, be stripped down and some of the parts will be replaced. However, the same number of missiles will be coming back. We shall continue throughout to own the same number of missiles at all times. I repeat the sentence with which I began: we shall be buying the missiles outright. They will remain ours. The idea that we shall not own Trident missiles is nonsense. That should be certain enough for the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell).

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): Did the Foreign Secretary not hear his hon. Friend the Chairman of the Select Committee on Defence explain on a radio programme that it was the same as taking an empty Calor gas cylinder back to the garage and receiving a full cylinder in exchange? Surely the point is that at any time during that process it is within the capacity of the United States Government not to provide the exchange missile, and therefore that the deterrent is not independent at all.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The position remains as I have described it. Obviously the scale and pattern of repair and the extent to which this or that component is stripped down and replaced can vary, but we shall continue to own the same number of missiles at all times. We shall have bought the missiles. We shall not be leasing any missiles, and the arrangements are not the subject of a mystery or recent development. As I have said, the arrangements are as announced some time ago. I repeat that we shall buy the missiles outright and they will remain ours.

Ms. Joan Ruddock (Lewisham, Deptford): Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman give way?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I have been dealing with this issue for long enough, and I shall continue my own speech.

If we had followed the advice of the Labour party and refrained from continuing with the dual-track decision we would not be considering arrangements for arms control and disarmament inspectors, but would be facing the appalling threat of hundreds of missiles from the Soviet Union, with nothing comparable of our own.

Mr. Cryer: Nonsense.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: If the hon. Gentleman believes that, he will believe anything.

Mr. Cryer: If the right hon. and learned Gentleman is so obsessed with the possession of nuclear weapons, can he tell us why the 121 nations which signed the United Nations nuclear non-proliferation treaty have not followed our example if that is so desperately necessary to bring about arms negotiations? Will he tell us whether all the missiles that he will obtain on hock from the United States conform with clause 6 of that treaty signed by our nation?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman seems to forget that we are discussing an arms control Bill, of which I have just proposed the Second Reading. The Bill is necessary in order to accommodate the first agreement since the development of nuclear weapons which provides specifically for the reduction of such weapons. The hon. Gentleman should be acclaiming that rather than challenging the proposition. Some Members of the Labour party have begun to realise the significance of what is happening. Some of them, at last, appear to be contemplating switching to the multilateral train of the 1990s. I am afraid that they will not find it easy to persuade the CND faithful to climb on to it as well. If they are willing to join us in welcoming and endorsing the principle of multilateral disarmament and endorsing the agreement

in prospect as a dramatic success for that principle. Conservative Members will certainly welcome them on board.

There are solid achievements for the West as a result of the agreement that is now in prospect. First, there is the total elimination of the SS20. It is worth recalling that the Russians have taken themselves—and us—on a pointless 10-year odyssey that has ended up precisely where it began, and along the way we have secured the elimination of the SS4, SS22 and SS23. Secondly this will be the first ever negotiated reduction in numbers of nuclear weapons. The task now is to do the same for strategic and conventional weapons, and to outlaw chemical weapons altogether. Thirdly there is the fact that some 1,500 Soviet warheads are to be eliminated, as against some 300 United States warheads. That asymmetry is an important precedent for future arms control negotiations. Finally, there will be a stringent, effective and mandatory verification package that will allow both sides to establish confidence in the treaty's operation. This is indeed a breakthrough in negotiations with the Soviet Union. Access to SS20 bases is glasnost for real. Verification is the key to all arms control.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): The right hon. and learned Gentleman has gone a little further than the immediate objects of the Bill and introduced the element of negotiation in relation to the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons. Will he give us some indication, however tacit, of the United Kingdom Government's position regarding the inclusion of Polaris or the Trident systems in such negotiations?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I can do precisely that by saying, as I said to the United Nations General Assembly in 1983, that we have never said "never" in that respect. But only if and when there are substantial reductions in the nuclear armouries of the super-powers on both sides, and no significant changes in the defensive arrangements of the Soviet Union, will it be possible for our nuclear deterrent to be part of the agenda.

The reason is very simple. Our independent deterrent is 3 per cent. of the nuclear resources available to either of the super-powers. It is the minimum necessary credible deterrent to be an effective deterrent in the true meaning of the word. Even after the deployment of Trident, and even after the 50 per cent. reduction in strategic nuclear weapons on both sides, our deterrent will represent the same percentage of the Soviet Union's nuclear forces as Polaris did when it first started. The position is not a mystery. It is as I stated in my 1983 speech.

The Government's verdict on the prospective agreement — which seems to be shared by Opposition Members—is clear. It is a very good agreement. It is not the promised land, but it is the beginning of the beginning. If it is faithfully implemented it will increase mutual trust and help to lay a foundation for more far-reaching arms control agreements between East and West.

I know that some critics believe that the agreement will undercut deterrence, or will undermine the long-established NATO doctrine of flexible response. I respect the seriousness of those views, but I regard them as seriously mistaken. Neither deterrence nor flexible response depends on the existence of a particular array of nuclear weapons. What deters is the totality of NATO's nuclear and conventional capability, and the collective political will behind it. There is no precise ladder of escalation, each rung of which requires a special weapons system with its own technical characteristics. What is necessary is a broad spread of capability at different ranges, and that we still have. Even after the INF agreement NATO will still have over 4,000 nuclear weapons in Europe, and we shall continue to keep the minimum mix of nuclear forces necessary to maintain credible deterrence.

It goes without saying that NATO will not circumvent the INF agreement. However, we shall continue to keep our force structure up to date, as we have always done. That may require some adjustments in numbers of particular systems. The Alliance has to adapt to changing defence requirements if it is to remain viable.

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): The Foreign Secretary has said that Her Majesty's Government will not circumvent the agreement. Does that mean that Her Majesty's Government will not take action to convert cruise missiles, which are land-based, to become air and sea-based?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It means that the Alliance retains, as it has done throughout, the freedom to undertake adjustments in its total nuclear armoury. That has always been the position. Adjustments have been continuous throughout the nuclear age. Our rule is to maintain the minimum necessary for credible and effective deterrence, and that will certainly result in the net reduction of the nuclear stockpile of the Alliance.

Dr. Alan Glyn (Windsor and Maidenhead): Will my right hon. and learned Friend tell us whether the Bill will have to be extended to cover chemical and biological weapons?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I said at the beginning of my speech that the Bill would enable us to extend by Order in Council its provisions to cover arms control inspectors and observers for other arms control agreements.

We decided shortly after coming into office to update the British independent deterrent because of the need to keep [illegible] adapting and modernising our defensive resources. That contrasts very sharply with the vacillation, confusion and — it must be said — dishonesty of the Opposition. They know, or at least some of them know, the value of nuclear deterrence for Britain's security. Some of them were members of Governments that supported it, but they cannot summon up the courage to say so openly.

Another fear that some may have voiced about an INF agreement is that it might decouple the United States from Europe. I believe that that fear also is mistaken. Europe is, and remains, the first line of America's defences, and to cast doubt on the political solidarity or military coupling of the American commitment when there are more than 300,000 United States troops stationed in Europe is fanciful.

The INF agreement should be a significant step towards enhanced security for East and West. Other NATO arms control priorities, which the present Government have played a key part in shaping, involve the prospect of greater prizes: 50 per cent. reductions in United States and Soviet strategic nuclear weapons, a worldwide ban on chemical weapons and the elimination of conventional disparities in Europe.

On strategic weapons, it is clear from my discussions with Mr. Shevardnadze in New York last month, and with

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Mr. Shultz here in London earlier this week, that there has been some Soviet movement, but there is still a long way to go. The Russians are still blocking progress on strategic weapons, in an attempt to impose unacceptable constraints on SDI. We have suggested to them that greater predictability in programmes permitted under the ABM treaty could meet their security concerns in a way that would also be acceptable to the Americans. We believe that that approach deserves serious consideration by the Soviet Union.

Chemical weapons, as people increasingly realise, are peculiarly hideous. The Soviet Union has a huge arsenal of such weapons, and we want to see a properly verifiable global ban.

There has recently been encouraging progress on some aspects of verification. A British paper on implementing a chemical weapons ban has been well received in the House, and I welcome that. However, many difficult problems remain. One particularly vital requirement is the provision of adequate data on existing capabilities. That is fundamental, but we still seem to be a long way from achieving it.

The progress being made in regard to nuclear weapons adds to the importance of tackling the huge imbalance in conventional forces. The Warsaw pact has three times as many tanks and artillery pieces as the NATO Alliance. It has twice as many tactical aircraft. There has been a 70 per cent. real increase in Soviet defence spending in the past 15 years.

It makes no sense for NATO to deal with that disparity by doubling or trebling the size of its own forces, even if we could sensibly find the resources with which to do so. As Mr. Gorbachev himself said:

> "Should we have any balance to redress, we must redress it, not by letting the one short of some elements build them up, but by having the one with more of them scale them down".

I agree that that is the way to greater stability in Europe.

The Allies are currently discussing with the Warsaw pact arrangements for conventional stability negotiations covering Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. As I have said, we expect negotiations to start next year. However, if we are to get the talks off the ground, the Soviet Union must be more ready to take them more seriously. Above all, it will have to be willing to discuss candidly what Warsaw pact military capabilities actually are. The Soviets have refused to do that in the MBFR and at Stockholm. We must ask when glasnost will really apply to military matters. When will the Russians do as we do and publish each year a defence White Paper showing what forces they have, and where? That is the key question.

Under this Government, the United Kingdom has played a key role in the search for agreements.

Mr. Denzil Davies: The Bill is partly about verification, but the Foreign Secretary has not told us how that verification will be done. Will Soviet inspectors be allowed on to Greenham Common? Will there be short-notice inspections, and how many sites in Britain will be subject to such inspections? Can the Foreign Secretary say something about the mechanics of implementing the legislation? As he has said, verification is the key.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I dealt with that point earlier. The verification arrangements are still under negotiation. However, they plainly involve the right of Soviet inspectors to attend in the United Kingdom to verify within the terms of the agreements that will eventually emerge. That is what the Bill is intended to achieve. I am unable to go further than that at this stage, because the provisions are still under negotiation.

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): As Greenham Common is in my constituency, may I say that the Bill means that Soviet observers will come to Royal Air Force establishments to verify the weapons of a third party. Will there be any limit on the number of observers who can come and on how long they can stay in this country? Will there be a reciprocal arrangement under which British observers will be included among those who may go from NATO to verify what is being done in the Soviet Union?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: In the context of a possible INF agreement, that question has not yet been resolved. The Bill makes provision for the enjoyment by British inspectors and observers of rights conferred under the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe agreement. Reciprocity will be at the heart of verification, and the arrangements that emerge for an INF agreement will provide for the attendance of Soviet inspectors at bases such as Greenham Common.

Mr. Douglas: Will the Foreign Secretary give way on that point?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: If the hon. Gentleman will forgive me, I must move on. The House will have an opportunity to ask questions during the debate. I have given way on many occasions and I believe that the House wants to debate the Bill more generally.

Under this Government, the United Kingdom has played a key role in the search for agreements which mean greater predictability and security for us all. We shall continue to do just that. We must be vigilant. We must not confuse Soviet style with substance, but we must also be alert and must recognise and exploit new opportunities.

There is a very full agenda ahead and there are some formidable problems, but the prospective INF agreement gives grounds for hope that further progress is possible toward agreements that enhance predictability and security on both sides. It is that which the Bill will help to achieve. That is why I have no hesitation in commending it to the House.

5.22 pm

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton): Since this is the first time, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I have had the opportunity to address the House since you were elected to the Chair, may I congratulate you and say what an enormous pleasure it is to be speaking while you are in the Chair. By contrast, I draw attention to the fact that neither of the Social Democratic parties is present this afternoon, possibly because they have been unable to reconcile their differences.

This is a tiny, two-clause Bill, but in its implications it is almost certainly more far-reaching than any piece of legislation that this House has debated during the last 40 years and more. Its significance is heightened by two events fresh off the press. The first is the presence in Moscow today of Mr. George Shultz for talks on the finalisation of the INF agreement with Mr. Shevardnadze. The second is the extraordinary revelation, made public in spite of the Government's wish to suppress it, that the

Trident system — Britain's much vaunted independent nuclear deterrent — will not be independent at all but will be merely an exceptionally expensive subscription by the British taxpayer to a missile library owned by the United States. We are all spending £9·265 billion on Moss Bros missiles, to be returned to the proprietors for refurbishing after non-use.

Even without this latest disclosure, the Bill contains ironies enough of strange dealings by the Government. —*[Interruption.]* The right hon. and learned Gentleman devoted the last few minutes of his speech to misleading remarks about the Opposition's attitude, and now he is getting shirty because we intend to respond in the manner in which he decided to address the House.

The world today is celebrating the prospect of the most heartening international agreement since the prototype atom bomb was tested in New Mexico in 1945. The INF agreement is remarkable and immensely heartening for many reasons. It may remove only 3 or 4 per cent. of the nuclear missiles that are befouling the earth, but it is, all the same, an exceptionally important forward step. It is unprecedented because, for the first time ever, nuclear powers are not simply agreeing to stop a development but are going much further and are actually reducing their nuclear capabilities. That is a sign to humankind that the nuclear arms race is not inexorable and that, if the will is there, we can roll back the nuclear frontier.

An entire category of United States and Soviet nuclear arms is to be eliminated. What is more, to make this agreement possible, the Soviets have consented to far greater cuts than the Americans. The Soviets will destroy four times as many missiles as the United States. They will destroy SS4s, SS12 scaleboards, and SS23s, although the Americans have no counterparts for reciprocal destruction. That is a practical example of the asymmetry of which Secretary Gorbachev has spoken. President Reagan and Secretary Gorbachev have earned the thanks of humankind in every country of the globe for the concessions that each has granted to make this agreement possible.

Both have also agreed to unprecedented arrangements for verification, with on-site inspections by both parties. The hon. Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) referred to the presence of Soviet observers in his constituency and asked whether there will be reciprocity. There will not be reciprocity, because Britain is not a party to the agreement. However, on-site inspection by both parties is what the Bill is about. It will confer diplomatic status on the Soviet inspection teams which will be coming here periodically to ensure that the INF agreement is implemented in good faith. Therefore the cruise missiles, brought here with such subterfuge that Sarah Tisdall was sent to goal for six months for revealing the squalid arrangements for their arrival, are now to be removed in the full blaze of international publicity.

When he was Secretary of State for Defence the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) appeared on television on 15 January 1984 and said:

> "The cruise missile system will become as accepted as the other nuclear weapons that . . . we've relied upon in this country to preserve the peace for nearly 40 years."

However, instead of being accepted, as the right hon. Gentleman so vaingloriously and inaccurately promised, the cruise missiles are to be dismantled and destroyed and thrown into the dustbin of history.

Mr. David Sumberg (Bury, South): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Kaufman: I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman in a minute.

Molesworth — where the right hon. Member for Henley cavorted like a clown in combat dress while supervising the erection of the protective perimeter for the cruise missile base — will now never receive cruise missiles. At Greenham Common, where *The Times* reported on 2 November 1983 the right hon. Gentleman's warning

> "Cruise intruders could be shot, says Heseltine",

this Bill will provide cruise intruders from the Soviet Union with full diplomatic protection.

The Greenham Common women — who have invigilated the Greenham Common site in all weathers and under all manner of vilification and who have been denounced by the Government and their cronies as Communist catspaws — are now to be superseded by genuine Soviet Communists, the difference being that, while the Greenham Common women were hampered and harassed, the Soviet inspectors will be welcomed as honoured guests and will be protected against even the possibility of being nicked for parking while they carry out their inspections.

Mr. Sumberg: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Kaufman: No.

They will be able to come here at regular intervals—certainly for three years and maybe for five. Moreover, it is suggested that these inspectors will be able to demand access at short notice to many other British military bases if their satellites suggest that such bases could contain hidden missiles.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Does the right hon. Gentleman oppose the agreement?

Mr. Kaufman: I am very much in favour of the agreement. The Prime Minister, the right hon. and learned Gentleman, the Minister of State and the right hon. Member for Henley have all championed the presence of cruise missiles in this country which now, thank God, are being removed without their being asked yea or nay.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The right hon. Gentleman must be clear on this point. The presence of those cruise missiles has secured the removal of five times as many Soviet warheads. Is that not a good thing?

Mr. Kaufman: The presence of cruise missiles in this country is not necessarily relevant to the number of Soviet missiles that are being dismantled. The very idea that one must install these missiles to remove them is a curious attitude for the Government to adopt.

Mr. Sumberg: Does the right hon. Gentleman recall the debate that we had four years ago almost to the day when cruise missiles were coming to Britain? Did not his party oppose, root and branch, the introduction of those missiles? His predecessor made it clear that if they were introduced the chances for peace in Europe were almost gone for ever. How does the right hon. Gentleman reconcile that fact with the agreements that have occurred? Is this not blatant hypocrisy on the part of the right hon. Gentleman? Surely it was because the Government took the decision to bring these missiles in that the agreement has been reached.

Mr. Kaufman: I do not accept what the hon. Gentleman has said. In the last Parliament, the Labour party opposed the installation of cruise missiles, but now we have the agreement between President Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev. The Government have not been consulted as to whether the missiles should be removed, and will not be consulted. They are being removed whether the Government want them here or not.

In June of this year the Tory election manifesto stated that

"The Conservative Government (has) deployed cruise missiles."

As in so much else, that document was not telling the truth. The United States, not the Conservative Government, deployed cruise missiles in Britain. The United States, not the Conservative Government, has decided to end their deployment. The Government have been given no say whatever as to whether they should go.

The Bill is extraordinary in that it is being introduced into the House to facilitate the implementation on British soil of an international agreement in which the British Government are not involved and to which they will not be a signatory. All others in receipt of diplomatic status in Britain are here as a result of diplomatic relations to which we are consenting parties or international agreements to which we are signatories. The Soviet inspectors in Britain will be protected by the Foreign Office and the police, as a result of an agreement to which we are not parties and in which the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for Defence have had no significant say whatsoever.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I invite the right hon. Gentleman to accept three points. First, the primary purpose of the Bill is to provide for the CDE agreement, to which the United Kingdom is a party on an entirely reciprocal basis. Secondly, how does the right hon. Gentleman suggest that we achieve an INF agreement if we are not ready to make the necessary and sensible arrangements for verification, which is what the Bill does? Thirdly, does he not understand that the substance of negotiations whereby we have achieved this INF deal has been the subject of the closest possible consultation between the United States and this Government at meeting after meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, an organisation to which the right hon. Gentleman is very strange?

Mr. Kaufman: The right hon. and learned Gentleman must make the third point to justify the fact that he is sitting on that Bench, but very few people will accept that the United States has paid more than passing attention to what the Government have said. The United States has made this agreement with the Soviet Union. We are not party to it, we have not been asked, the United States is taking cruise missiles away and we have no say whatever on the subject. Of course I am in favour of verification procedures and the provisions in the Bill, but what I am saying is that the Government are moving the Second Reading of a Bill for the removal of cruise missiles when they said that cruise missiles stationed on British soil were essential for defence against the Soviet Union. That being so, either the right hon. and learned Gentleman is dim—as may well be the case; it cannot be ruled out—or he is being deliberately disingenuous.

Although the right hon. and learned Gentleman uttered a word or two of praise for the agreement, it is no wonder that the Prime Minister's reaction to this historic INF agreement has been so sour and grudging. With all his usual caution, Lord Carrington, the Secretary-General of NATO, has commented on this agreement and said,

"We should take yes for an answer."

In Germany the Prime Minister said that nuclear arms cuts in Europe have gone far enough. She said that in a country whose Government have been brave and far-sighted enough to assist the achievement of the INF agreement by unilaterally volunteering to scrap the Pershing 1A missiles located on German territory. While others look forward to enhancing progress towards arms control and disarmament, the Prime Minister prefers the role of the last nuclear dinosaur.

We now understand more fully why the Prime Minister was so unhappy with the INF agreement. Even before yesterday, the consequences of the INF agreement, as well as of other important factors, threw some doubt on the viability of Trident as a successor to Polaris. Trident will gobble up vast sums of money from a defence budget that, as the Secretary of State for Defence not only admitted but totally accepted when speaking to the Select Committee for Defence on 14 May 1986, is declining in real terms. The more of that declining defence budget that is spent on Trident the less there is for Britain's conventional contribution to NATO.

Every authoritative reaction to the INF agreement has emphasised that withdrawal of intermediate nuclear missiles from Europe will throw the focus on the substantial imbalance in conventional forces between NATO and the Warsaw pact. In a leading article on 5 October, *The Daily Telegraph* said:

"The Government has hard choices to face and it is for the Prime Minister, who has hitherto intervened very little in defence affairs, to make the decisions.

The principal problem is underfunding. Some £18 billion, about 20 per cent. of Government expenditure, will be spent this year by the Ministry of Defence. But it is not really enough to finance both Britain's strategic commitments and the procurement programme needed to maintain its forces in the first rank . . . In the last resort, the Government must either spend more or cut its commitments and establishments."

In an address to the Royal United Services Institution on that same date, Lord Carrington said that an INF agreement

"will inevitably highlight the conventional element in deterrence and the imbalance which currently exists between Nato and the Warsaw pact in this area."

Speaking a few days earlier on television, Lord Carrington said:

"Conventional defence becomes more important as a result of this agreement."

On television on the same day, the Foreign Secretary said:

"Now, we're going to have to maintain our willingness to look at our conventional defences."

Yet, when every authoritative source emphasises that need, the Government are reducing our conventional capability within a reduced overall defence budget. That distortion of defence priorities takes place within the context of growing doubts about the operability of Trident. Today's *Daily Telegraph* carries a report on the difficulties that are being faced at Faslane in finding sufficient crews who are properly trained for Trident when it becomes operational.

Moreover, it was disclosed only this month that we are to obtain a version of Trident that we cannot fully arm. At a high price, we are to be sold access to the Trident 2 system, one of whose versions provides for 12 warheads.

Yet it is said that Britain does not possess enough weapons-grade plutonium to provide warheads for all the missiles that we will install. Indeed, when he was Secretary of State for Defence, Sir John Knott gave a commitment that the change from Polaris to Trident would not involve any increase in total warhead numbers.

A document that was published this year by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence gave the game away when it said:

"The Government have repeatedly made clear that they will not use the full theoretical maximum capability of the system."

It looks as though this terrifying deterrent only 3 per cent. of the total but nevertheless meant to be terrifying — will be going to sea with some of the missile tubes empty. That really should throw terror into the Soviet Union. It is a nuclear version of Russian roulette in reverse.

All that is before we know the effects of Trident of the two further agreements on whose attainment the United States and the Soviet Union have, to their great credit, now embarked. One objective is the declared aim of a complete ban on nuclear testing. The joint statement by the United States and the Soviet Union which was released by the White House on 18 September said clearly and categorically:

"Having discussed questions related to nuclear testing, the two sides"—

that is, the Soviet Union and the United States—

"agreed to begin, before December 1st 1987, full-scale, stage-by-stage negotiations which will be conducted in a single forum."

The two super-powers have decided to begin negotiations before the end of this year to secure a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

However, only yesterday, during Question Time, the Minister of State, the hon. Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor) said:

"We believe, however, that it would be premature for negotiations to begin until progress is made on outstanding problems, notably verification." — [*Official Report*, 21 October 1987; Vol. 120, c. 716.]

So, what the Soviet Union and the United States say they intend to do within the next two and a half months the Minister of State says is premature.

Why do the Government so often throw cold water on any efforts to achieve progress on arms control? Perhaps it is because they are worried that such progress would invalidate their own policies.

There are differing views on how a comprehensive test ban treaty would affect Trident. In a leading article on 19 September *The Daily Telegraph* stated:

"The test-ban treaty agreement would threaten the future of the British deterrent since weapons that cannot be tested become useless and all British tests are now carried out at American sites."

The Guardian's defence correspondent also drew attention to the problem, although he stated it in a different and less immediate way. He said:

"For Britain, a dependant on the Americans for access to their underground test site in Nevada, the alarm bells will be ringing long before the one kilotonne threshold is reached. Aldermaston will want to know whether, if permitted yields and numbers are coming down, the United States intends at some stage to withdraw the privilege of using the Nevada range. The British can hardly go back to Australia and the French would no doubt demand a high price financially and politically for the use of their Pacific test sites. Whatever view is taken, what is clear is that Britain's alleged independent nuclear capability is at the mercy of the American suppliers and possible future arms control agreements between the Americans and the Russians."

That was said before the disclosures that have been plastered over the front pages of the press today, to which the right hon. and learned Gentleman made an extremely carefully worded response this afternoon. I refer to the news that the Government have been concealing from Parliament and the people the fact that our £9·25 billion will never buy us a single Trident missile that will be all our own, that we will keep on having to take the missiles back to the Americans for servicing and that the replacement missiles that we will get will not be the same as the ones that we handed in.

When the Foreign Secretary was questioned about that, this afternoon he used his words very carefully. He said:

"We shall . . . own the same number of missiles at all times."

He did not say that we shall own the same missiles at all times. By those carefully phrased words, the right hon. and learned Gentleman has admitted what *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times* and other newspapers said today — that we are to have a form of leasing arrangement, that we are not buying anything for those immense sums but that we shall be subscribers to an extraordinarily expensive rent-a-missile library.

These rented missiles will not automatically be accepted by the Americans for re-servicing. Before they can be accepted back for a swap at the United States missile hock-shop at King's Bay in Georgia, they will have to be passed as being in a fit state by American officials stationed at Faslane and Coulport. No damaged goods can be returned. Britain will be paying billions of pounds for a second-hand delivery system that we shall never actually own.

It is hardly surprising that it is reported that the Secretary of State for Defence is ordering an inquiry to ascertain how some traitor has revealed to the British people how their money is being spent. Of course, the news of this swap arrangement throws doubt on the future viability of the whole Trident system as a British deterrent. Its independence is now shown to be a fiction. We are now seen to be wholly dependent on the Americans themselves continuing with such a system. Replacement missiles will clearly be available only if the Americans have them to replace.

Mr. George Walden (Buckingham): I want to ask the right hon. Gentleman a simple and mundane question. When he sends his car to be mended and it comes back with a new engine is it the same car or a different car?

Mr. Kaufman: Using that analogy, I remind the hon. Gentleman that the Foreign Secretary said that we would get the same number of cars back. He did not say that we would get the same cars back. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman now wishes to amend his extremely careful phrase and say, "We shall own the same missiles at all times", I shall accept that the stories on the front pages of *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* today are inaccurate. However, the right hon. and learned Gentleman is sitting and mumbling to the Minister of State and not intervening because those words with which he came to the House today were cooked up between the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Secretary.

Sir Geoffrey Howe *rose*

Mr. Kaufman: If the right hon. Gentleman is now going to amend what he said and say that we shall own the same missiles at all times I shall be glad to withdraw.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The right hon. Gentleman is perversely refusing to understand the position and perversely failing to acknowledge the advantages of the arrangement. There is no mystery about this. The statement from the Ministry of Defence on 9 September 1982 by the then Secretary of State for Defence explained the basis on which we would be purchasing the missiles. As I said at the outset, we shall own those missiles. We are spending money on purchasing them. The idea that we shall be leasing them or hiring them is total nonsense. Will the right hon. Gentleman please eliminate from his vocabulary all his merry quips about Moss Bros. and rent-a-missile? We shall be purchasing and owning the missiles.

The September statement said:

"This major difference between Trident and Polaris has accordingly enabled us to decide, in agreement with the US authorities, that we should use the planned US facilities at King's Bay, Georgia, for the initial preparation for service of our Trident missiles, and their refurbishment at the end of the 7-8 year commissions of our submarines . . . These revised arrangements will apply only to the missiles themselves: our nuclear warheads will be held in the United Kingdom."

Does the right hon. Gentleman complain that that arrangement for refurbishment extends as far as replacement if necessary? I have said that components will be replaced, but what is wrong about replacing a whole missile? We shall have purchased the full set of missiles and be entitled to have them refurbished, and replaced if necessary, to maintain them in our possession. The great advantage of that is that this decision will produce considerable savings for the defence programme, amounting to several hundred million pounds in capital costs in addition to running costs. I do not see what there is to complain about in the arrangements for ownership of missiles which result in substantial savings.

Mr. Kaufman: The right hon. and learned Gentleman has made another speech but he did not respond to my request. I told him that if he used certain words I would withdraw what I said earlier and accept what he said. I asked him if he could replace the words

"We shall . . . own the same number of missiles at all times"

with, "We shall own the same missiles at all times." His protracted speech did not give us those few words which would set aside the stories in the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Times* and *The Guardian* today.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman did not do that because he could not, because the stories were true. If they were not, he would be able to deny them in his categorical way instead of producing a years-old press release which did not respond to the point made today in the press and the point which I have been making. Those stories are clearly true -- *[Interruption.]* Instead of mumbling to himself, if the right hon. and learned Gentleman will say, "We shall own the same missiles at all times," he will put paid to all those wicked stories in Left-wing newspapers such as *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*. He is not prepared to do that, because it is clear that the stories in the press are true and that the arrangement is that we will not own the missiles all the time. We will pay for them as though we are buying them, but we will not own them.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We shall own the missiles and have the right to replace them.

Mr. Kaufman: Who has the right to replace them? It is the United States' right to replace them. The Secretary of State could have settled these stories and put them to rest once and for all. He has not done so because the stories are clearly true.

If we are at the mercy of the United States with regard to the continuation of this alleged independent deterrent, what happens to this alleged deterrent if Trident falls victim to an arms control agreement between the Americans and the Russians and if the Americans destroy their versions of the missiles to replace those that we hand in for "refurbishing", as the Secretary of State calls it? What happens if Trident is superseded by another American weapons system? Where is Britain's much vaunted independent nuclear deterrent then?

This is tragedy degenerating into Whitehall farce. It would be much better if, before expenditure has passed the point of no return, the Government scrapped this system, which is as unreliable as it is provocative. It would be much better to seek, as the Germans have sensibly done, to use the missiles to facilitate a strategic arms reduction agreement between the West and the Soviet Union. One of the great merits of the INF agreement is that it forces us all to look to the future and to the further arms control and reduction agreements that NATO, the United States and Britain can hope for with the Soviet Union.

President Carter's former national security adviser, Mr. Brzezinski, has called for a tank-free zone in central Europe. Such a development would be desirable, provided that any agreement acknowledged that such an arrangement would push NATO's capability almost back to the Atlantic coast while leaving to the Soviet Union huge territories for manoeuvre and for marshalling a conventional attack from deep within Warsaw pact territory. Accordingly, any agreement of that type would have to be based on the asymmetry which Mr. Gorbachev has chosen.

Proposals have been made in the United States for a balanced reduction of land forces in central Europe. Such notions, too, have their attractions, but withdrawal or balanced reduction on an equal basis of American and Soviet land forces could leave Soviet troops far behind the present boundary between NATO and Warsaw pact countries but, all the same, present in large numbers in the European mainland while causing a substantial withdrawal of American military land power from the European mainland. That would not be acceptable to many in Britain who favour disarmament but who support British membership of NATO and regard an American physical presence on the European mainland as an essential symbol of United States' commitment to the NATO Alliance.

When Labour Members called for withdrawal of cruise missiles from this country, and said that they should not be sited in this country, we were warned that if they were removed the Americans would be seduced into decoupling and would remove their forces from the European mainland. The Americans have decided to withdraw their cruise missiles from Britain. Not only is there no prospect of the Americans decoupling but the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has championed this afternoon, rightly, the fact that the United States intends to stay on the mainland of Europe. That is why we say that any troop withdrawal agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union would have to have an asymmetrical factor

to take account of the point that Europe wants United States' forces to remain on the European mainland as a symbol of the United States' commitment to NATO.

What is clear, and marvellously encouraging, is that the INF agreement is releasing a torrent of new ideas for further arms reduction. Such proposals and further agreements can only improve East-West relations. Such agreements will create confidence between East and West. I very much hope that they will lead to a more confident Soviet Union taking other measures that will reduce international tension.

Following President Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem, Egypt and Israel arrived at a peace agreement that is monitored not only by observers, as provided for in the Bill, but by the ordinary people of both countries, crossing open frontiers for commerce and tourism. Surprise attack is impossible over territory daily traversed by tourists and business men. Similarly, Soviet security as well as that of the West would be enhanced if the Warsaw pact countries were to open their frontiers, both for western visitors to go east and for eastern travellers to go west, for business and pleasure, and for emigration where desired.

The full implementation of the Helsinki accord by the Soviet Union would of itself not only be a further symbol to the world of the enormously welcome breath of fresh air with which Mr. Gorbachev is refreshing his country on the eve of the 70th anniversary of the 1917 revolution but enhance the universal wish of people in the East and the West to live in a peaceful world where national resources can be spent on construction rather than destruction. For the part it plays in that process, the Opposition welcome the Bill and will assist in its passage through Parliament.

5.57 pm

Sir Peter Blaker (Blackpool, South): The speech of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) was ignorant and illogical and did not rise to the level that this subject deserves. Some years ago the right hon. Gentleman's predecessor as Labour spokesman on foreign affairs—the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey)—said that listening to a speech by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State gave him the feeling that he was being savaged by a dead sheep. We observe that the dead sheep is still active and in office, and that the right hon. Member for Leeds, East has had to leave the field. Having listened to the speech of the right hon. Member for Gorton, I feel as though I have been savaged by a live donkey. All I can say on the right hon. Gentleman's part is that he cannot possibly be as stupid as he seemed and that he was braying on behalf of a party whose foreign policies have been wholeheartedly rejected by the voters.

The Bill and the prospect of an INF agreement are a total justification of the policy which the Government have pursued since 1979 and a total refutation of the policies of the Opposition parties. A few years ago the Opposition claimed that the introduction of cruise and Pershing would wreck the prospect of disarmament negotiations, but, as my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State pointed out, the Soviet Union walked out of the negotiations but rapidly returned when it saw that its activities and those of people in this country who spoke in favour of unilateral disarmament had been rejected and that the West remained united and firm in its policies. It defies common sense to argue now that it would have been better to abandon our policies one-sidedly. To have done that would have relieved the Russians on their side of any pressure to reduce their armaments. It would have left NATO in disarray, and possibly worse.

Secondly, as I remarked at Question time yesterday, if we achieve an agreement on intermediate range nuclear forces—as I hope we will—that will make it much more important to achieve an agreement to ban the production, possession and use of chemical weapons and, indeed, an agreement to achieve a better balance of conventional forces in Europe. We must recognise that our nuclear defences have been intended to deter not simply a nuclear war but any war—not least a war in which the Soviet Union, whose forces are trained in the offensive use of chemical weapons, might choose to use those weapons.

If a whole layer of nuclear weapons — the intermediate layer — is removed from Europe, Soviet superiority in chemical and conventional weapons will be even more significant than it has been until now. If that state of affairs were allowed to continue without the achievement of agreements on chemical weapons and on other forms of conventional weapons, there would be a danger, over a period, of damage to the morale of NATO and a danger of the Soviet Union being tempted to indulge in military blackmail of the Western countries.

There are two ways of remedying that state of affairs. First, we could build up our chemical weapon stocks, which are very small; or secondly, we could try to persuade the Soviet Union to agree to ban chemical weapons and reduce its conventional weapon stocks. I hope that the latter course will be the one that succeeds. At this point I pay tribute to Her Majesty's Government for the determined and effective efforts and proposals that they have made in connection with the verification of a ban on chemical weapons.

Thirdly, what is our long-term objective on nuclear disarmament? I hope that we shall be able to move on —I speak now of the two super-powers—to achieve a 50 per cent. reduction in strategic nuclear forces. But I do not believe that it is sensible to talk about the total elimination of nuclear weapons. My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary touched on that point. President Reagan was unwise to set that as our objective. It is unwise to talk in such terms, because it is not credible. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is not going to happen. We know that it will not happen because, among other things, we cannot destroy the knowledge of how to make the weapons. Such language becomes simply a ritual incantation that detracts from the credibility of our objectives.

In the 1960s, when I was personally involved in negotiations with the Russians on disarmament, the objective was said on both sides to be general and complete disarmament. That was a ridiculous objective to hold out to ourselves, and it detracted from the effectiveness of our efforts. I hope that we shall not make the same mistake now. In any case, the desirability of totally abolishing nuclear weapons would be doubtful, even were the objective achievable. Nuclear weapons have kept the peace in Europe and we would be very unwise to try to get rid of them altogether. Instead, we need to reduce their numbers.

My fourth point concerns Trident and the French nuclear deterrent. The Opposition, as they search for new policies, talk of negotiating the Trident weapon away. As I understand it, if we achieved that it would mean that we would get rid of all our strategic nuclear weapons, while

[Sir Peter Blaker]

the Russians reduced to 97 per cent. of what they have at present. That does not seem to me to be a very good bargain. We need the Trident independent strategic deterrent because we cannot be sure that the Americans will be ready to defend Europe for ever. The public understand that point, as they have shown overwhelmingly in several general elections, and they are absolutely right.

I agree with my right hon. and learned Friend about the circumstances in which we might be prepared to negotiate about Trident. We are talking about negotiating on what sort of strategic nuclear deterrent we would have, not on whether we would have one at all. There is, of course, scope for reducing the British strategic nuclear deterrent —the Trident deterrent—not by eliminating one of the four Trident boats, but by adjusting the number of missiles that they carry and the number of warheads on each missile. However, we must ensure that we keep a credible nuclear deterrent.

Finally, we should be very careful before we assume that there has been a fundamental change in Soviet policy. There has certainly been a fundamental change in Soviet presentation, which is much cleverer than it has been in the past. However, my experience in negotiations with the Soviet Union is that its first instinct is always to try to divide the West. That is exactly what it did in the negotiations for the partial nuclear test ban treaty in 1962 and 1963. Only after the Soviet Union saw that it could not divide the West—that the West was wholly united—did it agree to make what turned out to be a very satisfactory agreement.

The Soviet Union still supports the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia. It still has its forces in Afghanistan. There are still Cuban forces in Angola. The Soviet Union continues to flout the Helsinki agreement on human rights, which rightly states that the observance of human rights is related to the preservation of peace. The Soviet Union continues to suppress the wishes of the peoples of eastern Europe. When it ceases to do that sort of thing I shall begin to believe that there may have been a fundamental change in Soviet policy and Soviet attitudes toward the free world. Until then, we would be right to suspend judgment.

We have a long way to go, but Soviet agreement to an INF treaty would be a first important step to reduce nuclear weapons, and a step in the right direction.

6.8 pm

Mr. A. E. P. Duffy (Sheffield, Attercliffe): After the years of dangerous stagnation, 1987 has witnessed tremendous progress towards nuclear disarmament. For the first time in post-war history a big change in the military relationship between East and West seems possible. Yet an impassioned debate is taking place inside the Western Alliance about whether such an agreement on INF is in the long-term security interests of the Alliance. Nuclear disarmament is a many-sided question and involves a variety of perspectives, interests and options. For example, will the present agreement lead to an agreed framework for dramatic cuts in intercontinental missiles and, eventually, in battlefield nuclear systems? Can we really get the nuclear genie back into the bottle?

What of Warsaw pact superiority in conventional weapons? What is to offset that superiority, if not nuclear armaments? What are the costs of redressing that conventional imbalance in tanks, artillery, aircraft and ships? Should not the next agreement—triple zero—be on tanks? How will all this serve Russian interests?

If this agreement is secured, it will carry with it a threefold hope — for improved security, for added impetus to other negotiations, especially with regard to strategic nuclear arsenals and chemical weapons, and for improved co-operation from the Soviet Union. In the next, perhaps decisive, phase of arms control negotiations, both sides will need to show conclusively that there is sufficient political will to ensure that a serious disarmament process is here to stay.

No matter where one looks, there are few obvious signs of celebration. On the contrary, the nearer to zero the zero-zero option comes, the more NATO anxieties increase, mostly relating to the failure to link agreement on medium-range nuclear weapons with other aspects of the Soviet threat to western Europe.

Chancellor Kohl of West Germany is concerned about "a solution that would remove missiles without at the same time including the Soviet Union's enormous advantage in conventional forces".

General Bernard Rogers, just before stepping down recently as supreme military commander in Brussels, revealed that from a military perspective the agreement "gave me gas pains." His successor, General Jack Galvin, though more cautious, still believes that western defence will remain credible only if NATO retains an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional forces. Henry Kissinger warned that the upshot would prove

"a strengthening of the neutralist trend in Europe,"

and French Foreign Minister André Giraud condemned the zero option as another Munich.

One lesson of Reykjavik, therefore, is that arms control may be more of a challenge than an opportunity. Was the West ready? In retrospect, the Reykjavik talks were quite bizarre. The Americans went to Reykjavik totally unprepared. I am told that they even had to borrow carbon paper from their Soviet opposite numbers and spent half the night hurriedly typing out position papers over a bath and without any consultation with their allies.

The first onus on the Alliance must be to recover its solidarity and cohesion. The United States must take steps to reassure Europe and all must reassure West Germany. Europe must also serve itself better by its own exertions. The United States spends more on European defence—$134 billion — than the $83 billion spent by Europe itself. For that reason, over a period of many years western European countries have become more and more dependent on nuclear-reliant policies. The Soviet Union has achieved its overwhelming conventional superiority to a considerable extent through the default of western European nations.

The West must seize the arms control initiative from Mr. Gorbachev. The passivity shown by the West, and especially by the United States in the past two years, is almost criminal. During that time there have been at least three times as many initiatives from the Soviet Union as from the West. We may certainly expect new disarmament initiatives from Mr. Gorbachev, and they may continue to catch the West off balance. It is true that the Soviet Union has given up more weapons this time, but there is a danger in the public expectation that this will create in the West, oblivious to the conventional threat. In the United States and in Europe there is, properly, a deep wish for a new era

and new deals. In the United States, with its strong ethical strain in foreign policy making, the predisposition to see only the good in Mr. Gorbachev may be as pronounced as the inclination to see only the bad in what went before.

There are encouraging signs of new political winds blowing from the Soviet Union. We could be on the threshold of new and more constructive relations between East and West, but that does not relieve us of the obligation to ask further questions. What lies behind Mr. Gorbachev's smile? How far will glasnost go? How far can it go, given the Soviet system? How far can verification go? The Foreign Secretary has said that that will be the key. At the Congress of Vienna, Prince Metternich complained that

"there was the difficulty always of obtaining true data from Russia".

Nevertheless, Mr. Gorbachev should be taken at his word and the Soviet will should be tested. That is why I attach the utmost importance to confidence-building methods.

I shall want to hear the Foreign Secretary tell the House at a convenient moment what initiatives he is prepared to deploy within the Alliance or, preferably, to make on our behalf. Soviet domestic problems — we are all familiar with them and they make an alarming catalogue — call for domestic reform. Mr. Gorbachev may be the man that the Soviet Union needs for that job, so should we not be assisting him? For example, could not the United States offer agricultural technology rather than merely wheat shipments—for should we not all prefer a fat Russian to a thin one?

6.16 pm

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith (Wealden): It is a great pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy), a fellow delegate to the North Atlantic Assembly. Given our common experience, it will come as little surprise to him when I say that we share much the same views on a wide range of defence issues, albeit with the occasional difference of emphasis. I warmly support the points that he has made. His speech was a refreshing contrast to that of the hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) from the Opposition Front Bench.

I should say at once to my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary and his colleagues how much we welcome the Bill and how much we respect the work carried out by the arms control and disarmament unit of the Foreign Office. As a leader of the British delegation to the North Atlantic Assembly, I have met politicians and officials from a number of countries. There is no doubt that the quality of our input into disarmament talks is respected worldwide, and to some extent we bask in that glory.

I agree with the right hon. Member for Gorton on just one point. The present situation makes us look to the future. I wish, therefore, to consider some of the opportunities and challenges posed by the INF agreement and by the Bill before the House. Lord Carrington, who is no starry-eyed politician, said in his excellent address to the North Atlantic Assembly in Oslo recently that in the light of the INF agreement we must be prepared to be innovative and imaginative. I agree wholeheartedly.

There is a recognition that new technology, which is increasingly sophisticated and expensive, will place even heavier burdens on our economies. Certainly, there is a growing public expectation that our Government should make positive proposals. We must admit that such public expectations have been roused not least by Mr. Gorbachev, who has displayed political nimbleness as well as an attractive public persona that is not usually associated with Soviet leaders. Across the political spectrum of the North Atlantic Assembly there was no doubt that the mood of the delegates was that the time is right to explore further arms control measures.

We have been asked how far we can trust Mr. Gorbachev and the Soviet Union's intentions. I have no idea how far we can trust him or, indeed, any of his colleagues. Even if we trust him a lot in the next year or so, he could always be disowned by his colleagues. His words and deeds make a refreshing change from those of Mr. Brezhnev. He appears to recognise the debilitating effects of too heavy a defence burden. Certainly, it has been a burden which the Soviet economy is not well able to bear, and he knows it. I suspect, of course, that he may find — this point may lurk in the dark recesses of his mind — that, at some time in the future, arms control discussions could lead to divisions in the West and that the lack of a well-thought-out concerted approach to arms control by NATO countries could lead to a more favourable military balance for the Soviet Union. Indeed, he might even consider that Western Governments, when faced with Warsaw pact countries' promises of arms reductions, may be reluctant to insist on adequate verification procedures for fear of jeopardising the agreement. That is why one attaches such importance to a Bill of this nature.

If trust is an essential precondition, undoubtedly, if any agreement is to work, verification is the methodology by which we can ensure that agreements are adhered to. Some of the risks that we face include a slackness of approach and a lack of concerted policies by Western Governments. I agree with Lord Carrington; we should explore every avenue and test Soviet initiatives. We should go further and produce some initiatives of our own. But we should be much clearer about what we want from arms control.

I start with a simple premise. Our strategy has been and will continue for some time to be one of stopping and deterring Soviet aggression in Europe. Military commanders, as the hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) reminded us, tell us that the removal of intermediate and shorter-range nuclear weapons has meant that we have lost some of our flexibility in carrying out that strategy. One of the consequences of the agreement — it is not widely appreciated by the public — is the greater emphasis that will be put on our need for strong conventional forces which, as we know, are far more expensive than nuclear forces to maintain.

The Government, and NATO in particular, would be right to concentrate arms control talks on conventional arms. What makes the task so difficult is that we shall ask the Soviets to reduce their strength in an area in Europe in which they consider themselves to be superior. We know that the Warsaw pact and NATO forces' structures are asymmetrical. That is why equal percentage reductions are no answer. We know that Warsaw pact countries have about 17,000 tanks in place in the central region. NATO has about 8,000 tanks in place. A cut of about 10 per cent. across the board sounds good, but of course the threat to the West would be just as great.

Simple arguments about percentage cuts can lead only to negotiators getting bogged down in the numbers to be gained. The lack of symmetry means that, at some stage,

[Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith]

each side must be prepared to accept unequal reductions, as was the case in respect of the SALT treaties, certainly was the case with the ABM treaties, and is now the case with the current zero-zero agreement. Europeans, especially west Europeans, have taken the greater military risk, whatever the political advantage may be. If either side is to be prepared to accept an unequal reduction, there must be an incentive if the risks involved are to be accepted. That is essential.

How might we proceed? We, together with our allies, need to move with some speed if we are to regain the initiative and stop reacting, as we often have in the past, to Mr. Gorbachev's latest moves. Many of his moves result from ideas that we put forward years ago but which the Russians did not pick up. The West has lacked sufficient conceptual clarity in the formulation of its arms control objectives. After all, we were reminded of that fact by the hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe. After Mr. Reagan, in Reykjavik, proposed the elimination of all nuclear weapons, the West was in disarray. Even today there is the suspicion that America's nuclear arms control objectives do not sufficiently take into account Europe's own security needs. There is no doubt that there is insufficient sign of an agreed list of priorities in western Europe.

A clear concept of our arms control aims is an indispensable precondition if we are to avoid falling into the trap of agreeing to superficially attractive proposals which, in the long term, can only damage our power to deter war and our capacity to defend ourselves should war ever break out. We expect the Government to make it clear at all talks that we want stability and security at a cheaper price. If we are to make a start along such lines, we should make it perfectly clear to the Soviets that the most destabilising and threatening element in Europe is the short warning attack potential of the Soviet conventional forces and their growing offensive capability. The latter is expressed in their qualitative and quantitative improvements to their heavy armoured divisions and to their impressive navy, which could seriously inhibit our own force deployment and reinforcement divisions in a crisis.

Mr. Gorbachev professes his seriousness about arms control and his wish to reduce tensions and to normalise relations with his neighbours. The litmus test of how serious he is about his stated intentions must be his willingness to reduce the massive Soviet offensively configured forces in central Europe. That would go a mighty long way to reducing East-West tensions, enhancing stability and saving money for him and for us. Of course, Mr. Gorbachev's advisers consider that our forces pose a threat to their security, although we stoutly maintain that we are a defensive Alliance and that our forces are primarily equipped to deter and repulse an attack, not to launch one.

Why not have the experts—the military commanders, as the Soviets have suggested—discuss that point? Let the military commanders talk directly to one another about what worries them about each other's offensive capabilities. It has already been said that progress towards stability, the removal of distrust and the maintenance of peace are not merely military matters. At a later stage in our progress, we should consider linking further arms control measures to progress in non-military fields which can affect our longer-term security.

I should sleep a lot easier in my bed if I knew that Mr. Gorbachev would make glasnost something more than an exercise in smoothing some of the rougher edges of Soviet life. Let Mr. Gorbachev look at the terms of the Helsinki agreement of 1975 which, if implemented, would allow greater freedom of expression, freedom of mobility and expansion of human rights for his citizens and will enable him still further to relax the Jewish emigration policy. He should do those things if he wishes to build our confidence and trust to enable us to make military progress. If he wants us to help him with his infrastructure and his agricultural technology, he should be perfectly clear that we are willing, but at a price. Part of that price would be our wanting his tanks and much else of his punitive and financially costly military paraphernalia to back off the frontiers of West Germany. If he did that he would find that we would not be unresponsive, economically and militarily.

We are at a critical point in the East-West conflict, which is why we must do all that we can to ascertain whether a real amelioration in that conflict is possible. To fail to do so would be a dereliction of our responsibility and an admission of defeat to Mr. Gorbachev in the battle for public opinion. The time is ripe for us to improve the climate of trust and to seize the initiative, provided that it is done on terms that are in harmony with our overall security policy.

6.30 pm

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): I have no difficulty in agreeing wholeheartedly with the two preceding speakers on the need to secure a coherent, clear and agreed negotiating strategy for the West in arms negotiations. This debate illustrates how difficult that can be at times, when the prized objectives of the various key participants do not appear to be generally shared.

President Reagan has set as an objective the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons and has been denounced by Conservative Members for doing so. Having first been advanced and advocated by the West, the zero option came to be challenged at the point of its realisation by those who began to think they should never have advocated it in the first place. That is not a happy way to conduct arms negotiations and the hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) was right to point to some of the lessons of the Reykjavik process.

The most obvious key feature of the Bill is that it is about verification. The fact that we have a Bill about the verification process is a welcome sign that we have begun to break the log jam on verification which stood in the way of effective or worthwhile arms control agreements. We hope that the form of the Bill reflects the possibilities of further substantial verification agreements in other aspects of arms control. That can only be welcomed.

Secondly, the Bill confers diplomatic immunity. As the Minister will be aware, that has not been without its vicissitudes of late and has aroused a fair amount of public concern because of two types of cases—first, the use of diplomatic immunity as a cover for terrorist activities. That led to breaches of diplomatic relations with Libya and Syria. The Government were bound to take those actions and I supported them, although I now take the view that Britain should consider the possibility of resuming diplomatic relations with Syria, where certain key changes have taken place. However, I have no doubt at all that the Government were right to break off

diplomatic relations with Syria when they did. Indeed, I advocated that course some weeks earlier. The danger of the misuse of diplomatic immunity has been studied by the Foreign Affairs Select Committee. That in turn has led the Government to take a tougher stance to ensure that it is not abused.

In addition to the terrorist cases to which I have referred, there have been three cases this year of other offences causing public concern. An American diplomat's husband was alleged to have committed an indecent assault. In that case there was no waiver of diplomatic immunity, despite one being requested. The man concerned was eventually removed from this country. There have been two other cases. One involved a sex charge and the other the giving of evidence in a murder investigation. Diplomatic immunity was waived in both.

There is a great deal of public concern about such issues and it is extremely important that the principles on which diplomatic immunity is based are observed by all the states involved, because it is essential to the conduct of foreign relations that we maintain the ability for states to talk to each other. That is fundamental to the prevention of war, and the system must be made to work effectively. Instances such as the ones that I have described threaten the ability to do so.

The fact that the Bill is before the House shows the pace and progress of arms control and the welcome developments, especially on the INF deal. We all hope that that will lead to a wider range of international disarmament agreements. In this context, it is worth asking what the Government's response is to the prospect of going beyond the INF deal to a deal that would affect Britain's own nuclear weapons. In some ways, the Government seemed to be adopting a more rigid view than any of the other participants in the current international discussions. The Prime Minister stated in an interview in *Der Spiegel*:

"I will never give up Britain's nuclear deterrent and neither will France".

There have been repeated signals of various kinds that whatever progress is made in international disarmament negotiations the supposedly independent British deterrent is something about which we shall never negotiate.

Therefore, it is worth asking what it is all about. What is Britain's deterrent for? Is it a measured insurance against a real threat or do we have it because it is imagined that without nuclear weapons we would not be a real nation state? The case for Britain having independent nuclear weapons as a form of defence can be argued and considered, but nuclear weapons as a symbol of nationhood cannot be justified as a doctrine because it invites worldwide proliferation. It is manifestly the case that a country can be an effective nation state without having nuclear weapons.

It has long been the view of the Liberal party that the best defence for Europe is full British participation in a strong NATO, appropriately armed to meet any potential threat, including the nuclear threat, combined with determined attempts to achieve negotiated disarmament on a basis that would ensure no loss of security for either side at any stage. We have always accepted that NATO nuclear weapons should be stationed in Britain and that renders separate British deterrents unnecessary.

The challenge to that long-held view comes from the fear—not readily admitted by the Prime Minister, but widely discussed in specialist and public debate—that the United States nuclear guarantee to Europe might at some date be withdrawn or become unreliable. That is the basic argument for having some kind of independent British deterrent.

During the debate, the Foreign Secretary has said that it would be unthinkable to imagine that the United States guarantee would at some future date be withdrawn. The right hon. Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker) said precisely the opposite—that it was a contingency against which we should guard. Clearly, there are different views on this.

However, if the fear is justified—I do not believe that we can simply ignore it—does the planned British deterrent provide us with an alternative guarantee? How can it, since it depends on continued co-operation from the United States in servicing and supply?

We had an increasingly abstruse discussion earlier about the ownership of Trident missiles. I refer the Foreign Secretary to the definition that was helpfully provided by the Chairman of the Defence Select Committee in the previous Parliament, the hon. Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates), who said on radio today that it was like having a calor gas cylinder or soda siphon—one owned it while one had it, but then took it back and was given another one when it was used up. I will settle for that description if it is accepted by the Government.

It is not the issue of ownership that worries me but the system of refurbishment and renewal which depends on continued United States co-operation. That co-operation could cease to be available, perhaps because the United States was no longer willing to offer it or, more likely, because the United States was no longer maintaining those facilities for its own use, or because the continued involvement in the supply of Trident missiles by the United States might be incompatible with future strategic or INF deals between the United States and the Soviet Union. It is not an independent deterrent, but a very dependent one.

It follows from that that Britain's deterrent capacity with Trident would be in jeopardy in precisely the circumstances against which it is intended to be an insurance—circumstances under which the United States guarantee would cease to be available to us.

It must be hoped that with the new impetus of arms control negotiations we can reach the point at which Europe's defence does not need to depend, as it clearly does at the moment, on nuclear deterrence. That point cannot be reached until Europe's fears about the Soviet Union's conventional strength and its strength in chemical weapons are satisfied. If there is reason to believe that that might not be reached and that the United States guarantee may fail, a United States-based British deterrent cannot provide us with the insurance that we need. That could be achieved only by a deterrent wholly European in production and control.

Prudence suggests that Britain and her partners should at least explore that area and should do so without losing sight of the commitment to achieve the goal of negotiated disarmament which would make such a development unnecessary. Indeed, the exclusion of existing or future British and French weapon systems from arms negotiations would reduce the chances of enhancing Europe's security through multilateral disarmament. Therefore, the British Government's position is fundamentally illogical. Perhaps we shall receive more clarification of it tonight, but I think that this argument will continue for many months yet.

[Mr. A. J. Beith]

We hope that the discussions on strategic weapons between Mr. Shultz and Mr. Shevardnadze have productive results. They have been attended by certain transport difficulties, but they offer valuable prospects for real development on strategic weapons. But, again, in agreeing to a 50 per cent. cut in strategic weapons, as she did at Camp David, the Prime Minister was reported as insisting, "but no more". It appears that the British Government are always drawing the line at what can be regarded as worth attempting.

In all the discussions on strategic weapons there remains the fundamental obstacle of SDI. It appeared, certainly in the early stages, that the main motivation, other than economic motivation which is perhaps the most powerful of all, for Soviet desire for rapid movement in arms negotiations was their anxiety about SDI. That was not because they believed President Reagan's view that it would provide a complete protective shield against all nuclear weapons, but because of the enormously enhanced capacity involved in creating it.

Indeed, it is hard to find anybody who believes in President Reagan's vision of SDI which provides a global nuclear shield or, indeed, a nuclear shield merely around the United States of America. The Foreign Secretary's analysis of the failings of the SDI concept remains valid and the most effective critique of the whole SDI concept available in any library or text anywhere. I am worried that the Government have lost sight of the clarity with which he explained how the whole concept was a mirage.

It is time the British Government insisted publicly and more clearly that the existing SDI programme must not be allowed to threaten the ABM treaty and that it carries the potential to threaten European security, to which the Foreign Secretary so clearly and cogently referred.

The discussions on the test ban treaty may now be resumed. When negotiations on a test ban treaty were broken off in 1980, Britain was a partner in them. Now the prospect is that the discussions will reopen as part of the bilateral discussions between the United States and the Soviet Union. Where is Britain in all this? Since we were a party to the negotiations when they broke down, why should we not be now? Is it because we do not envisage that we can be a party to a comprehensive test ban treaty? Surely not.

Mr. Denzil Davies: The hon. Gentleman makes a good point and I hope that the Minister will answer it. As he said, Britain has always been a party to test ban treaty arrangements. The question he asks and which we shall ask is why we shall not be a party to these particular negotiations.

Mr. Beith: I am glad to have the right hon. Gentleman's support on this issue and perhaps the Minister who replies will clarify the position. It seems both illogical and a crippling limitation on the value of any future test ban treaty.

We must achieve progress on conventional forces reductions if the objective that I set is to be met. The objective is that all armed agreements should ensure that security is not lessened for either side. That is the basis of stability in arms negotiations and we cannot have that stability unless we make progress on conventional arms reductions and the whole frightening area of chemical weapons.

There are reasons for optimism in the state of progress so far and in the whole approach of Mr. Gorbachev, which must be seen against the background of his particular position. We should not be unrealistic or careless in our judgments about what he is doing or the limitations placed on him. However, we can afford to test the willingness and ability to deliver what he promises and we are in a position to negotiate realistic agreements with him. There are factors in the present Soviet system which make it inevitable that he will be much more determined to bring about serious arms reductions than any of his predecessors have ever been. Indeed, it is to his credit that he realises that this is necessary and that he has applied such imagination to doing so.

There are considerable signs of optimism, but also reasons for anxiety and pessimism in elements of both West and East. There are those in the Pentagon, this country and the Soviet Union who challenge the validity of the whole process. We must dispel the fears which they generate where those fears can be shown to be justified, but we must not lose impetus or determination.

The present Government worry me because they constantly seem to want to narrow the vision of what is possible. The Labour party worries me because it assumes that the vision has already become a reality. Clearly, it has not. We should set high horizons for what can be achieved, but we should be realistic in our recognition of the degree of security which must be guaranteed at each step along the road towards achieving those goals.

6.45 pm

Mr. George Walden (Buckingham): I listened with interest to the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith). He asked the Government questions about their defence policy, and at the end of my remarks I should like to ask some questions about Liberal party policy.

We are debating a technical issue which hon. Members have widened into a much broader discussion of disarmament and defence. The present moment is both propitious and disturbing. It is propitious because, clearly, we are dealing with a new leader in the Soviet Union. Indeed, it is not going too far to say that there is evidence of a new spirit in international affairs. However, I find it slightly disturbing, because in this debate and in the general public debate on these matters we seem to concentrate on the technological side of disarmament and not much on the political side.

If one looks carefully at the experience of the past few years, one discovers that the mistakes that have been made in the West—there have been mistakes—are political. This is a time to learn from them if we want to take advantage of the new opportunities that undoubtedly exist. I shall give three examples.

First, in the past year or two we have discussed insufficiently the origins of the military confrontation in Europe. We have spoken a great deal about technology. We do not want to fall into the position in New York, where they have programmed stock exchange dealings, with the results that we have just seen. The equivalent in defence would be alarming. We in Europe must return to base one, which is the political origins of the confrontation in Europe. In essence, they still exist today. Nothing that Gorbachev is offering to do will change that.

We should ask ourselves seriously what the present political situation is in eastern Europe. There are opportunities there for liberalisation and economic

revitalisation. However, we should be rather pessimistic about how far it will prove possible for eastern European countries to take advantage of the opportunities. Clearly, the pressures for liberalisation that Gorbachev has generated in those countries will make it difficult to find a legitimate political outlet that will not challenge the basis of the regimes there or the basis of Soviet hegemony over them.

I put to the House the perfectly reasonable proposition that it is possible to conceive that in the next year or two we shall face trouble in eastern Europe of the kind that we have seen in the past. I ask the House to consider how the present spirit on arms control between East and West would be affected by an eruption of that kind. That seems to me a very potent example of the dangers of not taking sufficient account of the political element in East-West negotiations.

The second example that I should like to give concerns the political situation in the United States. During the INF episode, in my view the West found itself faced with quite unnecessary political difficulties during the deployment phase because of the attitude and rhetoric of some of our American allies. The deployment was made more difficult than it should have been. That phase has passed, but let us be frank. In the American political system there is an underlying instability—that is perhaps not too strong a word—that tends, over time, to cause rather alarming vacillations in American policy, no matter who is President.

We saw an example of that in Reykjavik, and I think that we shall see more examples of that in the future. It is my firm conviction that the American mood will change from one of what I regard as an unnecessary adversary attitude to the Soviet Union to one of rather dangerous indulgence towards a new Soviet leader. This is built into not only the American tradition, but the way in which the American Executive operates.

We have seen examples of excessively hostile attitudes to the Soviet Union that have damaged the cohesion of the Alliance. I suspect that in future we may be faced with rather different problems that could make the opportunities for disarmament, as the hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) said, as much a challenge as an opportunity. I should not like to see a situation develop in which co-operation between the Soviet Union and America, which clearly will grow, in effect threatens the interests of Europe or this country. We should keep our eyes on politics and the political mood in the United States and also on the super-power co-operation that is bound to arise, and which we as a Government to some extent have encouraged, because there are risks as well as opportunities.

Thirdly, there is the political situation in the Soviet Union. I was glad to note that my hon. Friend the Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith) made a certain linkage between politics and defence. When the Russians look at the relationship with the West, as the House knows, they have a technique of comparing the overall balance of forces. I have always thought that a wise attitude of the Soviets, and something that we should apply to them in turn. It means that one does not just weigh the balance of forces on the military scales, but looks at the social, economic and political position of the potential adversary.

Let us apply that to Mr. Gorbachev. I think we all know and welcome what he has said about glasnost and perestroika. Let us assess what has been done. One Russian has been quoted as saying that the only difference so far is that, whereas before they had to queue for food, they now have to queue for drink as well. There is a deep truth there, because the political test for Gorbachev concerns the economy. He has not started to tackle it yet. There are two major facets. One is to do with manpower, with facing the necessity of some degree of unemployment in the Soviet Union. He is cautious about that, and that could be a politically explosive factor. The other factor is prices.

I do not want to go too deeply into all that, but that is an example of the potential precariousness of the position of Mr. Gorbachev. It is something that we ought to keep in mind, because, however much we approve of his sentiments or his campaign for political openness, it does not matter that much whether or not we approve. What matters is whether the Soviet people — not just his Conservative opponents, who have become rather used to the inefficiencies of the Communist system — approve of the rigours of reformism that he wants to place upon them.

Much of what we have been discussing today could be seriously affected by political perturbations in the Soviet Union, which could make Mr. Gorbachev's position less secure. Naturally, I and many hon. Members would be unhappy at that prospect, but we must realise that that prospect is always there. We must keep that in mind because, as I mentioned earlier, there is the danger, not only in the United States but in this country, of, on the one hand, this underlying instability of vacillating between unnecessary exaggerations of the Soviet threat, and on the other hand a certain relief from the tensions, a euphoria, that could bring unrealistic demands for disarmament on the Government.

I should like to return to where I started, which is the technical side of this debate. It is to do with the CDE. As we know, the CDE will move on early in the new year to discuss not only these relatively minor confidence-building measures, but to talk about conventional disarmament. When that stage is reached, it is perfectly clear to me that Mr. Gorbachev will launch an eye-catching initiative and that, in the atmosphere of today, which is getting a little unrealistic about the potential for early measures on arms control and disarmament, that initiative will catch the West unbalanced and cause further euphoria in public opinion. We ought to remind public opinion at every stage of what I would call the political precariousness as well as the opportunities of the present position.

Finally, I should like to make one addition to a point made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker). He was only partly right in his description of the policy of the Labour party on Trident, because he said that its policy was essentially to make the Russians an offer: "If you give up 3 per cent. of yours, we will give up 100 per cent. of ours." He is only partly right, because the next stage of the argument of the Labour party, and, as I understand it, of the Liberal party, is to say: "What is more, if you do not agree to that proposition, we will give up our deterrent anyway." Neither the Labour party nor the Liberal party is prepared to confront the real problem, which is the maintenance of a working deterrent for the foreseeable future if one is to indulge in genuine and productive negotiations with the Soviet Union.

Mr. Beith: Surely there is a difference between the possession of a deterrent which is intended to be independently British, which I contend we do not have, and a NATO deterrent stationed in Britain.

Mr. Walden: I do not want to intrude on the private discussions of the Liberal party, but by his intervention the hon. Gentleman has forced me to make a prediction. In the future, I foresee a Lib-Lab defence policy that I would call love in a mist. Both those parties are gravitating in the direction that I have just described—either the Russians will do a deal with us, or we will give up our deterrent anyway and that really will scare the pants off Moscow.

6.59 pm

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): In some ways I should like to take up the remarks of the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden) and engage in a discussion on defence policy generally. However, at the risk of being accused of dodging the issue, it would be the height of folly for the Labour party in 1987 to be fashioning a defence policy that it might want to use in a general election in 1991 or 1992. This is distinctly the wrong time to enter into the details of a defence policy. Instead, it is a time to be extremely cautious. I suggest to the hon. Member for Buckingham with great humility that no party has the perfect defence policy.

In engaging in the difficult analysis of international relations on which we have all now to embark, it does not help if we castigate others for insincerity or lack of national vigour. I would add — *[Interruption.]* The Under-Secretary of State has only recently entered the Chamber but he is already moping on the Government Front Bench. I would prefer him to be quiet for the present. I was saying in all sincerity that it does not help if we castigate others because they take a different view from ourselves. It does not assist to brand others as unpatriotic.

For example, the hon. Member for Buckingham talked about vacillation when discussing how we should behave towards the Soviet Union. In doing so, he suggested that the United States blows hot and cold. No one characterises his strictures more than the Prime Minister. Having met Mr. Gorbachev, she described him as a man with whom she could do business, but in the next breath she talks about the great red menace. Which posture are we to adopt? Which is the correct stance?

I share some of the thoughts of the hon. Member for Buckingham on suspicions towards the Soviet Union. That does not mean merely suspicions towards the Soviet Union now or over the past 70 years. There are suspicions in respect of the past 1,000 years of Russian history and the Russian outlook, including that on expansion. These suspicions do not necessarily help us in trying to analyse what Mr. Gorbachev is up to in 1987.

I am surprised that a specific and significant factor has not yet been mentioned in this debate. Surely Mr. Gorbachev must have recoiled from the Chernobyl incident. I am convinced that the full story of Chernobyl will never be told, but some of the implications of this "minor" nuclear disaster must have come home to him and the people of the Soviet Union. I am sure that he has recoiled from the implications of nuclear technology if it is mishandled. We have seen what can happen if an experiment or tests go wrong and the situation gets out of hand, and it is reasonable to suggest that Mr. Gorbachev has recoiled from the implications of chucking nuclear weapons about in European territories or elsewhere.

The INF negotiations have produced a helpful sign because for the first time the super-powers have come together and produced a reduction of horrific nuclear weapons, albeit an imbalanced one. It is against that background that I want now to deal with some of the issues that arise on a consideration of the Bill.

The hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) has dealt with some of the technicalities of diplomatic immunity and we are aware that the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs has examined the issue. There are extreme difficulties in curtailing the operation of the Vienna convention because of its reciprocal nature. Diplomatic immunity is granted to foreign ambassadors and consuls on the basis of reciprocity. In other words, we give something and we arrive at a reciprocal arrangement. That is common sense, and it is an understanding that has been underpinned. There have been diplomatic relations since the creation of nation states.

The Bill contains the proposition that the United Kingdom should grant diplomatic immunity to observers and specialists but this provision is not accompanied by a definition. No one tells us what an observer or a scientist is. We have some understanding of what a diplomat or a consul is, but is proposed that observers and specialists will be able to enter the United Kingdom to carry out quick-fire inspections. They will come to Greenham Common and Molesworth, which are bases on United Kingdom soveriegn territory. The legal position of these bases is somewhat in dispute because of the Visiting Forces Act and because we are not entirely clear about the arrangements between ourselves and the United States.

It is against this background that observers and specialists will come to this country with the right to visit bases on British sovereign territory to examine weaponry possessed by a third nation. What do we get in return? It may be that the Foreign Secretary has alluded to the answer. He said, in effect, that it is too early to arrive at a firm position and that we should await negotiations. We have seen on television the arch yuppie types who are the negotiators of the United States. We see them moving around with large bundles of papers in the course of placing their position on verification on the record. We are party to that, but what do we get in return from the Soviet Union?

An article on relevance appeared in *The Sunday Times* on 20 September. The author, addressing himself to reciprocity, wrote:

"The Government is concerned that any agreement between the superpowers might give Soviet officials unrestricted access to British bases, providing an unprecedented opportunity for the Soviet Union to gather valuable intelligence. The Ministry of Defence has made it clear to the Americans that this is unacceptable."

If it is unacceptable, are we helping the negotiations on verification? What is acceptable to us in terms of our understanding with the Americans? The Foreign Secretary has told us that he has met Mr. Shultz and has the intention of meeting him again, and as part of the current negotiations Mr. Shultz is discussing the vexatious and interesting issues of verification.

The *Sunday Times* article continued:

"The intermediate nuclear forces agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union announced on Friday will mean the scrapping of cruise missiles at two British bases.

Greenham Common and Molesworth. Ninety-six cruise missiles are currently deployed at Greenham and a further 64 are scheduled for Molesworth when it becomes operational next year."

The article continues and mentions a 20-page draft treaty.

As I have asked before, if we are to allow the Soviets to visit British bases by some arrangement, what do we get in return? What is the understanding between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union? I hope that I shall have an answer to that question at least.

Mr. Kaufman: My hon. Friend will understand that there will be reciprocity between the United States and the Soviet Union because they are the parties to the agreement that will have the consequence of removal of cruise missiles from the United Kingdom. I was endeavouring to say earlier that we are a bystanding party to an agreement to the removal of weapons from our territory, even though we are required to control—I am much in favour of this—the diplomatic status of the Soviet observers who come here to visit British nuclear bases to supervise the removal of American weapons.

Mr. Douglas: I fully appreciate and take on board the point made by my right hon. Friend. I would take that point a little further. We are doing this in terms of a delegated outer station. As I understand it, the affirmative procedure may be carried out in an Order that might be debated in one and a half hours.

I ask the Under-Secretary of State to consider the precedent. I know of no precedent of a nation granting diplomatic immunity to the citizens of another nation state with ostensibly no reciprocity. If the Under-Secretary of State or any other hon. Member can come forward and recite the precedents, I would welcome that edification.

I want to consider the more detailed questions about verification. In the June 1987 *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* the writers state clearly:

"The benefits of verification, like those of the broader agreement it serves, must exceed its risks. The primary risks of an intrusive verification system involve the potential compromise of national and industrial secrets to Soviet inspectors who would have at least the same access rights as US teams in the Soviet Union."

I can see the thrust of that from the point of view of the United States, but if those inspectors come here, there is no reciprocity. We have the right to be reasonably suspicious. The Soviet scientists and observers will come here and carry out a job with no reciprocity.

The bulletin continues:

"On the benefit side, the United States could gain from on-site inspections new knowledge of Soviet missile production and storage practices, and the superpowers might be able to build confidence by using agreed inspection procedures to resolve compliance concerns."

All the thrust is between the United States and the Soviet Union. Where does Britain stand?

Dr. Glyn: The hon. Gentleman has raised a most interesting point. However, this is only a reciprocal arrangement that will work between Great Britain and the Soviet Union through the United States. It is not a direct agreement and we are only the third party. As far as I can see, we have no rights at all in the Soviet Union.

Mr. Douglas: If I may put it delicately, the hon. Gentleman is reinforcing the point with which I am belabouring the House.

I want to consider where we might be going with regard to our relationship with the Soviet Union in general. Tangentially, I regret very much the absence of a Select Committee on Defence. I was a member of the previous Select Committee on Defence. Although I accept what the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed said about the remarks of the previous Chairman of the Select Committee with regard to newspaper speculation about the Trident lease deal, if there is anything that a Select Committee should examine in detail, it is that. We have had a long history of examining the Trident system. Indeed, we produced very recently an update of our views on the Trident system.

Such press speculation—if I may put it as delicately as that—might be examined by a Select Committee. I hesitate to caution the hon. Member for Hampshire, East when he is absent from the House, but I suggest that a former Chairman of the Select Committee on Defence should not make such statements without detailed examination. I do not believe that his analogy bears detailed examination by the House. I believe that the Select Committee should undertake that kind of job. In anticipating next week's debate on the Defence Estimates, I believe that that debate will be the poorer because for the first time for a considerable period we will not have an examination of the Estimates by a Select Committee on Defence. The House and the debates in the House have benefited from having the searching examinations of the Select Committee and those undertaken by the Secretary of State and his officials.

In conclusion, we are all hopeful that the moves between the super-powers a with regard to INF will bear fruit. Any speculation on the part of the Labour party that somehow or other that will reduce the burden of defence commitment on us, whatever view we may take of the unique possession of a deterrent by the United Kingdom must be questioned. I ask any Conservative Member who thinks that we ought to continue to possess a strategic deterrent to name any situation in which we would be likely to use that deterrent—Polaris or Trident—without the support and/or the backing of the United States. I keep asking that question, but I never get an answer.

There is no conceivable situation in which we would use that deterrent without the support or backing of the United States. An essential pillar in our strategy is to remain committed to NATO and not to think that because of the reductions in nuclear weapons somehow we can reduce defence expenditure. We should have a unique naval role within NATO, but because the Government adhere to a costly strategic deterrent, we are not fulfilling that role now. An up-to-date thrust was given by the Secretary of State's reply to the Select Committee's report on the Falklands when, for the first time, he came clean and reneged on a long-standing commitment to order three type 23 frigates a year. That is a sign of the cost of Trident.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I know that we have gone rather wide of the ruling of my predecessor, the Chairman of the Committee. Indeed, we are straying very wide now. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will have regard to the Bill.

Mr. Douglas: I appreciate that stricture and conclude by stating that that is a clear sign of the cost of Trident to our overall defence commitment and defence capability.

7.16 pm

Mr. Robert Rhodes James (Cambridge): It is always a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) whose understanding of these matters and whose outspokenness is greatly appreciated on both sides of the House. It is also a pleasure to follow the wisdom of my hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden).

I was very grateful to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) for his reference to my friend and colleague, Kerensky. Kerensky and I were visiting professors at Stanford University where I was doing a course on the Russian revolution. I nearly dropped a tree on him and almost became famous as the man who killed Kerensky. That is the only agreeable reference that I can make to the speech of the right hon. Member for Gorton.

With all respect to the right hon. Member for Gorton and to the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock), who I suspect will speak shortly, my complaint against the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was that it emphasised totally the horrors and perils of nuclear war and therefore gave some people at least the impression that conventional war was tolerable and reasonable.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): Absolute nonsense.

Mr. Rhodes James: It is not absolute nonsense. I am a soldier's son. I was born in 1933 and was brought up during the war. I experienced so-called conventional warfare. I also make the point—and this is not a party political point—that more people were killed in two nights in Tokyo and Hamburg than were killed in Hiroshima or Nagasaki. That does not make me any less of a strong——

Ms. Ruddock: As the hon. Gentleman has just referred to me and to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, I want to make the position quite clear. We, and I personally, have never felt that conventional war was tolerable in any way. We have opposed conventional wars throughout the world which have occurred continually while we have had the so-called "peace" for 40 years. We have said that, given the likely delivery of nuclear weapons with the current state of arsenals, in no sense would we have a war equivalent to the dropping of one or two bombs on Japan during the last world war. We would have an all-out nuclear war ending life on this planet. That is the difference. That is not a threat posed by conventional weaponry. That does not mean in any way that we regard conventional wars as tolerable.

Mr. Rhodes James: I do not want to dispute with the hon. Lady except to make a simple but important point. So often it is alleged that nuclear war is the ultimate horror, which it is, but that somehow conventional war is not. When we look at the world in which we live we see war everywhere. We see war in every continent and in every area. Those who claim that the third world war has already begun have some evidence to support them.

The Iran-Iraq war is the most perilous of all the conflicts.

Mr. Martin J. O'Neill (Clackmannan): Surely one of the difficulties we have is that the removal of intermediate weapons from central Europe requires greater vigilance over conventional weaponry. One of the regrettable aspects of the arms control debate as it is conducted in this country is the low priority placed by the Government, which the hon. Gentleman supports from time to time, given his independent position on many issues, on obtaining any sort of control or reduction in conventional weaponry within Europe. The Government are not prepared to support the movements that are a natural consequence of the INF agreement that we all welcome.

Mr. Rhodes James: That is not up to the hon. Gentleman's usual standard, particularly because of the references made by my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary to that point. I am not making a party political speech but the Foreign Secretary's speech and the Bill represent a significant step forward, which I would have hoped would have been more warmly welcomed by the Opposition than it has been.

The Iran-Iraq war is, as I have said, the most perilous of all the conflicts we are now facing. The major arms-producing nations have willingly supplied and sold to the belligerents the instruments and equipment that have fed the slaughter of the past seven years. They are now appalled and frightened, with good cause. Now, so typically and so late in the day, they turn to the United Nations, that scapegoat and court of last resort. They are at last dimly realising that the Persian Gulf, in terms of time and distance, is closer to this country than Sarajevo where the events in 1914 led my father to the Western front, Loos and Gallipoli and which led to the slaughter of a generation.

Even after Hungerford we are told by the gun lobby that guns do not kill, only people kill. That is the old American cry. In spite of the murder of a President, his brother and others we still hear that same cry. It is a grim historical fact that in modern history, until the late 1960s, there were few nations in the world which were militarily capable of inflicting any serious damage on another country. Today, that capability is virtually universal. The military industrial complex which President Eisenhower denounced and against which he warned is triumphant. The arms dealers, private and public, covert and overt, have never had it so good and, as a result, we have a world at war. It is only just being realised by the major nations that we are looking over an abyss. No-one appreciates that more than my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary. Peace-keeping is a crucial role but peace-making is infinitely more difficult in a world where armaments are prevalent and where military strength is regarded as the real strength of a nation or community.

Mr. David Young (Bolton, South-East): Given the advent of such things as the atomic artillery shell, we are concerned about a conventional war escalating into a nuclear holocaust. Since our deterrent is not independent—we are confined as to the people against whom we can use it—we seek to contain any escalation of a conflict. That is the issue that concerns us here.

Mr. Rhodes James: It is all very well for the hon. Gentleman to say that, but how does one contain the escalation of a powder keg—for example, the middle east? How do we prevent that?

I welcome this Bill and the developments we have achieved because it represents a step, some may say a small step, in the right direction. It is a step towards sanity and understanding. I agree with the hon. Member for Bolton, South East (Mr. Young) on one point. If we allow a

conflict, whether in the Gulf, the middle east, Southern Africa or Central America, to escalate then the problem to which he alludes may occur. My point is that peace making or preventing such a situation from arising is the key.

Disarmament and arms control tend to be discussed solely in the context of the East-West relationship whereas the problems we face are much wider, more complex and more dangerous. However, here we have a real cause for hope and progress. The five thermonuclear powers in the Security Council have realised the enormity of the problems and the dangers in the Gulf. They have many differences but they have realised that they have a common interest in preventing that conflagration from extending. They recognise fully what may happen and perhaps because of that—I am always an optimist—sanity might break out.

This modest Bill, dealing with one part of the problem, may expand and lead us towards dealing with the wider problem: the proliferation of armaments and the peril that that presents for us all, for this nation and not only to western democracy but to our futures.

7.28 pm

Ms. Joan Ruddock (Lewisham, Deptford): I stand here as someone who is proud to have been, and who is still today, a member of the much maligned peace movement to which Conservative Members have referred. As a member of that movement I wholeheartedly welcome the Bill, coming as it does from the Stockholm conference on security measures, disarmament and confidence building in Europe and heralding, as it does, an INF agreement.

Much has been made today of the process by which the INF agreement has reached the drawing board. It is claimed that it is the result of negotiation from strength. It is also being said that the Soviets had the strength. Indeed, it is said that it was a measure brought about because we had to deploy weapons in order to have the SS20s removed. I have heard of few things more extraordinary. It is a fact that they are removing four times as many warheads as the West is removing. Where is the strength? Who has been motivated to bring about the negotiation that is concluding in this way?

The truth is that deploying cruise and Pershing missiles had nothing to do with the military need to remove SS20s or, indeed, to counter them, despite the claims of Conservative Members. It was a political decision, which rested on trying to reassert the position of the United States vis-a-vis western Europe and its involvement in this continent. It was General Rogers who said:

"Some people agreed to a zero option proposal because they never thought it would be accepted by the Soviet Union."

That is the truth of the dual track position of the West. The reason that we have a deal today that is reaching its final conclusion has nothing to do with that position, but has much to do with other factors that have not been mentioned today. Certainly it has nothing to do with the British Government, who have tried all along to frustrate the process, and little to do with the military leadership of NATO, which has not shown itself inclined towards nuclear disarmament.

I believe that the present factors are threefold. First, President Reagan is very much in need of a foreign policy success.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. David Mellor): Did I hear the hon. Lady say that NATO is not interested in disarmament? What does she say about the Montebello process, whereby the number of nuclear warheads held by NATO has been unilaterally reduced from over 7,000 to just over 4,000?

An Hon Member: That was one-sided.

Ms. Ruddock: That was indeed, one-sided. It was done because it suited us, and because we wanted to modernise. It had nothing to do with trying to encourage nuclear disarmament by unilateral or bilateral means.

The second factor, I believe, is Mr. Gorbachev, who, as has been recognised on the Conservative Benches, is concerned with restructuring the Soviet Union in economic terms, and who, furthermore, has decided that the concept of parity in the nuclear arena is nonsense in an age of gross overkill.

Thirdly, I cite the influence of public opinion, led by the much-maligned peace movement. Let me remind the House of the unpopularity of American missiles in Europe. In polls taken earlier this year, 56 per cent. of British people, 66 per cent. of West Germans and 78 per cent. of Italians opposed them. It is the pressure of public opinion that has brought the leaders of the super-powers to a negotiating position. There is a strong desire among the people of Europe, both East and West, for real nuclear disarmament—a desire that is mirrored in the objective of both super-power leaders to achieve a nuclear-free world.

Dr. Hampson: I know that there are always different ways of interpreting history, but we really are going down a strange road here. It is surely just as likely that historians will say that the Kremlin stayed its hand and made no effort to negotiate, or even to make any overtures to the West, as long as it believed that the public opinion cited by the hon. Lady might do the job for it. Of course, the Soviets then realised that Western Governments, led largely by our Government, were not going to listen to public opinion. Then they decided to come to the negotiating table.

Ms. Ruddock: I stand by my point. It is clear that public opinion influenced President Reagan. He now sees that if he is to have a foreign policy success he must be seen to be in favour of nuclear disarmament.

It is also worth our considering a question that hon. Members have urged us to examine today. What would be the position if the result of the June election had been different? A Conservative Member said that Britain would be facing the appalling threat of thousands of Russian missiles. If that were the case, what does he think would have happened? Does he really believe that the Soviets would have attacked this country because they had a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons and we did not? On which other countries have they used their nuclear weapons? It is a considered fact that our nuclear arsenal is equivalent to only 3 per cent. of that of the Soviets. If they had wanted to attack this country, they would have done so. Our nuclear weapons have nothing to do with the fact that they have not done so.

Our nuclear weapons system—the so-called independent British nuclear deterrent—is useless. There is no scenario in which it could be used, and the only course for any sensible British Government is to get rid of it. If Labour were in government, we would now enthusiastically be welcoming the INF deal. We would be embarking

[Ms. Ruddock]

on a process by which, because of our willingness, there would be an end to tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, and by getting rid of Trident we would be giving a major impetus to the strategic weapons reduction to 50 per cent. which the super-powers have expressed themselves willing to undertake.

Suddenly, all the debate is about conventional instead of nuclear weapons. I wonder why that is. We should look very carefully at what the Soviet Union is saying. The Soviets are prepared to make conventional reductions, they have accepted that they must be asymmetric, and Mr. Gorbachev himself is on record as talking about a reasonable sufficiency of conventional weaponry.

I believe that the Bill signals the potential of major change in super-power relations and for establishing real detente between East and West. As such, the Opposition support it. The Foreign Secretary quoted Churchill and gave us the benefit of his opinion that it was necessary to establish a climate of trust. I think that he was absolutely right, but I believe that the essence of today's debate should have been how to establish such a climate. There is little point in talking about technicalities, while opposing the spirit of detente. I hope that the Foreign Secretary, or whoever winds up the debate, can explain how it is possible for the Government to be in the spirit of the Bill when they appear to oppose any further nuclear disarmament. I refer, of course, to the statement by the Prime Minister that nuclear disarmament in Europe had gone far enough.

I also hope that it will be made clear to us in that final response that the Government will give an undertaking that, while preparing to agree verification of INF in Britain, they are not also preparing to assist in the substitution of those weapons. Let me quote from the October edition of *Aviation Week and Space Technology*. Discussing Western leaders' reassessment of the Alliance's nuclear position post-INF, it states:

> "NATO's officials agreed to investigate ways to modernize its nuclear forces, including the possible replacement of the short-range Lance battlefield tactical missile, a new stand-off air-launched cruise missile, and improving the alliance's dual-role aircraft capability."

That, I believe, has been specifically spelt out as a possibility of more F111s for Britain. If that is what the Government are planning behind the scenes it will be a major problem and will thoroughly undermine the process of nuclear disarmament to which the Government are on record as having publicly committed themselves in the past.

The people of this country deserve to know the real intentions behind the Bill. Are the Government going to engage in a cosmetic exercise which they had no choice but to enter, or are they going to take this opportunity to engage in a process of nuclear disarmament desired by the peoples of the world, which could be brought about by the changed attitudes of the super-powers? I regret to tell the House that I believe that the former is the case.

7.39 pm

Mr. James Hill (Southampton, Test): We have wandered far and wide—certainly far wider than this two-clause Bill. Emphasis has been placed on the euphoria created by the Gorbachev agreement and on the possibility that the INF agreement will be signed next spring. Professional verification will be needed within the next 18 months.

The Bill is designed to provide observers, scientists and scrutineers with diplomatic immunity. The euphoria led to almost a Gorbachev fever, which swept through the world. However, most of these matters have to be taken on trust. We are delighted to know that the new leader of the USSR has created in his country an environment in which such an agreement can be discussed and perhaps brought to a successful conclusion. Only a minute percentage of the total stockpiles are covered by this agreement, but it is a start.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister accepts with pride the fact that at last there is an agreement. However, we must view it with great caution and examine every part of it. If there are to be further agreements on battlefield, conventional or chemical weapons, parity must be secured so that European security is not endangered. *Red Star*—the Soviet forces newspaper—believes that the agreement is a breakthrough and that it could speed up negotiations on long-range strategic missiles, and perhaps beyond.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has made it clear, as have the French, that independent deterrents, such as Trident and the French nuclear submarines, will not be given up. Lord Carrington, the Secretary-General of NATO, has confirmed that nuclear weapons will still be part of the European flexible response. That is how it must remain until there is conclusive proof that Mr. Gorbachev in particular is able to deliver the goods. When there was an open inspection of a factory in the USSR that makes chemical weapons, the bosses of the USSR forces would not allow scrutineers or journalists to see their latest chemical weapons. There will, therefore, be a conflict between Mr. Gorbachev's glasnost policy and the old establishment, not only in the Politburo but also in the Supreme Soviet.

There is a European institution which, although 36 hon. Members belong to it, receives little publicity. I refer to the Western European Union. Three years ago, Herr Genscher, who was then chairman of the Council of Ministers of the WEU, said in Rome that there was a chance that the seven nations of the WEU, which includes France, would adopt a more central role over European security. The Western European Union includes the big four—France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy—and the three Benelux countries. They were brought together after the second world war to verify the stockpiles of those nations that had been defeated. With its headquarters in London, the WEU could be reactivated and could play a big part in the verification process.

The WEU serves as an information base for papers on the strategic defence initiative, the Falklands, the Iran-Iraq conflict, Afghanistan and the Turkish-Greek stalemate over Cyprus. Academically, therefore, its work could be useful to the verification process. The WEU is called the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance, but it is seldom mentioned. Once in a while it is referred to by Mr. Chirac or President Mitterrand, or even by the German Minister of Defence, and then it receives a few columns in the press. The French want to push the WEU for three reasons. First, the French are not in NATO. Secondly, France has its own independent nuclear defence deterrent. Thirdly, the political decisions are taken in Paris. France, therefore, wants to play a key role in European security.

Those who study European security might care to know that there are to be two seminars on the subject. One is to be held in London next March by the WEU's Scientific and Technological and Aerospace Committee. The seminar will last for about three days, and one of the subjects to be dealt with is verification. Unless agreements can be verified, they are useless. In the autumn of next year there is to be a seminar in Brussels at which every strand of European security will be discussed.

Europe is nervous about what happened at Reykjavik between America and the USSR. It is also nervous about what is happening now. The West Germans are extremely nervous about the results of such agreements. Along the 600 or 700 miles of the Berlin wall they can see the forces of Eastern Europe. They know that it would be a matter of only a few hours before they were taken over.

The Western European Union has drafted a resolution for discussion by the Council of Ministers. My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary will be discussing that resolution with his colleagues. The only guarantee of European security is the policy of deterrence that is pursued by the Atlantic Alliance. The main threats to international peace now arise in areas that are not covered by the Atlantic Alliance. The Gulf is a perfect example of that. However, one could go further afield.

The harmonisation of armaments design is an essential part of European security. The involvement of forces with weapons that were not interchangeable was a startling weakness. The Western European Union has tried to harmonise that matter.

The stockpile of chemical weapons is only just coming to light. I understand—this is a terrifying point—that the USSR has about 900,000 tonnes of chemical weapons. In a demonstration for journalists, a chemical was dropped in a rabbit's ear and it died within five seconds. It is a most terrifying weapon that no one will be able to avoid. We in the WEU—I am sure that most sensible parliamentarians will agree with this — consider the recent development of chemical weapons to be a significantly serious threat to mankind.

Some 36 hon. Members are members of the WEU, but it receives little publicity. It is a vehicle for European verification procedures. It currently has a basic structure but like many other institutions it is under-funded. It has few observers, so it will be difficult to obtain a considerable number of professional observers within a short time. They will have to be trained and that process will have to start shortly.

I hope that the next time that the Foreign Ministers meet, they will say, "We will have the INF agreement at Easter. It looks as if there will be verification but it cannot all be carried out from satellites. We must probe the factories or arsenals." In this context, the reactivation of the WEU will be of great assistance not only to NATO but to the USSR as well. If the USSR wishes to prove that it intends to be open and above board, we must be able to go to its factories and arsenals and see what it is doing.

The squabble that we heard earlier about whether we should have Trident is academic. We must get the first agreement thoroughly tied down and our verification procedures must be 100 per cent. We must then start talks on conventional and chemical weapons. We must talk about battlefield nuclear weapons and perhaps in the long term about intercontinental ballistic missiles, which concerns Trident.

By that time, we in this House will have enough experience to be able to talk not only on procedures for verification but also on the next steps that we will have to take to protect western Europe and the rest of the world.

7.53 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): I am grateful for the opportunity that the Bill gives to discuss some of these issues. It concerns the straightforward granting of diplomatic privileges and immunities to people who are coming here to undertake verification under a series of agreements both present and, we hope, future.

It is worth pointing out first that our possession of nuclear weapons, which is so vaunted by Conservative Members, and is supposed to give us a seat at the negotiating table and make us powerful enough to be there, does not seem to apply in this case. As has repeatedly been pointed out, the Bill is not to do with our Foreign Office or our representatives; it allows members of the Soviet Union to inspect weapons of the United States sited in Britain.

Our Government were foolish enough to allow the stationing of weapons of a foreign state on our soil. It is clear from what the Foreign Secretary said that no reciprocal relations are involved in the Bill at the moment.

Mr. Mellor: The hon. Gentleman has not changed much in the five years that he has been away; he is completely wrong. The Bill deals with the Stockholm arrangements on confidence-building measures and provides for British inspectors to look at exercises in the east, as we did in East Germany in September. It makes provision for the granting of diplomatic immunity to Warsaw pact observers who come here, as they will next month, to observe the Purple Warrior exercise in Scotland. Whether the INF inspections are attached to that will depend on whether an INF treaty results. The Bill deals with the Stockholm arrangements, to which we are party. Will the hon. Gentleman kindly acknowledge that fact?

Mr. Cryer: I wish that the Minister would read the Bill. In clause 1(2) he will see that the privileges and amenities to be conferred relate to future arms control agreements that can be made without further resort to primary legislation.

Mr. Mellor *rose*——

Mr. Cryer: I know that the hon. Gentleman is anxious to intervene, but I should like to finish this point. I am looking at a research note that the Library has kindly provided and it suggests that the first application of the clause could arise from the INF agreement between the USA and the USSR, which is now imminent. Will the Minister confirm that the negotiations are between those two countries? The Foreign Secretary was unable to tell the House whether there was to be a reciprocal arrangement whereby members of our Government could inspect Soviet installations.

Mr. Mellor: That again was characteristic of the hon. Gentleman, whom we have all grown to love; he will never admit that he has his facts wrong. The hon. Gentleman asserted that there was no element of reciprocity in these arrangements. I say again that the Bill will bring into effect the existing Stockholm arrangements, which are reciprocal in the sense that British observers have already observed Warsaw pact manoeuvres in eastern Europe. It may also have, by Order in Council, an INF component if there is

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one, but that is a different point. I acknowledge that that is a bilateral matter, but all I am asking the hon. Gentleman to concede—if he looks at *Hansard* he will see this—is that he asserted that there was no element of reciprocity in the Bill and that he was wrong.

Mr. Cryer: I know that the Minister has been sleeping for a while and that he came to suddenly, but he knows perfectly well that I was referring to nuclear weapons on our soil and their inspection. I have yet to come to the Stockholm agreement. Like me, the Minister is anxious to discuss it. For the Minister's benefit I shall reiterate my earlier point. The possession of nuclear weapons has not given us a seat at the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Perhaps the Minister would like to contradict me?

Mr. Mellor: Our missiles are not the subject of those negotiations, so we are not party to them.

Mr. Cryer: Before the Minister intervened, I said that our Government were foolish enough to subordinate our country to a foreign power by placing cruise missiles on our shores. That subordination has not given us a seat at the negotiating table.

Mr. Mellor: Nonsense.

Mr. Cryer: The Minister knows that it is perfectly true. Our expenditure of £30 million or £40 million on these facilities has not given us the key to open the door to the negotiating table.

What does our possession of nuclear weapons mean? We have heard a number of complacent views: we must have Trident; the Bill is not related to Trident in any way, but relates purely to the INF agreement that we hope the two super-powers will reach soon.

My hon. Friends have suggested that we should get rid of Trident. When my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock), who distinguished herself by being chair of CND for a number of years, was talking about getting rid of nuclear weapons, there were jeers from the Tory Benches.

I remind the House that Tories support mass extermination. Of course they say that they do not want to use nuclear weapons, but that is a bit like Hitler putting the gas ovens on one side and saying that they are just a threat or a deterrent. Despite the cosy language, the Government are retaining the means of exterminating men, women and children without distinction. I believe that to be totally immoral and, therefore, like my hon. Friends, I welcome the Bill as a gesture towards getting rid of some nuclear weapons We are talking of only between 3 per cent. and 4 per cent. of the world's stockpile.

The Foreign Secretary said that nuclear weapons had kept the peace for 40 years. I asked him why, when we had reached the point of mutually assured destruction and both sides could "take out"—in the newspeak of mass extermination — sufficient cities on either side to represent a deterrent, we did not pause with the sword of Damocles hanging over us instead of continuing to make more weapons with greater yield and greater accuracy. Still some on the Tory Benches want to continue down that path.

That path moves us towards the brink of the abyss—that nuclear holocaust from which there is no retreat. That is why members of the Labour and Tory parties say that the Bill represents one move away from that. It is a chink in the awful vortex of deterrence which has built up over the years so that we now have, as the Foreign Secretary admitted, between 50,000 and 60,000 of these weapons of mass extermination.

In clause 1(4) reference is made to the "Stockholm Document". It says that this

"means the document dated 19th September 1986 and concluded at the Stockholm Conference on confidence and security building measures and disarmament in Europe".

That document was signed by 35 states at the end of the conference. An important section of the agreed document is headed:

"Refraining from the threat or use of force".

Section (9) states:

"The participating States, recalling their obligation to refrain, in their mutual relations as well as in their international relations in general, from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations".

The Government say that the Bill has nothing to do with the Trident programme, but they signed an agreement not to be inconsistent with United Nations aims. If it is necessary for us to have nuclear weapons, why have 121 nations not followed our example and why have other nations not caught on to the Foreign Secretary's idea of retaining the peace? Why do they not get hold of this magic totem that keeps the peace?

The junior Minister, because he has not got that far in his brief, might like to know that there is a United Nations nuclear non-proliferation treaty which, in addition to the Stockholm document, has been signed by Britain. That treaty commits us to carrying out the aims of the United Nations. Clause 6 of the treaty commits us to get rid of nuclear weapons. That means that we are committed to get rid of any development after Polaris. Indeed, it commits us to remove Polaris. Yet the Government, far from honouring that United Nations treaty, are increasing our nuclear firepower or extermination power by between four and 10 times.

The basic, underlying deal in the United Nations non-proliferation treaty is that the 121 non-nuclear signatories declare that they will not deploy nuclear weapons, that they will not develop nuclear weapons provided that the nuclear signatories, including the United States, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom enter firm negotiations in good faith to get rid of their nuclear weapons.

The United States and the Soviet Union are doing that; hence the Bill and its passage without a vote. We welcome the Bill. However, the United Kingdom is not making the slightest effort to diminish its nuclear capacity. What are the Government to say to the 121 non-nuclear nations who signed the non-proliferation treaty when they ask—as they have at several review conferences, including that in September 1986 at Geneva—"Why should we live in a world without nuclear weapons and honour our commitment to the treaty when the United Kingdom is deliberately setting out to break the treaty and ignore our commitments?" Anyone with a modicum of sense can see that that is dangerous.

Two major countries are negotiating a reduction in nuclear weapons but this Government are creating a train of thought in non-nuclear nations that might lead those nations to establish nuclear weapons. That is a great danger. What if Libya embarked upon that course? The

Government would hold up their hands in horror. The junior Minister would leap to his feet in an even greater frenzy than that which he displayed at the beginning of my modest contribution. He would say that Libya should not have nuclear weapons.

It is difficult for the junior Minister to say to a country, "You should not have nuclear weapons," when he is part of a Government who are spending £11 billion on nuclear weapons.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), who follows these matters closely, will remember two Tories arguing that more money should be spent on the National Health Service. The hon. Member for Bromsgrove (Mr. Miller) said that hospitals in Birmingham cannot take patients because of lack of money. The Government should reduce expenditure on Trident and spend more on the National Health Service and other methods of preserving life.

If the Conservative party is so worried about the threat of a Soviet onslaught——

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): What? The rent-a-rocket mob?

Mr. Cryer: Yes. If the Government are so concerned about a Russian invasion, why do they embark on a policy of mass extermination? Why not just take suicide pills and let the rest of us get on with living? In the deployment of nuclear weapons the Government are threatening mass extermination, in contradistinction to the document which they signed on the threat or use of force. The deployment of Trident is a threat of force on a scale greater than we have ever witnessed.

Sir Antony Buck (Colchester, North): Does the hon. Gentlemen agree that we are going into this exercise for precisely the same reasons that made the Labour Government update our nuclear deterrent by introducing Chevaline? But we are doing this openly — it can be debated in the House of Commons — rather than behind the scenes. We are updating our nuclear deterrent so that we can get what we all want—balanced force reductions on both sides. I do not think that the unilateralist cause commends itself to most sane Members.

Mr. Cryer: I think that the hon. and learned Gentleman is implying that Chevaline was developed secretly by four members of the Labour Cabinet and that the decision was announced to the House by a Tory Secretary of State for Defence. I accept the hon. and learned Gentleman's criticism. The Chevaline episode was shameful. The decision was not announced in public by those four members of the Labour Cabinet because they knew that the trade unions and the Labour party would campaign strenuously against it because it breached Labour party policy. Present Labour party policy is clearly committed to removing nuclear weapons.

The former Secretary of State for Defence — the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) — went with 2,000 policemen and more troops than stormed Goose Green to remove 16 peace people from Greenham Common. That demonstrates the strength and power of the peace movement's ideas. The Bill has been introduced partly because of the negotiations between Gorbachev and Reagan. The negotiations were brought about, in fair measure, by public pressure. The right hon. Member for Henley went to Greenham Common with all his military paraphernalia because he knew that his blond locks and the bomber jacket covering his torso would be on television and that a group of people using Ministry of Defence land to grow wheat for the starving people of the world was a cogent symbol of the false priorities of the Tory Government. That is why the right hon. Gentleman had to crush the movement with such force. There is no other explanation. Why else should the former Secretary of State for Defence with 2,000 police in evidence go on a dawn swoop to get rid of only 16 people?

Mr. Skinner: They were Quakers.

Mr. Cryer: They were Quakers and religious people who thought that peace was the vision for the future and that peace was necessary to escape the holocaust with which the British and United States Governments and the Soviet Union — albeit to a lesser extent — were threatening to engulf the world. That is why those people were crushed. But the movement still exists. We hope that when the INF agreement is concluded, Molesworth will be turned into something useful and the Greenham Common base will be closed. The Greenham Common women and many millions of other people will have struggled amid a barrage of abuse from our rotten press and the sneers of Tory Members, the Prime Minister and the rest of the Cabinet against the presence of nuclear missiles.

We welcome this legislation to provide immunities based on the document produced at the Stockholm conference. We hope that the Government will pay more attention to that document than they have paid to the United Nations nuclear non-proliferation treaty. We hope especially that the Government will pay attention to section (9) and section (14), which concerns the commitment to peace and security. We hope that the Government will recognise the utter foolishness and hypocrisy surrounding the massive £11 billion expenditure on Trident nuclear weapons, and will carry out the confidence-building measures represented by the Stockholm document and the Bill. We hope that the Government say, "We must obey the document and fulfil our treaty obligations." The Government will cut the provision for the poorest people and reduce expenditure on public services, the National Health Service and education. They should put some of this money from Trident towards worthwhile objectives.

8.14 pm

Dr. Keith Hampson (Leeds, North-West): Had my speech followed that of the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock), I should willingly have taken her to task on a number of important points. The remarks of the hon. Member for Keighley——

Mr. Cryer: Bradford, South.

Dr. Hampson: He is the hon. Member for Bradford, South, Keighley, Sheffield and everywhere else. The remarks of the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) had no relationship to the debate, whatever his reasons for being here.

The hon. Member for Deptford accused the Conservative party of having an obsession with "nuclear". The last few Labour Members to speak in the debate showed a total obsession with "nuclear". They cannot free their minds of it or of speculation on the supposed use of a nuclear weapon. They ignore the fact that it is in the system to stop the risk of any sort of war occurring. As I

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said during the speech of my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary, Labour Members would have us reach the stage of "denuclearising" Europe so that it would become safe to have a conventional war in Europe—one begun possibly by either side, by a politician or a general —because there would no longer be the deterrent of a nuclear weapon.

We can see the imbalance of Labour's argument, the one-sidedness of its case and its unwillingness to pay regard to the intentions and good will behind any alternative view. There was not a word of credit for the Government's intentions to bring about nuclear disarmament and to ensure that there is peace with stability. Labour Members ignore the essence of the Bill, which is about the confidence-seeking measures stemming from the Stockholm conference. We are debating a Bill to establish greater trust between the super-powers — we on the NATO side, and those on the Warsaw pact side.

The importance of these measures cannot be overestimated. The Soviet Union has failed for decades to acknowledge the need for on-the-spot verification, but that is what we have achieved. I do not understand how the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas), who is one of the most sensible defence spokesmen, could have started running the hare to the effect that there is no reciprocity. Stockholm is about reciprocity and about letting our people go on to Soviet soil and challenge. One can do only so much with space technology. One can see whether missiles have been removed, but not where the warheads have gone or what is happening in the chemical plants. This is the first big breakthrough in the disarmament process, because everything hangs on verification.

We shall be able to see Soviet military manoeuvres, and they will see ours. This is a great step forward. During the disarmament talks one of the Soviet spokesmen said that " history is in the making"
in the INF talks. History would not forgive us if we missed the opportunity that stems from the Stockholm conference. It is not just INF. At the heart of the matter lies the verification process.

Unlike Labour Members, I believe that, just because we have begun the disarmament process and there has been a lessening of tension, it does not mean that NATO countries should relax. Soviet military aims remain essentially the same. The Soviet Union still wants to decouple United States forces from Europe. The Soviet Union wants to "denuclearise"—a terrible phrase—the European theatre. The West's emotional response is to want to sweep along in the process of removing nuclear weapons, but that would be dangerous at this stage.

We are to get rid of an entire tier of weapons systems —the intermediate systems—but we should hang on to what remains for now. We have an intermediate range of weapons — aircraft which in many senses are more effective than cruise. This is not the stage at which to dismantle the whole. On the other hand, I do not for one moment believe, as many in Western Governments seem to believe, that the INF deal will leave us dangerously exposed. It is crucial that we accept it — and accept it willingly. I find it odd — it is certainly illogical — that Opposition Members can be so carping and grudging about the terms of the Bill, while at the same time accusing us and our Prime Minister of being grudging. It is the Opposition who begrudge every single advance. The process will take a considerable time to evolve, because it takes a long time to foster good will, given the cold war and the history of relations between the countries involved.

Some unpalatable facts remain, and in our genuine search for good will we must not be blind to the reality of those facts. First, 95 per cent. of our nuclear arsenal remains. Moreover, as has already been said, the huge conventional strength of the Warsaw pact creates a dreadful imbalance that could destabilise Europe and produce a conflict that could escalate. Therefore, it would be rash of Europe to allow itself to end up in a situation in which either side felt that there was a possible element of risk. Opposition Members always refuse to consider the matter in a balanced way. I have to ask them, "Why is every Soviet manoeuvre in design and execution offensive, unlike NATO manoeuvres?" There is a good case for taking things slowly while, at the same time, looking for evidence and a real commitment on the Soviet side to showing that things are changing.

I do not for one moment believe that the next real breakthrough will be on strategic weapons, because I think that that will get bogged down by SDI. However, it is in the interests of those on both sides of the iron curtain to come together on conventional weapons and try to achieve an agreement to reduce the imbalance of forces. That means that the Soviets will have to accept that their side will have to reduce more to even out the disparities.

That must make sense to us. I do not accept that any of us in the West will easily pour extra sums of money into our conventional defences on a large enough scale. I certainly believe that we can achieve much more by greater co-operation on procurement and joint measures. However, to meet the objective, it would be much better to run down forces to achieve a better balance on the conventional side. That applies equally to the Soviet Union. If Gorbachev is serious about trying to get his economy moving, he must bear in mind that one of the biggest distortions for the Soviets is the sheer scale of their conventional forces.

Those hon. Members who have read anything by John Ericson of Edinburgh will know that his writing shows not only that the Soviet high command in many ways plans for a long conventional war in Europe, but, equally, that it is disturbed by the inefficiency of its conventional forces and by the proliferation of arsenals of all kinds, which add nothing to the defence and security of the Soviet Union. Conventional weapons present great potential for reductions. Brzezinski has recently argued that the most destabilising factor of all in Europe is not one of the different nuclear systems; it is the tank. It is the sheer scale of the tank forces on the other side that the West has always feared most of all.

My key point is that we must encourage a downward spiral in military measures and counter-measures; build up a dialogue at all levels — in cultural and sporting activities, in exchanges, particularly between young people and in television broadcasting — and try to build up a better understanding on both sides. We should reinforce that with as many agreements and treaties as possible. As INF has shown, the process of talking to try to reach an agreement helps in turn to ease tension. At the same time, the exchanges on nuclear reduction must be balanced by exchanges about, and the reduction of, conventional

forces. I should not like to see our battlefield or short-range nuclear weapons negotiated away without first dealing with conventional forces.

Behind all these matters lies the question whether we can really trust Mr. Gorbachev. Is he really different? How far will his fresh approach go? Is he a serious reformer? I believe that the answer is in part that the system is breaking down. Mr. Gorbachev is much less dogmatic than his predecessors. I do not believe that he consults Communist ideology before making decisions. However, that does not make him any less dangerous. He is a patriot who will act in the national interest. However, the system is changing, and because of that it is worth while for us to do everything that we can to encourage the process and to give Mr. Gorbachev something to show for the effort that is going into the new detente.

The West has distrusted the Communist system. Therefore, the more that that system changes, the greater ultimately the degree of trust will be, and that will result in greater security and peace in Europe. I am sure that the Soviet Union will become a less frightening place to people in Europe. However, we shall inevitably still see foreign policy objectives on the Soviet side that are simply not ours. Therefore, we must keep our guard up. I wish that the Soviets could give us specific evidence that they were prepared to be more accommodating and to show more trust. For example, it would help if, in the Gulf, they were more prepared to offer help, rather than pouring vodka on the flames.

I am a great believer in breaking down the stereotypes built up during the cold war. Even President Reagan has changed his view and the stereotypes are no longer so powerful for him. However, at all costs, we must avoid seeing Gorbachev as we would like him to be. He is still the ruler of a super-power with its own interests. We can all dream our dreams and we can all have hopes, but we must act as reality dictates.

8.26 pm

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): The Bill is about inspection to facilitate the INF agreement. It is a small Bill, but it covers a very big topic. Before the summer recess, I was pleased to win a debate on the state of the arms control talks at that time. I welcomed the agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union then, as I welcome it in its present form. I welcome that agreement not just for itself but because it represents an important start along the road. It is an important step because this is the first time that it has appeared that there will be any reduction in the nuclear arms race. Previous agreements have dealt with the limitation of arms expansion, so this is an important step forward.

However, let us get this measure into perspective. it deals only with nuclear weapons of a limited range—the intermediate range which runs between 500 km and about 5,500 km or perhaps slightly more. As has been said, the agreement deals with only 3 to 4 per cent. of the nuclear weapons in the world. As the Foreign Secretary said, more than 4,000 nuclear weapons will remain in Europe. It is still very much a case of nuclear overkill in the world. By any standards there is a glut of nuclear weapons in the world, although for me one would represent a glut. It is that glut which has resulted in this agreement and to which this agreement is intended to address itself. Against a background of that information this agreement can only be a start. However, the Prime Minister is trying to make it into a stop rather than a start with her statement that arms cuts have gone far enough. The truth is that they have gone nowhere near far enough. We still have a long way to go.

When my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) opened the debate he said that the arms control talks had produced a torrent of ideas to take us forward to new agreements. That is right. Around the world, especially in the peace movements, there have been suggestions to take the agreement on. But there has also been a torrent of ideas in a different direction—looking for ways to cheat on the agreement. The British Government and certain NATO military people are looking for loopholes — "compensatory measures", to use their jargon—such as the conversion of cruise from land-based to sea and air-based missiles in an attempt to get around the agreement.

Expansion of battlefield nuclear weapons, which are outside the scope of the agreement, would include shells with a neutron bomb capacity. Neutron bombs kill people but leave property intact. I understand that there was a dispute between the Prime Minister and Chancellor Kohl when these weapons were discussed. The West Germans do not want reliance on battlefield nuclear weapons because they know that such weapons will be used only in Germany. Naturally, they do not want that, and they are right to argue that any agreement should be rapidly extended to include such weapons. I hope that the Minister will state the Government's position and explain why the Prime Minister was at odds with Chancellor Kohl on that issue.

The Government are looking for loopholes in relation to long-range missiles, too. It has been widely reported in the press, but not to the House, that the Government and NATO are looking for replacements for the Lance missile. That would be an extension of long-range nuclear missiles. It was announced only yesterday in relation to trident that there were to be 16 missiles, each with a capability of eight warheads. That is a massive expansion of Polaris and of Britain's curret capability. At a time when the super-powers are looking to reduce their nuclear arsenals, that is a terrible indictment of the Government's nuclear policy. Yesterday's news, which might be described as "rent-a-rocket", makes nonsense of the assumption that Britain's nuclear deterrent is independent. We are dependent on the United States in this respect.

At the beginning of the debate, there was controversy between the Front Benches about what the Foreign Secretary described as the right of replacement. It is a right of replacement by the United States, not by Great Britain. That again shows our dependence. When Trident is superseded, this country will be faced with a "take it or leave it" situation. I hope that we shall leave it, but we may be forced to take some new generation of weapons and to incure further costs. If the whole missile needs to be replaced, we shall presumably be charged millions of pounds again. That is not independence. It is a case of dependence and of expansion at a time when the world is looking for reductions in nuclear weapons.

There is another loophole in relation to the expansion of conventional weapons. I understood and sympathised with the point made by the hon. Member for Cambridge (Mr. Rhodes James) when he said that conventional weapons have a terrible capability. That is all the more reason to secure reductions in conventional weapons rather than the expansion that Conservative Members see

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as the Government's natural recourse in the wake of an INF agreement. We should be looking for agreements about conventional weapons, but the Government are looking for loopholes, particularly in relation to weapons that can easily be converted to nuclear capability. That is why there is currently talk about the stand-off bomber. It could very easily become a stand-off nuclear bomber, which would certainly be in breach of the spirit of the agreement. It is dressed up as a conventional system, but the real purpose is nuclear.

When the Secretary of State for Defence visited his counterpart in France recently, the main purpose was to discuss nuclear joint ventures, again getting around the spirit of the agreement being put on paper by the United States and the Soviet Union.

One of the most dangerous loopholes of all is the star wars expansion, which is being pushed ahead. I have always regarded the argument that it is a shield as a fraudulent misuse of language. It represents a highly dangerous first-strike nuclear capability from space, but the British Government have gone along with it and have not raised their voice to halt that dangerous programme.

Those are all loopholes and ways of cheating on this very important agreement. Yet the Foreign Secretary had the nerve to say from the Dispatch Box that the Government would not circumvent an agreement. When I picked him up on that, he dodged the point in relation to cruise missiles. If the Government do not intend to circumvent the agreement, why is there such a desperate search for loopholes and talk of further expansion?

One of the main emphases has been verification to make the agreement stick. I agree that that is very important, but I do not believe that the problems are insurmountable. The Bill is part of the process of dealing with the difficult aspects of verification.

In my view, a far more serious and longer-term threat to the INF deal and to future world peace is proliferation. We see examples of such proliferation regularly. There is Israel's Jericho 2 bomb. South Africa was reported to have exploded a nuclear device on 30 September. During the summer, Pakistan got into trouble with the United States Administration for pushing ahead with its own nuclear programme. Those developments pose a great threat to world peace and the Government were wrong to remain silent rather than calling for the abandonment of such proliferation and strengthening embargoes to ensure that such countries receive no nuclear material whatever.

The Government's philosophy has favoured proliferation. When the Prime Minister visited the Soviet Union before the general election she said, in effect, that any small country which felt threatened by a larger one should be entitled to have nuclear weapons. That is a recipe for proliferation and for countries such as those that I have mentioned to say that they want their own nuclear weapons.

The Government encouraged proliferation not only by the philosophy of their approach but by their actions. One such act was reported in *The Independent* during the summer recess. I shall refer to it on a future occasion. The Government have given permission to British Nuclear Fuels Ltd to sell weapons-grade plutonium to foreign countries. The first clients will be Japan and West Germany. It is ironic that those countries formed the axis in the last war. It is a scandal that the sale of weapons-grade plutonium should go on. I strongly condemn it. Let us have some straight answers from the Government on that point.

In his opening remarks, the Foreign Secretary said that nuclear weapons have kept the peace since the war. The Conservative party relies on that statement as the crux of its argument on such matters. The logic of such a simplistic assertion is quite clear. If it is true, all countries should have nuclear weapons. The logic of that argument is that countries such as Iran and Iraq should have nuclear weapons. Do the Government agree that South Africa, the front-line states, Israel and the Arab states should have nuclear weapons? The Government should be much clearer on the matter and say that it is not appropriate. Once they agree, their argument that nuclear weapons have kept the peace for 40 years and can provide an umbrella for peace falls on its back.

The truth is that they have not kept the peace since the war. Every day since the last world war, a war has been going on somewhere in the world. Some of the participants have had nuclear weapons. So nuclear weapons have not kept the peace in countries such as Vietnam and Afghanistan and the Falkland Islands. So much for the effect of nuclear blackmail that some people constantly bleat about or the mystical power of nuclear weapons for keeping the peace, as the Government claim. It is a myth.

Whenever the point is made that nuclear weapons have kept the peace since the war, one must always say, "So far," or, "Up till now." A dangerous nuclear conflagration could still develop. I fear that, because of the hysteria that has been generated by the press and the tension that arises in a difficult situation, nuclear weapons could be used at some time in the future. I remind the House of the hysteria that was generated during the Falklands war and in conflicts between the United States and Iran. Long before the current Gulf developments, extreme Right wingers marched in the streets of the United States, screaming, "Nuke Iran". That was their cry. It could happen. Such tendencies could have an effect on the Government at a future date.

Since the war, NATO, the United States and Britain have always sought somehow to limit nuclear weapons. I do not think that it is possible, but they believe that they can perhaps limit the power of nuclear weapons and use them in a certain theatre — invariably the European theatre. The object should be to keep such weapons from the Soviet Union and the United States from where the first nuclear bombs would be dropped. The temptation exists. Nuclear bombs could be used against a country which challenges the overseas assets or imperialistic interests of the super-powers.

Let us face facts. What is the unspoken fear about the Gulf war at the moment? It is that it could escalate to a point at which the United States will use a nuclear weapon, if not against Iran, against another country. If it is a bomb of the type dropped at Hiroshima or Nagasaki, it would still mean an enormous loss of life. Radiation effects such as those at Chernobyl would be absolutely catastrophic not only in the country concerned and surrounding countries but around the world. There would be many thousands of deaths.

The danger of escalation would be monumental. It may not be limited to one or two nuclear bombs. It could set off a conflagration — a holocaust. Of course that is horrible. I do not go along with those who have said that

it is so horrible that it will never be used. There is a danger that it could be used, and it is likely that it may be used in future. That is why it is vital to step away from the nuclear arms race and get reductions in nuclear armaments around the world. That is why it is important that the agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union is encouraged as a move towards much more important things — to stop any nuclear confrontation. Nuclear weapons get in the way of an agreement being reached between the Soviet Union and the United States for any large-scale reductions. We must encourage this and further agreements. It should stop the cheating and the attempt to get around the agreement. In the longer term, when we have a Labour Government, we must step away from the nuclear arms race.

8.49 pm

Dr. Alan Glyn (Windsor and Maidenhead): I agree with the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) on one point, and that is that we all welcome disarmament. There is a possibility of a nuclear outburst, but as long as we can preserve our overruling strength, it is unlikely. I welcome this small Bill, which has been widened by the House. It is a start to disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, in accordance with the Stockholm agreement. But we must remember that such agreements have been reached only because we have been in a powerful position —not only with NATO but with the United States—to negotiate them. I understand from my hon. and learned Friend the Minister that if the INF agreement is enlarged there could be equal facilities for us and the Soviet Union. It is quite a long way off but it is an extremely important point. The real importance of this agreement is the word "verification". For how long have we in this House been looking for proper verification of arms?

The Bill contains the provision of immunity for those who carry out verification work. Although I do not regard that as important in this country, it is important that that immunity should extend to our people whenever they are operating in foreign countries, such as in Soviet territory. People could be accused of all sorts of things, such as spying, and could be in some trouble without diplomatic immunity. The important point about immunity is not the immunity that we are offering now, but the immunity that we shall require when we are in the same position.

The Stockholm agreement is to be welcomed and we are fortunate to have it. The agreement itself is simple but its scope can be enlarged and it is capable, by Order in Council, of being increased. I regard that as most important because it would enable us to have some sort of arrangement with the Soviets. I wish to go into those arrangements in a little more detail, but before I do so I should like to say that we already have some form of arms agreement through the INF deal and, at last, the SS20s are beginning to recede.

I am reminded of Prince Metternich's expression at the Congress of Vienna in that one thing that is absent is that we do not know the exact armaments of the Russians. We do not know Russia's absolute capability. We have many ideas but we do not know exactly where their sites are. When it comes to making an agreement with the Russians, we cannot rely on satellite information. We must know what stocks of poison gases and biological weapons they have concealed deep in the Ural mountains. We know approximately and have been given figures on that today. We do not know whether those figures are right or wrong but we do know that they are massive. We know that the Soviet army is equipped to use those weapons and that it has protective clothing. Agreement must be reached on this important matter. It is possibly even more important than, or at least as important as, atomic weapons.

Mr. Gorbachev's policy is not a new one for him or for Russia. If one casts one's mind back to the days of Lenin, one recalls that he said exactly the same thing. Mr. Gorbachev realises that his own economy is stagnant and that he does not have the capability to sustain a vast armaments campaign. He clearly wants to develop his country just as Lenin did in the 20s until Stalin came along. Russia was importing materials and trying to build up its factories. Indeed, I remember that Ford tractors were sent there. Mr. Gorbachev is endeavouring to do the same. However, we should always remember that Mr. Gorbachev is not the only master. He is surrounded by people who do not want to do the same things. So far he has managed to control them and has been able to put over his own policies.

The other main point that has been raised today is that of the American negotiations, which I think are slightly out of the context of the Bill. I have repeatedly said in the House that the time may come when the defence interests of the American people do not coincide with our interests. At that point we are in grave danger. We must always ensure that our armoury is sufficient to defend ourselves, independent of the Americans. America could be affected by, for example, a change of Government. Equally, so could Russia. We must recognise and appreciate the work and the potentialites of the Bill but we must keep ourselves ready for an emergency.

I shall not comment on the policies of the Liberal and Labour parties, because they are not likely to be in government for a long time. At any rate they cannot be for the next five years, and I do not think that they will be during the next 10 years.

I should like to say a quick word about Trident, which has been mentioned frequently in the debate. I am no longer alarmed by the articles in *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*. The Government are capable of negotiating a settlement with the United States which, after all, is our principal ally, whereby we can guarantee to have replacements. Of course, both minor and major repairs will have to be carried out. I rather liked the analogy of the soda siphon and the cylinders. Indeed, the whole unit may have to be replaced; but I am sure that the United States will honour its bargains and if it returns something it will send back an appropriate replacement. As one of my hon. Friends said, the engine may need changing or may even have gone too far to be replaced and a completely new unit may be required. Like many hon. Members, I was alarmed by *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* this morning. However, I am glad that that matter has been cleared up by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary.

Chernobyl was a horrible disaster but lessons can be learned from it. Both the Russians and ourselves realise the enormity of what happend. Hiroshima is a long time ago but Chernobyl is a recent event and has brought home to everyone the awful consequences that could arise from a minor event. However, what would happen in the event of a major disaster? The Chernobyl disaster has been a great lesson to the world on the dangers of atomic warfare and has brought home to people in other countries who might not previously have appreciated it, the sort of thing that could overtake us.

[Dr. Alan Glyn]

With the vast conventional forces and the nuclear and chemical arsenals of the Soviet Union, NATO must never allow itself at any time or by any agreement to put itself at either a nuclear or conventional disadvantage, in long-range, intermediate battlefield or strategic nuclear weapons so that we do not put ourselves at the mercy of any other power. The United States may withdraw slightly and Mr. Gorbachev's policy may alter slightly, so we must always be ready to say that we are capable and able to defend this country. Any Government must have that as a priority.

8.58 pm

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): I shall detain the House only briefly with a couple of points which came to my attention while I listened to the debate.

I detect a change of attitude on the Government Benches. In contrast to their previous attitude, they now seem to display a melange of confusion and consternation. They are in a dilemma to reconcile a slavish pro-Reagan apostleship with his stumbling ensnarement by Gorbachev's skilful manoeuvring. I do not know whether Gorbachev is a chess master, but clearly his negotiations with the United States premier have placed this Tory Government in a dilemma of a knight's fork on arms negotiations.

Why has this change come about? How has it been achieved? Tory Members have sought in their desperation to camouflage their confusion by accusing Gorbachev of being driven by economic necessity to recognise the strength of the West and to concede to the strength displayed by the deployment of cruise and Pershing. In the same breath they accuse my colleagues of re-writing history—that is their phrase. Typically, they seek to visit their failures on their opponents.

The real scenario is akin to that, but for different reasons. Many senior Soviet leaders realised long ago that the whole purpose of the West's ardent advocacy of the nuclear arms race was to create major profits for the American armouries and to compel the Soviet Union to devote far more of its industrial and economic resources to military production — military production which developing countries could ill afford. The West was determined to portray the USSR as inefficient industrially and unstable economically because of what the West asserted was ideological fallacy. Many Soviet leaders saw this and said so long ago. Gorbachev is the first of that school of thought to achieve a position from which pressure can be exerted to break the mad cycle of such a Mexican stand-off mentality. Because of that, he has been able to outmanoeuvre Western leaders by taking up options so rapidly that Western countries have been unable to deal with each other to produce any sort of sensible or coherent response.

The basis of the Bill will chase that into the open. As my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) said tonight, one suspects the Government's motives in introducing this, but one would like to hope that their motives are clear and that we can make honourable progress as a result of this measure.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): I call Mr. Denzil Davies.

Mr. John Browne (Winchester): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I understand that my hon. Friend the Minister of State is prepared to speak for only 20 minutes. Could you prevail upon the right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) to start speaking at 10 past nine rather than at 9 o'clock?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have no power to do that. I realise that the hon. Gentleman hoped to speak in the debate and I suggest that he looks out for his chance some time before 10 o'clock.

9.2 pm

Mr. Denzil Davies: The Bill has been welcomed, perhaps with a few reservations, by hon. Members on both sides, and I too welcome it.

When the Foreign Secretary spoke, I detected some confusion. Yes, he—and I sincerely believe him—was in favour of the measure if it led to an INF agreement, but he was not sure whether he wanted to go much further down the road of multilateral nuclear disarmament, despite protestations of belief in multilateralism. I also detected some contradiction from Government Back Benchers. Yes, they were in favour of multilateralism, but I am not sure whether, even if we could match the Russians bullet for bullet, bayonet for bayonet and tank for tank in conventional weapons, they would be happy to get rid of nuclear weapons.

The Bill deals with several matters. It deals with the Stockholm conference and the need to provide immunity for observers. It also provides for an Order in Council —I do not know why the Minister got so shirty with my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) about this — to enable inspectors to come to verify an INF agreement or, indeed, any other agreement. The explanatory memorandum makes it clear that the Order in Council could relate to further arms control or disarmament measures.

The Bill is important for two reasons. We hope that it is a forerunner of an INF agreement, and it provides for important verification in those circumstances. The Foreign Secretary could have dealt a little more fully with the consequences of an INF agreement in respect of verification because the Bill will presage an Order in Council in relation to that.

I know that the Minister of State is to take only 20 minutes in reply, but I hope that he will tell us something. There have been negotiations. The British Government have been in communication with the United States Government on those matters. We are close to an INF agreement. If there is an agreement, where will the Soviet inspectors be allowed to visit? Will they be confined to Greenham Common? What will happen at Molesworth? If there is an INF agreement, is it clear that missiles will not be sited in Molesworth? Will Soviet inspectors be allowed in other sites in Britain? How many visits will be allowed? Will there be short-notice inspections? Will the Government agree to that? I am sure that the Minster of State knows quite a lot about it. He should tell us a little about whether the Government are thinking about allowing Soviet inspectors into Britain in consequence of an INF agreement.

It will be an historic agreement if, as I assume it will be, it is reached and ratified. As has been said, it will lead to the reduction and the elimination of a whole class of nuclear weapons. As far as I am aware, all previous arms

control agreements have not brought about reductions. A very fair criticism of previous arms control agreements that has come from the Right wing in the United States and from the Left wing in Europe is that they have merely controlled the increase in weapons and not led to the reduction in weapons. Frankly, they have often been about yesterday's technology. Both sides have been happy to agree to control yesterday's technology and leave out future technology. If the INF agreement comes about, it will be different. For that reason it will be of immense significance to Europe, to detente and to future relations between the super-powers. It may apply only to about 3 per cent. or 4 per cent. of the total stock of nuclear weapons, but for the two super-powers who have seen each other as enemies for so long, to reduce any class of nuclear weapons is an important step forward.

The agreement has caused some confusion in the ranks of what one American commentator described as the nuclearphiliacs. I do not say that any Government Member who spoke tonight was a nuclearphiliac, but I did detect signs of nuclearphilia in some speeches. One group of nuclearphiliacs hailed the agreement as the justification of a policy that they described as negotiating from nuclear strength. Another group of nuclearphiliacs are full of gloom and doom at the demise of a few of their nuclear toys and see the agreement as weakening Western security. The second group ignores the fact that the Russians will give up a 3:1 superiority in the longer range intermediate weapons—SS20s, SS4s, SS5s, Pershing II and cruise—and a 9:1 superiority in shorter range intermediate weapons. As far as the West is concerned, the 1 is merely the Pershing I missiles in the Federal Republic of Germany.

I cannot see how allowing an agreement whereby the Soviet Union gives up a 3:1 and a 9:1 superiority can possibly be said to damage Western security. If the Soviet Union enters into that agreement for whatever reasons, that will be a benefit for us.

Despite the superiority of the Soviet Union in certain areas, another group of nuclearphiliacs believes that everything must be done by negotiating from strength. I am not sure whose strength that will be when the Soviet Union has a 300 per cent. superiority of strength in one class of weapon and a 900 per cent. superiority in another. I fear that arms control, like life, is not as simple as some people think. The reasons why we are so near an INF agreement are perhaps more complex than some appreciate.

We are faced with an extraordinary coincidence. The leader of the Soviet Union, Mr. Gorbachev, wants to restructure his country. If he is to do so, he must restructure his domestic economy and his foreign policy. We have a United States president, despite what we have said from the Opposition Benches about President Reagan, who since his visit to the Cheyenne mountains some years ago to inspect the American nuclear button has acquired a genuine abhorrence for nuclear weapons and an impatience with some of the more arcane metaphysics of deterrence. The effect of this extraordinary coincidence was seen at the Reykjavik summit last year, when President Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev nearly agreed—unfortunately this was not clear at the end—to eliminate all ballistic nuclear missiles.

The Reykjavik talks and the atmosphere created by the two leaders have led to a near-certainty, we hope, of a agreement on intermediate range nuclear weapons. If such an agreement is concluded, the talks will probably lead also to an agreement before the termination of President Reagan's presidency to reduce ballistic missiles to 50 per cent.

It is no wonder that the Prime Minister worked herself into a lather following the Reykjavik talks and rushed off to Washington to try to preserve what is now described ridiculously as the British independent nuclear deterrent, or Trident. The Foreign Office must know—if it does not, it is falling down on the job—that President Reagan's offer at Reykjavik to get rid of all ballistic missiles was not the product of a confused and senile mind. In this instance, I disagree with my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy). Of course, the nuclearphiliacs would wish that view to be taken, and the publicity after the Reykjavik talks tried to persuade us that that was the position. It was suggested that the Americans had no paper on which to write and that they had to scribble something in the bathroom. It is suggested also that they did not know what they were doing.

That is not entirely the position, and I am sure that the Foreign Office knows it. The President had agreed a negotiating position on eliminating ballistic missiles before he left for Reykjavik. His Secretary of State, his Secretary of Defence, his Director of Arms Control and Mr. Richard Perle, whom we call the prince of darkness, were involved. I have no doubt that he did so for his own reasons because he does not believe in ballistic missiles. It must not be assumed by anyone that this was an aberration on the part of President Reagan. I understand that there was an obsession with star wars, but President Reagan, for all his faults, has realised that it is impossible to defend America, or Peoria, Illinois, for example, with 25,000 nuclear warheads when the other side has 25,000 nuclear warheads targeted on Peoria, Illinois or any other place in the United States. That is why we had the extraordinary offer from President Reagan and the counter-offer from Mr. Gorbachev at the Reykjavik summit.

When the INF agreement comes—I believe that there will be further agreements on ballistic missiles—it will reflect an extraordinary change on the part of the leaders of both super-powers. No doubt the British Government hope that the issue of strategic missile talks will go away. They hope that Trident D5—the missiles that we are supposed to have bought—will not be part of the talks. Indeed, we have been told by Ministers that they will not be part of those talks. I want to consider the reports in this morning's newspapers following the extraordinary briefing at Faslane yesterday about the missiles that we are supposed to be buying.

The Foreign Secretary said that they are our missiles, we will buy them and there will be an equal number of missiles if they are traded in for service. It may be pendantic to ask whether we own the missiles. We certainly own the Polaris missiles. They are ours and we service them. Perhaps we can return to this point during the defence debate next week. As I understand it, the whole rationale and basis of King's Bay, Georgia and the saving of money on servicing is based on handing missiles in and taking other missiles out. Missiles go in to be serviced and others are taken out. Missiles from Britain that may have been put in for service may very well end up in American nuclear submarines.

We are not faced with a payment of £4·5 billion for missiles. We are paying £4·5 billion for the right of access to a pool of American nuclear missiles. We are buying the

[Mr. Denzil Davies]

right to those missiles, but they are not British missiles. I notice that the Foreign Secretary has arrived in the Chamber. Perhaps he does not remember his Bar exams years ago. There was something called Clayton's bag. People put sovereigns in that bag and it was impossible to know whose sovereigns were whose once they were there. We appear to be entering a kind of Clayton's bag. There will be American missiles in that bag.

If we do not own missiles, but own the right to a number of missiles from an American pool, that becomes important in relation to arms control talks. That is not a pedantic matter. We should recall the Pershing 1A missiles in West Germany. The United States Government and the West German Government made it clear—although in the end they found a way round this — that those missiles were third-country systems. If we are not buying missiles, but simply buying the right to some American missiles, it is impossible to argue that the British Trident missile is a third-country system, because they will be included in the talks, as they are all American missiles. I hope that we can have further clarification on that from the Foreign Secretary. He did not clear that up today, but read from a very carefully drafted brief.

I want to consider compensatory measures. The nuclearphiliacs have not given up. They are still working away trying to undermine Reykjavik and the consequences of INF. They are working away within NATO's military and civilian bureaucracy. With the careful drafting for which the Foreign Office is well known, the Foreign Secretary said that of course they would not do such a terrible thing as to have compensatory measures. He said that we would have adjustments because everyone is in favour of adjustments and compensatory measures are considered terrible. We can call them compensation or adjustments, but I want to call them compensation. However, what are they compensation or adjustments for? Perhaps the Minister of State will tell us when he replies. What are we compensating for? Presumably we are compensating or adjusting because the Russians have given up three times as many medium-range intermediate missiles as we have given up and nine times as many shorter-range intermediate nuclear missiles. Apparently we are going to compensate or adjust for that.

Various suggestions have been made. We heard one or two during the general election campaign from the Secretary of State for Defence, although he conveniently forgot to answer some of the questions that were asked. We have been told that perhaps we could have more F111 bombers carrying hydrogen bombs from Upper Heyford and Lakenheath or, according to Mr. John Keegan of *The Daily Telegraph*, we could have cruise missiles on submarines or frigates. Apparently, although this is even more far-fetched, American B1 bombers could be located in Britain to compensate or adjust for giving up one third and one ninth of what the Russians are giving up. No doubt all those new weapons would then be committed to NATO. Presumably, if NATO felt that it must adjust or replace cruise and Pershing II missiles with other weapons, there would be no Western or NATO objection if the Soviet Union deployed three times or nine times as many weapons to compensate for our adjustment. The whole absurd situation goes on.

If there was any attempt to circumvent or adjust—whatever weasel words may be thought of at the time—an INF agreement in that way, the political damage to NATO in Europe, especially in the Federal Republic of Germany, where there are problems as the Foreign Office knows, would be considerable. I hope that the Minister can tell us what the Foreign Secretary had in mind when he talked about adjustments to compensate for the INF agreement. I hope that he can tell us that there will not be any adjustments and that the Government will not agree within NATO councils to allow those weapons to be committed to NATO for the purpose of compensation or adjustment.

Several hon. Members have mentioned battlefield nuclear weapons and conventional arms reduction talks. One of the consequences of the INF agreement is that the only land-based nuclear weapons committed to NATO in western Europe will be battlefield weapons based in West Germany. They will be mainly nuclear artillery and the Lance missile. The West German Government, quite properly, want to get rid of them. They have a short range and in a war in Germany they would cause devastation on NATO territory. As Werner Ruhe, the special adviser to Chancellor Kohl said—everybody knows the quotation by now — "The shorter the range, the deader the Germans." Those weapons would destroy 55,000 British troops. They would destroy the troops of our allies, 300,000 American troops and all the families of the troops situated in the Federal Republic of Germany. Although the information is not very good, I understand that the Soviet Union has at least 30 per cent. greater superiority in those weapons and that the weapons have a longer range. It is in NATO's interest to negotiate away those battlefield nuclear weapons because they will destroy our own forces, and that is an extraordinary military strategy.

NATO Foreign Ministers at Reykjavik last June agreed that there should be talks on conventional arms reduction as well as on battlefield nuclear weapons. It makes sense for those talks to take place simultaneously. I concede the point, if it is necessary to do so, that those talks have a bearing on the battlefield talks. However, there is no reason why conventional arms reduction talks between the Warsaw pact and NATO, which will hopefully start in the new year, should not take place simultaneously with those on the reduction and elimination of battlefield nuclear weapons.

We are told that we have the nuclear artillery because of all the Russian tanks. No doubt the conventional talks will address themselves to trying to reduce those Russian tanks. I see no reason why there should not be simultaneous talks on battlefield nuclear weapons. That, I believe, is the view of the German Government, and of Chancellor Kohl.

Alas, as so often in these cases, it is unfortunately not the view of the Prime Minister. *[Interruption.]* It is no good the hon. Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith) muttering from a sedentary position.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: Stop bashing her.

Mr. Davies: I am not bashing her; I am describing the position. The hon. Gentleman need only read the Reichstag speech—the Foreign Secretary probably does not approve of it, but it was a very interesting speech—made to the International Democratic Union, which could be described as the first Capitalist International. In that speech, an audience including Chancellor Kohl was told

that he must not get rid of battlefield nuclear weapons, or even negotiate them away from his soil, because that would mean the denuclearisation of Europe.

I thought it rather arrogant of the Prime Minister to tell the Germans not to get rid of those weapons, which are the first weapons that NATO would use and which would wipe out the whole of Germany, as well as 55,000 British troops and 300,000 American troops. The Foreign Secretary, I know, takes a different view, and I hope that the Minister of State in his wind-up speech will tell us the view of the British Government. Will the talks be postponed until after the completion of talks on conventional arms reductions, or is the Government's view the same as that of the Federal Republic and Chancellor Kohl—that the talks should take place simultaneously, so that we can get rid of those weapons as well?

If the double zero option is so good, as everyone agrees it is, what is so wrong with a triple zero option to get rid of battlefield nuclear weapons — provided, of course, that the Russians get rid of theirs, and that we can somehow link the process to conventional arms reductions?

An INF agreement, once signed, will have been brought about by the changing attitude to nuclear weapons within the leadership of the United States, and by the advent of Mr. Gorbachev and the changes that he wishes to see in the Soviet Union.The agreement will present a real challenge to NATO. We have not heard much about it tonight, but it does present a challenge, especially to the European countries within NATO and to NATO's strategy of flexible response, which I believe can no longer be sustained in its old form.

If NATO does not come up with some new thinking, Mr. Gorbachev, for his own purposes, will exploit quite ruthlessly the contradictions within NATO strategy which now exist, which have existed for a long time and which are now highlighted by an INF agreement. It is no good saying that that is propaganda or public relations.

Sir Antony Buck: The hon. Gentleman has been talking about new thinking. Will he give us some of his new thinking? What line does he suggest would cause a breakthrough, or some progress, in these matters which are of such deep concern to him and to me? Has he anything more positive to suggest?

Mr. Davies: I am prepared to take another half hour from the Minister if necessary. I have made a number of speeches in the House to which the hon. and learned Gentleman has listened, and I shall no doubt have another opportunity during the next few days to discuss the matter.

As for "new thinking", I will say this to the hon. and learned Gentleman. If we cannot secure balanced reductions in conventional forces, we have always argued that those forces should be strengthened to enable us to move away from the suicidal strategy of the nuclear element in flexible response. The hon. and learned Gentleman's Government are cutting conventional defence, and relying more on nuclear weapons. That is a ridiculous way to proceed.

The agreement will present a real challenge to NATO, but the momentum that it creates will not be easily stopped. The British Government and Conservative Members are faced with a choice: either they cling to the Prime Minister's antiquated rhetoric or they join with others and work towards a saner, and nuclear-free, world.

9.29 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. David Mellor): This debate, which has focused on the arms race, arms control and disarmament, has touched on some of the major problems that face the world today. As well as being major problems in their own terms, all of them are symptoms of an even more fundamental problem—the lack of trust and confidence between East and West, as was so eloquently pointed out by my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-West (Dr. Hampson). This debate — which has properly ranged very wide, as it was intended to do — is based on a little Bill that deals with the building of confidence between East and West.

This is my first opportunity to welcome the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) to his new responsibilities. He could not have imagined, any more than I did when we were transferred from the salt mines of Home Office Bills, that we would find ourselves so soon engaged on a Foreign Office Bill. It is a slimmer Bill than those to which we were accustomed. We shall enjoy the Committee stage of the Bill, but I hope that it will not take up 59 sessions, as happened with the Committee stage of what is now the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. I say that in case any hon. Member is enthusiastic about bidding for a place on the Committee.

This little Bill is based on the Stockholm confidence-building arrangements, about which too little has been heard. There has been a great breakthrough this summer. Warsaw pact observers were present at NATO exercises in West Germany. They observed the nature of those exercises and the number of men deployed. United Kingdom observers were present at similiar exercises in East Germany. In November we shall welcome Warsaw pact observers to the Purple Warrior exercise in Scotland. Such confidence-building measures lie at the root of building the necessary trust upon which we can then design the international arrangements that will reduce the overstocked arsenals, both conventional and nuclear, of so many world powers.

I endorse some of the suggestions that have been made tonight, notably the suggestion of my hon. Friend the Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith). He referred to ways in which those who are engaged in practical military business can talk to each other about what it is that takes place on the other side that causes the temperature to rise — the configuration of forces that leads military men to adopt aggressive rather than defensive postures. The more we think about confidence-building measures, the better it will be. I hope that there will be a major extension of the Stockholm arrangements at the Vienna CSCE meeting, which we hope will reach its final stages during the next few weeks or months.

A great deal has been said today about the other exciting development of recent months: the prospect of the making of treaties being resumed between East and West. Between 1971 and 1974, 25 international agreements between East and West were signed. There was then a pause, but there are now over 20 worldwide discussions that will lead, one hopes, to a similar range of international treaties. The one on which we are focusing, the INF treaty, is currently the subject of intensive discussions between Secretary Shultz and Mr. Shevardnadze in Moscow.

I entirely accept the commendation of the treaty by the right hon. Member for Gorton. The treaty is significant,

[Mr. David Mellor]

first, because it amounts to a reduction in the world's nuclear arsenal; and, secondly, because it allows for a reduction that recognises that some have more than others. If we are to succeed in making reductions, it is crucial that people recognise that asymmetrical reductions will have to be at the heart of the process. Thirdly, it has a symbolic significance, because it shows what can be achieved and that further progress is necessary.

If the right hon. Gentleman had confined himself to such sentiments, we would have been pleased to say that his speech was an auspicious one. However, there was a great deal in his speech with which I could not agree, notably his analysis of what led to the INF arrangements and why they are likely to succeed.

We have recently heard from the right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies). He believes, like me, that the INF deal is a good one. He displayed that peculiar inwardness that characterises Labour defence spokesmen who are trying desperately to whistle to keep up the spirits of Opposition Members and who have lost any conviction that they can persuade the rest of the world of the credibility and sanity of what they are saying. He is of the opinion that it is only nuclearphiliacs — a most unattractive term — on the Conservative Back Benches who believe that it was only by standing firm and negotiating from strength that we almost have an INF agreement.

I shall quote from that well-known Conservative newspaper, *The Observer*. In a most interesting editorial on these matters on 20 September it said:

"Think back to 1979, when NATO settled on its 'twin-track' decision to deploy cruise and Pershing-2 missiles in Europe while continuing to negotiate with the Russians about the elimination of such systems. If the Soviet Union had then offered, inconceivably, to eliminate all its intermediate and short-range missiles aimed at Western Europe in return for the non-deployment of cruise and Pershing-2, the offer would have been greeted with disbelief—and joy. Yet that is the very outcome that has now been achieved by deployment and negotiation: the twin-track decision has achieved its objective."

As we lawyers say, hearken to this:

"Now is the moment for those who stood firm in 1983 — the year of deployment — to enjoy the results of their resolution. Despite public agitation"—

the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) knows all about that—

"and the parading of conscience through the streets"—

the hon. Lady is good at that as well—

"NATO was not deterred. Who would now have the nerve to claim that if the prescription of the peace groups had been followed the outcome would have been as good? The deal is a triumph for toughness and realism in international relations."

The hon. Member for Deptford has the requisite degree of brazenness, as she exhibited at some length during the debate. None of us should be under any illusions. The Labour party, with its policies, could not possibly have obtained this deal.

I shall deal with some points about the INF negotiations.

Mr. Cohen: If the Minister believes that we will derive advantages from this deal, will he tell us whether there will be fewer nuclear weapons in the world as a result of the agreement than there were at the beginning of the Reagan Administration, which instigated a massive expansion in nuclear weapons, including their siting in this country?

Mr. Mellor: The hon. Member should know that the INF process started with a massive expansion in Soviet weaponry in Europe. That was where we came in. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will forgive me if I now make my contribution, having listened to his.

I wish to take up three points made by the right hon. Member for Gorton about the INF arrangements that did not seem to have the ring of truth about them. First, the right hon. Gentleman asserted that the United States decided to put cruise missiles into Europe and that the United States will take them out whether we like it or not. Nothing could be further from the truth. It was a collective Alliance decision in 1979 and it showed a solidarity which the Labour party and its acolytes in the world of extra-parliamentary activity did their best to undermine. However, as *The Observer* was kind enough to say, the Alliance stood firm.

The hon. Member for Deptford said that the dual-track decision was forced on the West by the peace movement. It was forced on us, but by the decision of the Soviet Union to deploy SS20 missiles — something that was known from the middle of the 1970s and which were deployed in 1977. I do not recall the hon. Lady or Monsignor Bruce Kent chaining themselves to the railings beside the Soviet embassy to protest. If the hon. Lady was in chains, I should be glad to hear about it.

Ms. Ruddock: I wonder how the hon. Gentleman accounts for the fact that cruise missiles were on the drawing board long before the SS20s were deployed. The West was preparing a missile system. The nature of the ground-launched cruise missiles was such that they could not be deployed by the United States except in Western Europe.

Mr. Mellor: The hon. Lady owes those "facts" to her imagination—not for the first time.

It is not necessary for Oppositions to be logical. That is one of the joys of sitting on the Opposition Benches. However, it was interesting to note that the right hon. Member for Gorton praised the deal itself, yet called the deployment of the missiles that made the deal possible squalid. I find that reasoning difficult to understand.

The right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues support the Bill, but we heard from them some extraordinary cheeseparing and graceless arguments about Soviet inspectors coming here to verify. They returned to the sad and tired old dogma that is part of Labour party defence policy which makes them ready to jump on to the lowest common denominator of public fear where that can be exploited.

Mr. Denzil Davies: Give way.

Mr. Mellor: I must continue.

Mr. Davies: Give way.

Mr. Mellor: No. I decide when I give way. I shall continue, and then I shall give way.

Mr. Davies: Give way.

Mr. Mellor: I shall not give way.

Mr. Davies: Give way.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Only one at a time please.

Mr. Mellor: I shall give way in my own time.

Mr. Davies: Give way.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Minister is not giving way.

Mr. Mellor: The right hon Member for Gorton used the pivotal position of the inspectors in the Bill as a launch pad for a lyrical passage about the Greenham Common women. The Greenham Common women contributed nothing to the disarmament arrangements, but merely encouraged the Soviets to think that they could get what they wanted for nothing. It took them until 1985 to realise that that would not be possible.

Mr. Davies: I have no objection, because we are talking about a sensible part of the verification arrangements, but where will the Soviet inspectors be allowed to go? Will they be allowed to go to Greenham Common and Molesworth only? This is the subject of discussion between the British and United States Governments. Will the inspectors be allowed on other sites? Will there be such a thing as a short notice inquiry? Will the Minister tell us a little about the negotiations?

Mr. Mellor: I heard the right hon Gentleman when he made the point the first time. I am sorry that he felt the need to intervene and waste time making it again. I am grateful to the right hon Gentleman for acknowledging something that the right hon. Member for Gorton was not prepared to acknowledge.

Mr. Davies: Answer the question.

Mr. Mellor: I shall answer, but I shall tell the right hon. Gentleman something else first. The right hon. Member for Gorton suggested that the British Government had no part to play in these negotiations. That was the third major inaccuracy that I wish to draw to the attention of the House. At least the right hon. Member for Llanelli bases his question on a somewhat firmer factual base in acknowledging the work being done. One issue that has to be determined between Mr. Shultz and Mr. Shevardnadze in Moscow is the detail of the verification regime. Mr. Shultz has consulted us regularly, and we in the Foreign Office have seen not just weekly, but daily, pieces of paper on the details of the arrangement. We accept the need for thorough and effective inspection provisions. The proposals which the United States put to the Soviet Union followed consultations with us and were made with our support. The details of the proposals cannot be made public at this point, but the arrangements will concern right of access by Soviet inspectors to Greenham Common and Molesworth.

Mr. Davies *rose*——

Mr. Mellor: I shall not say any more on that point, but will carry on making my speech. I did not interrupt the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Davies *rose*——

Mr. Mellor: One of the right hon. Gentleman's more attractive qualities is that he thinks that every point he makes is important. Some of us think that our points are important, too, and want to make them. I shall do so, if I may, in a House that allows free debate on both sides.

This treaty is a sign that the Alliance works and that we are capable, by negotiating firmly and clearly with each other, of finding a basis on which we can persuade the Soviet Union that it is in its interests to yield up more of the missiles which it so provocatively placed in Europe at the end of the 1970s and to which we made a measured, sensible response which has won the confidence of the British people and of sensible folk throughout Europe.

It seems that the Labour party, in the terminal phase of its defence policy, thinks that any expedient will do to belittle Trident. The Labour party has seized with alacrity upon what was said in the newspapers this morning. We have heard about Moss Bros. missiles, and so on. In so far as any misleading impression was conveyed during the briefing, I very much regret that. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State made the position clear this afternoon. Because there appears to be some doubt, I shall endeavour to make the position clear again.

Mr. Davies: Careful.

Mr. Mellor: I am always careful. There is a little motto engraved on Sir Humphrey's paper: "Be careful"—Sir Humphrey always says this — "particularly in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office."

The Trident missile system, like the Polaris missile system, is purchased from the United States. The Polaris rockets need more frequent refurbishments than Trident, and they are carried out in Scotland. The Trident missile needs fewer refurbishments, and they are required to be carried out every seven or eight years. One of the Labour party's key points is that this system is too expensive, but we can save more than £700 million of public money if, instead of constructing a facility to carry out refurbishments locally, the work is done in the United States. It then becomes a matter of logistics as to how a rocket in need of refurbishment can best be refurbished and returned with the minimum time and fuss to the job that it is intended to do. The Americans have discovered that if a rocket has to be fully overhauled it might be just as convenient to replace it with another missile. Refurbishment may vary from a minimum amount of work to total replacement of the missile. I cannot understand why we should call down difficulties on an arrangement that allows a missile to be fully overhauled every seven years to the point of replacement.

The right hon. Member for Llanelli, for all his many faults, was a distinguished law student with a fine academic record. He knows that the law of property is sophisticated enough to embrace a concept whereby one can own a rocket for eight years, take it back and get another rocket, which one owns. We do not have to go to Moss Bros. for legal arrangements like that.

Mr. Kaufman: Is the Minister confirming what was said on the front page of *The Daily Telegraph* today—that the arrangement will involve regular replacement of the missiles from a pool held in the United States?

Mr. Mellor: The amount of work that needs to be done on each missile will be determined by the state of that missile when it arrives for its refurbishment.

As a relative newcomer to debates such as this, to me the most revealing aspect of this debate has been the way in which the Labour party—for all the valiant attempts to launch second fronts—has lurched unsteadily through the day with the albatross of unilateral nuclear disarmament hanging heavily around its neck.

It was said of the Bourbons that they saw everything and remembered nothing. However, compared with the Labour party, the Bourbons were filled to overflowing with insight. Will Labour Members ever appreciate the fact that, if the truth be told, unilateral disarmament does not even persuade many of those who have to advocate it from the Labour Front Bench and that it certainly does

[Mr. Mellor]

not have the remotest prospect of persuading the British people? We know that many Labour Members would like to ditch the policy. There is a revisionist tendency within the Labour party.

However, the hon. Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone), who does not need to appear on occasions such as this—it is not necessary for his purposes—was there at the Labour party conference telling Members what they could and could not do. In his own inimitable way he made it absolutely clear when he said:

"any attempt to abandon our non-nuclear defence policy would lead to civil war inside the party which would render it unelectable in 1991."

We have here an interesting example of Morton's fork. According to the hon. Member for Brent, East, the party will be unelectable in 1991 if it abandons unilateral disarmament. It will also be unelectable in 1991 if it keeps unilateral disarmament, because that policy renders it unelectable. I find that a very happy situation.

Mr. Davies *rose*——

Mr. Mellor: The fly has caught a fat trout.

Mr. Davies: I am trying to assist the hon. and learned Gentleman. This speech is getting rather thin and he has eight minutes to go. Will he answer the very important question about battlefield nuclear weapons and the need to start talks on them at the same time as on conventional weapons? What is the Government's view about immediate or speedy talks on battlefield nuclear weapons?

Mr. Mellor: The right hon. Gentleman is right in saying that that is an important point. At the moment we have the prospect of concluding an INF deal fairly shortly, although a number of difficult details remain. In addition, talks are taking place in Geneva on two other aspects. One set of talks could, if the political will was there, lead to settlement fairly quickly. I am referring to the talks on strategic weapons, based on a reduction of 50 per cent. in each side's arsenal. That is something that all of us commend. It is a joint Alliance position. We must seek some balance in the way in which the world moves—as I hope it will — towards arms control and arms reductions. We cannot allow ourselves to do business exclusively on the part of the agenda that is determined by Mr. Gorbachev.

We face a tremendous Soviet advantage in chemical weapons, which we unilaterally repudiated, but on which the Soviet Union showed no reciprocity whatever—that shows the futility of unilateral gestures — so we must consider the potency of the Soviet chemical and biological weapons threat. *[Interruption.]* I am coming to the point. As the right hon. Gentleman kindly told me, I have a few minutes left and I shall arrive at the point within that time. These are complicated matters and I wish to set them in a coherent framework so that the right hon. Gentleman may have the advantage of hearing the argument in all its glory.

The Soviet Union has an overwhelming preponderance in the conventional sphere, to which, glasnost notwithstanding, it is adding by the minute. In 1986 it was adding tanks at a rate of eight per day, fighter aircraft at two per day, pieces of field artillery at six per day and warships at a rate of one per month. We must insist on a balanced approach to disarmament issues and demand that the conventional imbalance between the Soviet Union and the West be redressed. In this, we could do with the assistance of the Opposition. All too often they seem to see their role as voice and echo to the latest speech by Mr. Gorbachev, but they could have a role in sticking up for the British interest, which would be to insist that Mr. Gorbachev publishes details of the Soviet conventional weaponry and where it is.

Until we reach that point, we must look with great suspicion at any proposal further to reduce the nuclear weaponry available to western Europe, when our troops and our society would nakedly face the overwhelming preponderance of Soviet and eastern European conventional forces. A point that did not emerge with any clarity from the speech of the hon. Member for Deptford is that one is just as dead when one is shot at by a tank as when one is hit by a nuclear weapon. The killing power of conventional weaponry should not be underestimated, nor should the potential for aggression on the part of the Warsaw pact.

That is why—I come to the point in a logical way which would have appealed to the right hon. Gentleman when he was busy being a successful law student—on that basis I say that if we have two successful negotiations on nuclear weapons it is time that we did something about conventional weapons before making further reductions in the nuclear arsenal, which would have the potential to make Europe safe once again for conventional warfare.

Mr. Davies: The answer should be quite clear. The British Government do not agree with the West German Government that there should be simultaneous talks on conventional arms reductions and on battlefield nuclear weapons. Chancellor Kohl wants simultaneous talks, but the British Government want to wait until an agreement is concluded on conventional arms reductions. Is that the position—yes or no?

Mr. Mellor: I have set out our position with as much clarity as I can muster. Just as the right hon. Gentleman has to discuss matters of defence policy with his hon. Friend the Member for Brent, East, so we have to discuss with our allies what the arrangements should be. *[Interruption.]* I think that the hon. Member for Brent, East is an ally of the right hon. Member for Llanelli, although it is a marginal point. We shall discuss within the Alliance how these things should be done.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: So far I have admired everything that my hon. Friend has said, but his last point was not a very fair comparison.

Mr. Mellor: The current position is that we have the prospect of resuming business between East and West, which could lead to a reduction in what we can all agree, whatever our other disagreements, are the enormously over-swollen arsenals of both conventional and nuclear weapons. We have the opportunity to build confidence between East and West, but that can be achieved only by allowing representatives of each Alliance to visit the other with the full protection of diplomatic privilege to ensure that trust and confidence are properly based on compliance.

That is what this modest but important little Bill seeks to achieve. I commend it to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time and committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 61 (Committal of Bills).

PETITION

Rating Reform

10 pm

Mr. George Robertson (Hamilton): I beg to ask leave to present a petition on behalf of my constituents, protesting at the introduction of the poll tax in Scotland the year after next. Such a tax will be regressive and unfair. It will penalise the poor in favour of the rich. It will be an administrative nightmare, which will be costly and immensely bureaucratic. It will bear down on families and will drive young people from their parents' homes. As surely as that night follows day, it will lead to large-scale defections from electoral registers and to the disfranchisement of thousands of citizens. It is a pernicious, ill-considered, regressive and wholly dogmatic measure, and it shames the party that produced it as an alternative to the present rating system. The message to the Government from my constituents in the Hamilton constituency is quite clear: repeal the Act, repeal the measure.

To lie upon the Table.

Mr. John Lang

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn. *[Mr. Lightbown]*.

10.1 pm

Mr. David Clelland (Tyne Bridge): I bring to the House the case of Mr. John Lang, a resident of Gateshead, who was wrongly imprisoned for 14 months. The tragic story of John Lang's imprisonment began coincidentally when he arrived in London on the same night as another tragedy was taking place — that which occurred in the Heysel stadium in May 1985. That was two and a half years ago, and John Lang has still not recovered from the experiences that he has suffered since that date, and he probably never will.

He came to me, although I am not his Member of Parliament, at a time when his Member of Parliament, Bernard Conlan, now retired, was ill. It was agreed by Mr. Conlan that I should pursue the case. That was in November 1986. Yet here we are today, 11 months to the day since I first wrote to the Home Secretary about the case, with still no sign that the matter is to be amicably resolved. Notwithstanding the intervention of the general election, the matter could have been resolved before now and, as a consequence, the need for the debate avoided.

Incidentally, I am pleased to see my hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead, East (Ms. Quin), who is now Mr. Lang's Member of Parliament and who has taken a great interest in the case. My hon. Friend has kindly agreed that, because of my involvement in the case, I should pursue it.

I first wrote to the Home Secretary about Mr. Lang's case on 21 November 1986. On Second Reading of the Criminal Justice Bill on 27 November 1986, I also raised the general matter of innocent people being held on remand for long periods. I refer the Minister to the *Official Report* for that day. I asked the Secretary of State whether such persons were also victims of crime.

Following that intervention, I received what I believed to be an encouraging letter, dated 16 December, in which the Secretary of State recognised that, in raising the point, I had a specific case in mind. But I did not receive a considered reply to that specific case until 28 April 1987, 23 weeks after first having raised the matter with the Home Office. In that letter, the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the hon. and learned Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor), whom I now see dealing with matters relating to defence and disarmament — I hope that his briefing on that matter is a little better than it was on this one—said:

"I have carefully considered all the circumstances of Mr. Lang's case".

He went on to state:

"on the information available to me, I do not think that this is a case in which the Home Secretary would be justified in authorising an exceptional payment from public funds."

The Minister was wise to include the qualification

"on the information available to me"

because, despite 23 weeks of research, the information on which he based his decision was full of inaccuracies as I shall explain more fully later. I wrote to the Minister again and was told by letter on 21 May 1987 that the case was being given "further consideration". To date I have not received any notification that a decision has been taken, although I have been informed in a letter to me dated 1 October that a decision is expected soon.

I hope that the Minister is now in a position to give a full reply and announce his decision to the House tonight. However, before he does so, I should explain the full background of the case to the House. Like so many other unemployed men from the north-east, John Lang travelled down to London to search for work. Like many others in his position he had no money to spare for expensive hotel accommodation and had with him the name and address of an acquaintance of his brother whom he hoped might be able to offer him a bed and the man was able to do so. The next morning Mr. Lang left the house to look for work. He returned at the tail end of a police drug raid on the house. Naturally, Mr. Lang was questioned about his involvement with the owner of the house and with the drug ring that the police were investigating.

It should have ended there, but Mr. Lang found himself arrested and held in custody because he had the same name as his brother, Lang, who was involved in the drug trafficking, and because he had in his pocket the telephone number of a paging service that was used by the leader of the drug ring. That number had also been given to Mr. Lang by his brother in case he needed help in finding accommodation.

If I were to turn out my pockets, like many other hon. Members, I would find scraps of paper on which my secretary had written names and numbers. However, I would not expect at any time that the possession of those bits of information would automatically implicate me in the activities of the people to whom they referred, nor would I expect to be automatically included and implicated in the activities of my family simply because we share the common name.

Unfortunately, the police took a different view. Given the scale of the drugs ring and certainly given the scale of the drugs haul that was cited in the original police submission, it was more or less inevitable that the bail applications of all those involved should be refused. The charges that were eventually brought concerned 32 kg of cannabis with a street value of £100,000, whereas the orginal submission cited 37 kg of cannabis with a street value of £200,000.

Mr. Lang was held in custody, protesting his innocence from May 1985 until July 1986. I do not need to spell out the devastating effects that Mr. Lang suffered as a result of spending 14 months in four prisons. However, add to that the fact of Mr. Lang's illiteracy, which did not emerge until July 1986, and the fact that during his imprisonment his wife divorced him, sucessfully applied for the custody of their daughter and the transfer of their house to her sole name — those were complex legal documents that Mr. Lang coud not read, understand or deal with — and quite literally Mr. Lang's life was in ruins.

When John Lang's case came before the court he was the only defendant — there were 10 in all — to be completely exonerated, but his life was in ruins. His claim for compensation was refused, although the Home Secretary has the power to pay compensation where a person has been completely exonerated at trial. I refer to the letter to me from the Home Secretary dated 16 December 1986. In a written answer to me on 29 November 1985, the right hon. Gentleman stated inter alia:

"facts may emerge at trial, or on appeal within time, that completely exonerate the accused person. I am prepared, in

principle, to pay compensation to people who have spent a period in custody or have been imprisoned in cases such as this" [*Official Report*, 29 November 1985, Vol. 87, c. 689.]

John Lang's case is, indeed, such a case, yet his claim for compensation was rejected by the Minister.

The reasons given by the Minister in his refusal to pay compensation are contained in his letter to me of 28 April 1987 and are based on what can be described only as an appalling catalogue of inaccuracies. The inaccuracy about the inflated size and value of the drugs haul makes its appearance. Apparently the Home office have quoted from the original police evidence, not from the facts that emerged at the trial. The Minister's letter also says that the raid took place when Mr. Lang was seen arriving at the house. The truth is that Mr. Lang arrived back at the house after his search for work and at the tail end of the raid. The Minister claims that the lady of the house implicated Mr. Lang in her statement. That evidence, which was so confused and garbled that the court dismissed it, merely referred to the "Geordies" who occasionally stayed at her house. One of the few facts clear from her evidence is that she did not know John Lang's name.

Here we have a case where a man is in prison because he has the same name as his brother, because he can be called a Geordie and because he had in his pocket a piece of paper with a telephone number on it. The circumstances are too flimsy to be called evidence and Mr. Lang was rightly exonerated.

There can never be real monetary compensation for the devastation that John Lang suffered, but if there is any justice in the system there should be at least some attempt to make recompense. To deny the validity of his case for compensation, especially on the basis of gross inaccuracy and misinformation, is to perpetuate the original wrong against him.

While I make the case for the payment of compensation to John Lang, his main preoccupation is the hope that his case can somehow prevent other innocent people from being held for so long on remand. He has been injured by a system which is supposed to protect the innocent and he believes that all fair-minded, right-thinking people will be concerned and appalled, not only that such a case can happen, but that not so much as even an apology is presented when it does.

There is no question here of setting a precedent which might prove an obstacle to sympathetic consideration. The Home Secretary has stated in the House and in writing to me that in cases such as the one I have described he would be willing to accept that compensation is appropriate, that is, where facts have emerged at the trial that completely exonerate the accused person. That is the position in this case.

I can cite what might be taken as a precedent set by the Government when they recently awarded compensation in the form of ex gratia payments to six service men serving in the Mediterranean area who were held improperly in custody. I wish them well, but I argue that John Lang deserves equal treatment.

I hope that tonight the Minister will be able to say that the Government recognise that mistakes can be made and were made in this case, that consideration is being given about how long periods on remand can be avoided and that John Lang is entitled to the recognition that he has been badly wronged.

10.13 pm

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. John Patten): I have listened with considerable interest, care and concern to the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge (Mr. Clelland). He has certainly spoken of his concern with the case of Mr. John Lang and his claim for compensation to cover a period which he spent on remand in custody. It is not for me to pass judgment on other hon. Members, but from my observation the hon. Gentleman has been more than assiduous in his representations on behalf of Mr. John Lang, who is not one of his constituents but whose case he took willingly upon his shoulders.

I am glad of the opportunity of this debate to set out the position in some detail and to try to advance the issue a little further. I see that the mistake has attracted considerable attention in the region. Mr. Lang's Member of Parliament, the hon. Member for Gateshead, East (Ms. Quin) is present, as are the hon. Members for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) and for Blaydon (Mr. McWilliam) and others whom I know well from my visits to the region. I appreciate the concern that this has caused.

It is important to reiterate the facts for the record. They are that John Lang stood trial with seven others at the Newcastle Crown Court in May 1986. The charge against Mr. Lang was one of conspiracy to supply controlled drugs. The jury was unable to reach a verdict and a re-trial was ordered. Finally, on 30 September 1986 a second jury returned a verdict of not guilty in respect of Mr. Lang and he was therefore discharged. I understand that he had been on remand in custody from the time described by the hon. Gentleman.

On 27 November 1986 the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge first raised in the House the question of compensation for Mr. Lang in respect of the hardship he had suffered as a result of his remand in custody for the charge of which he was eventually acquitted. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary subsequently wrote to the hon. Gentleman giving an outline of the arrangements for the payment of compensation to persons wrongfully convicted. Those arrangements were fully described to the House in a statement by my right hon. Friend on 29 November 1985. The hon. Gentleman, in his remarks tonight, I think has shown that he is fully aware of what that statement said.

It would be otiose of me to go through the details, as they are clearly on the record. Therefore, I turn to the substance of the facts of the case. It is important that the facts are on the record so that any decision that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State makes can be judged against that record.

During 1985 police officers in the north-east mounted an operation to trace and arrest several prominent criminals who were engaged in drug trafficking on a large scale, something that hon. Members on both sides of the House abhor. Inquiries revealed that drugs were being smuggled into the United Kingdom for distribution. Henry Perry, the person thought to be principally involved, had connections in Tyneside, London and with known drugs dealers on the Continent.

During the course of the inquiry information was received that a large quantity of cannabis had been deposited in a house in London NW1. The house was occupied by a man and woman from Newcastle. A search warrant was issued. Officers of the drugs squad kept observation on the house throughout the evening of

[Mr. John Patten]

Wednesday, 29 May and the morning of Thursday, 30 May 1985. I understand—I think there is no doubt about it—that Mr. Lang was sighted at the house.

The police entered the premises and spoke to one of the occupants. They searched the premises and found what by any standards is a large quantity of cannabis—32 kg. I gladly give the hon. Gentleman an apology because in a letter sent to him in April, to which he referred, it stated that the amount of cannabis found in the house was 37 kg. That was incorrect, and I apologise for that. It was 32 kgs. The 32 kg of cannabis were thought by the police to be part of a larger total consignment of approximately 50 kg that they were after.

As the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge said, Mr. Lang returned to the house while the police were there. He was spoken to by the police and told them that he had come from Gateshead to look for a job in London with, as the hon. Gentleman said, not much money in his pocket and with all the problems of illiteracy and those other issues that were clearly described by the hon. Gentleman on Mr. Lang's behalf.

Mr. Lang at first denied staying at the house overnight but later agreed that he had. He said that he had met in a pub the occupant of the house who had agreed to give him a bed for the night. He had left the house that morning to telephone his then wife. He denied any knowledge of the cannabis. The police subsequently found on Mr. Lang a piece of paper on which was written the number of the telephone paging unit that was believed to have been used by Henry Perry. I hope that everything that I have said thus far is consistent with the account that the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge understands to be the fact.

Mr. Lang was then arrested for being concerned in the supply of cannabis and subsequently he stood trial with others similarly charged. At the first trial the jury was unable to reach a verdict and a second trial was ordered. Mr. Lang was subsequently found not guilty. As a matter of record, his co-defendants either pleaded guilty or were convicted.

To turn from the facts of the case to the consideration of the claim made on behalf of Mr. Lang, the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge submitted a claim for compensation which was considered carefully in the light of information obtained and on the basis of the criteria outlined in my right hon. Friend's statement of 29 November 1985. It was concluded, on the basis of the criteria, that an ex-gratia payment would not be justified. It was considered that there was no evidence of serious default on the part of the police.

The fact that Mr. Lang had been acquitted at the trial was weighed carefully, but, as hon. Members will readily appreciate, an acquittal at a trial is not necessarily always tantamount to complete exoneration. That has often been the position in the past. It appeared from the facts available that the case fell within a category where it could be said—this is obviously debatable and one of the issues between the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge and the Home Office—that the prosecution had failed to sustain the burden of proof. Accordingly, it followed that the claim did not attract compensation within the terms of the statement of policy made by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary. The hon. Gentleman was informed of this decision on 28 April 1987 in the letter to which I have already referred, which included the inaccuracy about the weight of cannibis for which I have apologised.

The hon. Member urged my right hon. Friend to reconsider the matter immediately afterwards, as he told us this evening. He pointed to what he considered to be inaccuracies in the facts outlined in the letter conveying the decision. It was agreed immediately that the case should be re-examined in the light of these further representations. Extreme care is give to these cases and the documents involved are examined in detail. As the hon. Gentleman is aware, the case has been under examination since that time. We have been making strenuous efforts to bring the examination to a conclusion but we have been hindered by difficulties in obtaining certain documents that we have been striving to secure.

There is a further factor to which the hon. Member did not refer. I have learnt only recently that solicitors acting on behalf of Mr. Lang have lodged a formal complaint against some of the police officers involved in Mr. Lang's case. This adds an entirely new dimension to the consideration of a claim for compensation. Hon. Members will be aware that a complaint against one or more police officers is an extremely serious issue. The hon. Member understands that the statutory procedure for the investigation of complaints against police officers is completely independent of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and other Home Office Ministers. My right hon. Friend has no authority in such matters.

It will be readily appreciated from what I have said already about the payment of compensation in cases that involve police default that the findings of an independent investigation into complaints could be of direct relevance to and could affect the final decision taken on Mr. Lang's claim. That is because there is new material to be considered. I have therefore decided in fairness to Mr. Lang himself that the decision must be postponed so that we in the Home Office can take full account of the findings of the investigation into the complaints against the police officers. These complaints could bring to light new material that must be considered and taken into account in the proper and full consideration of the compensation claim that has been pushed so forcibly by the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge on behalf of a constituent of his hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead, East. That is bound to lead to some further delay in determining Mr. Lang's claim. However, I fear that that is unavoidable, given the possible relevance of the complaints to the decision which must be taken on the claim for compensation.

I assure the hon. Members for Tyne Bridge and for Gateshead, East that I am arranging to be fully informed of the results of the findings of the independent body which is statutorily charged with this matter when those findings are known. Thereafter we will reach a decision as quickly as we can, for I fully appreciate the length of time that has been taken just as I appreciate the length of time during which Mr. Lang was on remand in prison.

I hope that the hon. Members for Tyne Bridge and Gateshead, East will find my response as helpful as possible this evening. Needless to say, the representations that the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge has made to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary in writing and the points that he has made clearly and forcefully to the House tonight will be fully and carefully taken into account before we reach a final decision on the claim for compensation.

10.26 pm

Mr. Ted Leadbitter (Hartlepool): I want to raise a few questions as I believe that we still have five minutes left.

The Minister has approached this matter with a remarkable amount of responsibility. This is an individual matter in which a sense of injustice is still outstanding. However, I am genuinely puzzled by one or two of the Minster's comments. First, he said that the prosecution in this case did not sustain the burden of proof. It is clear that the evidence before the court was substantially short of proving a state of guilt. The Minister went on to say that an acquittal is not necessarily a question of exoneration. Unless some words are used in the acquittal to suggest that there is a lack of complete exoneration, we must assume that exoneration exists. Finally, he said that the delay in dealing with the claim for compensation arises from a complaint againt the police.

If a complaint is put by Mr. Lang's solicitors to the police about their conduct, we must assume that in the case which was heard against Mr. Lang before the court, all the evidence that the police could have brought was brought to sustain a state of guilt. What is there in the complaint against the police which suggests to the Minister that there is new evidence or even the possibility of new evidence? I would have thought that that was a separate matter.

I am happy that the Minister has approached the question broadly with a sense of understanding. I am sure that to some degree he satisfies my hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead, East (Ms. Quin) and of course my hon. Friend the Member for Tyne Bridge (Mr. Clelland) who put the case tonight. However, I feel that there is a degree of procrastination here which is irritating. The man was acquitted and the evidence has gone. I am sure that the Home Office should be more concerned about bringing the matter to an end.

Mr. Patten: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman feels that there has been unnecessary procrastination. On the other hand, I can understand how such a feeling can arise as this matter has taken a long time. In answer to the second of the hon. Gentleman's substantial points, who am I to say that the inquiry by the statutory authority into the complaints against the police would not produce new material facts which could influence my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary to take a decision in favour of Mr. Lang? However, if we go ahead now who is to say that my right hon. Friend might not take a decision the other way? No doubt, then the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge or his hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead, East would return to the charge again and say that we must look at the issue once more.

I understand what the hon. Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) said about exoneration. However, if he addresses himself to the *Official Report* of 29 November 1985, columns 691 and 692, he will see that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary sets out clearly the fact that he sees no statutory provision for the payment of compensation but, thereafter, he sets out certain circumstances in which he will consider the payment of ex-gratia compensation. We have to cleave closely to my right hon. Friend's statement; and it is on the basis of that statement that my right hon. Friend will make his decision in due course when we have the report on the complaints against the police.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at half-past Ten o'clock.

House of Commons

Friday 23 October 1987

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Health

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

9.34 am

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wonder whether you have received any requests from Ministers or anyone else to make a statement regarding the proceedings that took place at Lambeth magistrates court yesterday, about which the Prime Minister refused to comment, in which the Government Chief Whip, an ex-Member of Parliament and the right hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) were involved, along with South Africans and others, in machinations and allegations about trying to take over members of the African National Congress in this country. There has been a lot of speculation in the press this morning and I would have thought that that is a matter for a statement. If Ministers are not available to make that statement today, they should be requested to do it at the next available opportunity, so that they can clear the air.

Mr. Speaker: Whether a statement is made is not a matter for me.

9.35 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): This debate is taking place against the background of an increasingly healthy population. The population of this country as a whole has never been healthier. If we look back 100 years, we find that nearly half the people of this country died before the age of 40. Today, 70 per cent. of our people survive into their seventies. The little girl born today stands a very good chance of surviving into her eighties. Even looking back 40 years, to the start of the National Health Service, life expectancy at birth was only about 67 years for men and 72 years for women. In the last 10 years alone, two years has been added to life expectancy and perinatal mortality has shown a dramatic improvement, with the number of deaths per 1,000 births going down from 17·6 to 9·5. In human terms, that means that about 4,500 babies will survive this year who would not have done so 10 years ago.

Why has this quite dramatic improvement in public health come about? In my view, there are three main factors. The first reason is concerted action, often directly led by the Government and the House, to improve the environment. Proper sewage disposal and adequate supplies of clean water led to the elimination of killer diseases such as cholera. Nor has this effort stopped. It continues as part of the responsibilities of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. Indeed, there is action right across Government to improve the conditions in which we live. Today, of all the major countries, we must be one of the best housed and have one of the cleanest environments, particularly since the Clean Air Acts of 1956 and 1968.

The second reason is improvements in medicine. Mass screening and immunisation programmes have eradicated other killer diseases that were once common. Smallpox has vanished altogether. Diphtheria and tetanus are now rare. Progress in the fight against tuberculosis and polio has been maintained. The antibiotic revolution means that pneumonia is no longer a killer of young people or, indeed, of older people, and that even feared diseases such as meningitis or complications such as septicaemia can now be treated. The establishment of child health clinics has had an important role in improving the health of mothers and children.

The third reason is that matters such as increasing consciousness of health and better diets, linked with an all-round rise in standards of living, have contributed to an overall improvement in general health. Today's school-children are taller and more robust than ever before. They enjoy better dental health. In 1983, only 48 per cent. of five-year-olds experienced some dental decay, compared to 71 per cent. 10 years previously. Well over half of all our children starting school have never known dental disease.

In the light of such success, why must we continue to give priority to preventing disease and promoting good health? There is a simple answer to that: prevention never ends. It is not just a one-off exercise. As we eradicate one group of diseases, medical science offers opportunities to tackle other candidates, such as the new vaccines that are coming out now for mumps or hepatitis.

Secondly, there are growing problems and new diseases which need attention. Heart diseases and lung cancer—the diseases of affluence—are rightly causing growing concern. These diseases were unknown in the last century. Many new problems arise as the result of addiction. Some, such as AIDS, appear to have come at us totally out of the blue.

Other countries are showing that prevention works and that many of these diseases can be tackled. Had we faced the prevention of heart disease with the enthusiasm that the Americans did some years ago, we might have been able to report much better results here. Over a 15-year period in America, they reduced deaths from heart disease by 40 per cent. and strokes by 50 per cent., and that improvement is still continuing.

Another reason why we should continue in this way is that it would cost us a great deal of money not to do so. The Health Service in England and Wales is spending over £20 billion this year, and a frightening amount is spent on curing illnesses that are preventable. Treating heart disease alone costs us £450 million a year. Treating lung cancer costs us more than £110 million. Treating kidney failure costs £100 million a year. It is a fact that 10 per cent. of kidney failure is probably caused by high blood pressure. I am told that control of blood pressure could contribute towards a postponement of the onset of kidney disease in about half of the cases that proceed to full renal failure.

It is not only money that is a consideration. In all humanity, we cannot stand back and let disease continue that we know can be avoided or postponed, or whose

[Mrs. Edwina Currie]

action can be mitigated or reduced. That is why we are in business. We are here to save lives and to improve the quality of the lives that we save.

I have been accused of being a killjoy when I advise people to cut out smoking and watch what they drink and eat, but I ask the House to consider where the joy is to be found in angina. Who would choose to have a stroke? Who would choose to have an amputation through vascular disease? Where is the pleasure in being breathless, in being unable even to walk to the front door, let alone in the street? Where is the fun in being dependent upon an oxygen cylinder? It is not being a killjoy to say that we should enjoy the good things of life but only in moderation, for by taking that course we are likely to enjoy them for much longer and live to tell the tale. We are probably not talking about saving money at all. We engage in prevention because it is right, and we can use the resources that are released to do other things.

Let us consider the main causes of death in England and Wales. We find that in 1985 about 140,000 men died of circulatory disease, 74,000 of cancer and 34,000 of other respiratory system diseases. Nothing else comes anywhere close. For women the figures are 147,000, 67,000 and 30,000 respectively. So our main killer is circulatory disease, which means heart disease and stroke. If we split the figures by age and sex, we find that disease patterns are different for men and women, and different for older and younger people. The main killer of men before their time is heart disease. The main killer of women prematurely is cancer, with breast cancer the leader in England and lung cancer the leader in Scotland. Indeed, lung cancer is rapidly increasing among women as a cause of death. The figures for women show a tragic 25 per cent. jump since 1979, whereas those for men are at last beginning to decline.

We will all die some day. Heart failure or pneumonia is often the last of a string of problems. We cannot prevent all disease. Some people do it all wrong and they survive to die eventually of old age. Others do everything right and still succumb in their 50s. Sometimes life seems so unfair. I have said before how important it is that we face death and care better for the dying so that they are relieved of pain and can die with dignity.

There are many who have a dangerously incorrect view of heart disease, our main killer. People sometimes think that they will have a heart attack and keel over and that that will be a good way to go. Against that, I offer these thoughts. When it happens, most people do not want to go; nor do their loved ones want to lose them. Secondly, for many it means being cut off not, in a sense, at the conclusion of business but in the prime of life. Last year in Britain about 37,000 people aged under 65 died of heart attacks. They left behind bereaved families, often with financial problems. Few would regard that as a good way to go, but when it happens, after years of smoking and eating a fatty diet, perhaps, it is too late.

For many with heart disease and circulatory disease the immediate result is disability, not death, for many heart attacks are not fatal. As a result, we have 300,000 sufferers from angina. Last year we issued 31 million prescriptions for preparations acting on the heart and for anti-hypertensive drugs. The numbers of heart bypass operations have been increasing steadily and we expect to be carrying out about 15,000 a year by the end of this Parliament. Every year more than 100,000 suffer a stroke. If we can do anything to reduce this appalling toll of misery and suffering, I believe that we have a duty to do it. I hope that the House agrees.

It is the same with cancer. We debated cancer in March and I do not want to deal with it at length now. I merely say that our scientists have considered the incidence of cancer in different countries, and it is very different from place to place. This has led them to think that as much as 80 per cent. of cancer is potentially preventable. Although there is a great deal of research taking place, we still do not know all the causes of cancer. However, we know some of them, and the main culprit is smoking cigarettes. Not only that, but cigarette smoking may raise the chances of getting all the cancers, so "Don't Smoke" has to be the message.

We know also that medical science in cancer is aided by early diagnosis, so screening for breast and cervical cancer, for example, is an important and valuable weapon in the war against cancer, which I believe will be conquered some day.

At the same time we face other problems, some of which seem to have appeared without warning. AIDS is the main one which concerns us now. To the end of September this year, 1,067 cases of AIDS, including 605 deaths, have been reported in the United Kingdom. There have been about 7,500 reports of people who are HIV antibody positive. Although it is not possible to know how many people are actually infected, it has been estimated that it could be between 30,000 and 50,000. Many of these people will go on to develop full-blown AIDS.

The treatment of those with AIDS is expensive, being about £20,000 per patient per year, and as yet we cannot save them. The implications for the Health Service are therefore very serious, and the Government are well apprised of them. We must remember the United States experience, where 43,000 people have AIDS and nearly 25,000 are dead as a result of it. In the United States, one person dies of AIDS every four hours. It is a most serious worldwide problem.

In the United Kingdom there is only minimal evidence of heterosexual spread other than to the partners of those such as drug misusers or homosexuals, who are most at risk. But the potential for wider heterosexual spread cannot be ignored. AIDS is spread by heterosexual contact and it is a problem for us all. In the absence of a cure or vaccine. Public education is the main weapon in the fight to counter infection. As part of the strategy to combat AIDS, the Government have embarked on a sustained compaign of public health education. A recent survey of what we have done shows a high awareness now and increased knowledge about AIDS and the ways in which the infection is spread. There is growing understanding of the ways of avoiding and reducing risks. We are hoping and praying that changes of lifestyle brought about by the campaign will have their effect.

We accept that the Government have a major responsibility and role in prevention, and we are approaching these responsibilities broadly in three ways. First, we are helping people avoid disease. Secondly, we are helping them by enabling early detection. Thirdly, we are promoting action across the whole of government. Helping people avoid disease is known as primary prevention. Our aim is to ensure that individuals understand the connection between the way in which they live their lives and the risk of disease, and that information

is readily available about risk factors to enable them to make sensible choices and decisions in their everyday lives. It is all about understanding, information, choice and individual responsibility.

I do not like banning things if it is at all possible to avoid doing so. However, I have no doubt that during this debate the Government will be called upon to ban just about everything in sight. I do not like using the law if we can make progress in other ways. My attitude is at least partly pragmatic, for I look at other countries with tough laws and I see that if people do not agree they do not obey. If they agree, changing the law may often not be necessary. The key factor is to provide information and encourage people to make sensible choices. However, I will support changes in the law if I can see no other way of making progress or where is is clear that public support is so strong, or the public interest so paramount, that legal changes would be helpful. For these reasons, I have voted as a Back Bencher for seat belts, fluoridation and the abolition of dangerous items such as scented erasers. I will not put people's lives at risk for the sake of my principles, especially as my other principle is to keep down NHS costs.

The second part of the Government's role is to provide early detection. That is secondary prevention. As we know, not all disease is preventable and not everyone takes care to prevent it. It is important, therefore, to be able to detect disease as early as possible. The Government's role has been to set up surveillance and screening programmes such as those for breast and cervical cancer. We now have effective antenatal care for the early detection in pregnancy of foetal abnormalities or of problems such as toxaemia which would harm mother and baby. Those continue to be as important as ever. Just as important is the development of screening of children—for example, the PKU test — to detect potentially handicapping defects as early as possible.

We are interested in screening for the inherited blood disorders, sickle cell anaemia and thalassaemia that are found in people from Africa, the Caribbean, the eastern Mediterranean and Asia.

Mr. David Ashby (Leicestershire, North-West): My hon. Friend will know of my great interest in and familiarity with familial lipidaemis. I asked my hon. Friend some time ago whether the Government would consider screening for those at risk in relation to familial lipidaemis. Will the Government consider extending screening, especially as machines are available for that work to be carried out very simply?

Mrs. Currie: My hon. Friend reminds me of an occasion when he set up an exhibition in the Upper Waiting Room for the Family Heart Association complete with the machines to which he has referred. If many people had their cholesterol tested, I would not be surprised at the poor level of the results. My hon. Friend put that point to me and the matter is under consideration. He should await the publication of the White Paper on primary care, which might answer some of his questions.

With regard to sickle cell disease and thalassaemia, we have pilot studies under way to advise us on the best method of screening, and we hope to make progress shortly. With regard to female cancer, it is worth reminding the House that no country outside Scandinavia is carrying out comprehensive cervical cancer screening, but by next spring we will have the entire system up and running. We were the first country in the world to announce a comprehensive nationwide breast cancer screening programme. We have a great deal to be proud of in the way in which we have set up secondary prevention.

I spent an interesting morning this week with the Maternity Alliance and that will be of interest to the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman). We discussed pre-conceptual care. There is some evidence that poor diet and smoking before conception has an adverse effect on pregnancy. I look forward to taking that work on, with the Maternity Alliance's help and advice. With an eye to the future, we are looking at detection systems for other cancers such as ovarian cancer which kills more than 3,600 women a year, although I must say that no system looks very promising at the moment. However, we take a close interest in that.

The third branch of Government action on prevention is the promotion of preventive action across Government and throughout Government Departments. Disease prevention and health promotion is not the responsibility solely of the Department of Health and Social Security. There are many aspects of this work, much relating to everyday life, going on across the whole of government. In the past few years, Government have responded to threats to the nation's health by setting up ministerial committees to take action forward in a co-ordinated way. There are now interdepartmental ministerial committees on AIDS, drugs and, announced only last month by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, alcohol misuse. I sit on two of these. We have also set up the Health Education Authority as an integral part of the NHS and it will carry forward a comprehensive health education scheme.

The work of many other Departments also, to a surprising degree, has a health promotion element. For example, guidelines on voluntary nutrition labelling were recently announced by my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. All main nutrients of interest to consumers are within the scope of these guidelines, which follow an agreed international standard. However, because of European Community constraints, we have not been able to make nutrition labelling compulsory, as many here would have wished. However, a considerable step forward has been taken. Nor must we forget the work of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport in his efforts against drinking and driving and the safety of vehicles to reduce the death and injury rates of road users.

To get an idea of the wide range of such activity, a survey was carried out by my Department which showed that there were nearly 300 projects of a "preventive" nature going on across all Government Departments. These range from accident prevention — road safety, safety in the home, fire safety — to environmental protection such as air pollution and waste disposal. It is a quite remarkable list and it surprised us and demonstrates our high level of concern and determination. I have arranged to put the list in the Library, and it will be updated from time to time.

I want to tackle one or two of the arguments that doubtless will be aired today. For example, I wanted to consider the argument about inequalities in health. Despite all the activity, there remains a higher incidence of ill health in certain social groups and in certain parts of the country. Much is made of the idea that the onus is all

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on the Government through their policies for example on unemployment, benefits and taxation of tobacco to bring about good health. People are often portrayed as helpless pawns of their circumstances with no capacity to take individual action to help themselves.

I ask the House to reflect that philosophies of that kind tend to make things worse. Surely people should accept responsibility at least in some part for their own health whatever their income; whether cigarettes are expensive or cheap; whether liquor is easily available or hard to get hold of; whether life in their neighbourhood is easy or tough; whether they live in Sunderland or Somerset, in Sheffield or Scotland or whether they live in the tough inner city, the affluent suburbs or a village in the country. There is a real health divide between those who know that their health is in their hands and they can do something about it, and those who do not and will not. Both groups are present throughout the country. The Government cannot compel people to be healthy, but they can help, and we are determined to do so.

We recognise that improvements in overall levels of national health are also linked to improving national prosperity. The Government want to see the general health of the nation to continue to improve. We are making that possible through economic policies which improve living standards for all through real economic growth. Family incomes after tax have risen by 16 per cent. in real terms under this Government. The average household now spends nearly £162 per week. Expenditure on social security benefits is up by 38 per cent. in real terms. In the end, however, individuals have an inescapable responsibility for their own and their family's health. Not to accept that ignores the capacity and willingness of individuals to choose healthier ways of living if they are given the information they need.

Nor is this simply a question of the Government spending more money on health. We have done that handsomely. Spending on the NHS is up; staffing is up; the number of patients treated is well up. The fact that far more are being treated as day and outpatients suggests that we are picking up conditions earlier; that the public are much more aware and willing to come forward. That may account for a 7·5 per cent. jump in out-patients treated in the past year or so.

We have allocated a lot more money to the regions with the most serious gaps in health provision and the worst disease figures. For example, in 1978 during the lifetime of the previous Labour Government, the northern region received £277 million. This year it is to receive £665 million. In 1978, the west midland region received £433 million and this year it will receive more than £1 billion —the exact figure being £1,050 million. The regions will receive large amounts of capital.

However, that is not the whole story. I challenge the assumption that endlessly putting more money into the Health Service will automatically produce better health or that that is all that the Government have to do. Some countries spend a greater proportion of GDP on health care, but that does not mean that their residents enjoy better health than us. We have better life expectancy than the United States and better infant mortality than West Germany. The inequalities in health between different social groups in the United Kingdom is far less, for example, than the United States, which spends more of its GDP on health than any other country.

Just as the improvement in dental health has occurred outside the dentist's surgery and the drop in lung cancer deaths among men has less to do perhaps with the chest surgeon's skills than to men giving up smoking since the mid-1970s, so the general improvement in health that I am seeking will come not from simply building more hospitals and employing more doctors, but from throwing away the frying pan and putting the cork back in the bottle. If we are successful, we will be able to use the magnificent NHS resources that have been voted to us to care for other groups, which perhaps as a society we have tended to neglect—such as the mentally handicapped, the mentally ill and the increasing numbers of old and frail.

Mr. Tony Worthington (Clydebank and Milngavie): Why has the Minister totally ignored mental health in this speech?

Mrs. Currie: I have not totally ignored mental health. I was just about to mention it as the hon. Gentleman rose to his feet.

There are major preventive elements in mental health and it is a matter to which I have asked my Department to give increasing attention. The hon. Gentleman is right; we tend to concentrate on acute illness because, when we look at how much preventable disease costs us, we can see that heart disease is still at the top of the list. *[Interruption.]* If it is Labour party policy to ignore heart disease, I would be sorry to hear it.

As I have said, if we are successful we will be able to use our Health Service resources to care for other groups such as the mentally handicapped, the mentally ill and the old and frail. However, it is sometimes said as an argument against prevention that if we are successful in prevention and in bringing about good health, fewer people will die in middle age and there will be many more old people and what will we do then? I hope that that is what happens. I look forward to my nineties and joining the ranks of the wrinklies and the crumblies.

It is already happening. We are expecting 4·5 million people aged over 75 by the year 2000. We are expecting them because they are with us now and are already joining the ranks of the retired. As I said earlier, most people do not choose to die in middle age, nor do they choose the risk of serious disablement. The elderly are not a separate species. They are citizens, and prevention applies to them too. There is not a cut-off point at the age of 65. Most people would choose retirement and a long life and they would enjoy it if they felt that they could enjoy good health, mobility, independence and be free from pain. It is just as important to watch one's weight at 70 as at 17 and it is just as important to take exercise, perhaps even more so.

It is worth reflecting that each major prevention success has had far-reaching social consequences of the sort we are now contemplating. The fall in child mortality leads us in the West to have smaller families because we know with confidence that our children will grow up and that makes it easier for women to have careers. The development of feminism, in my opinion, owes a great deal to disease prevention earlier in the century. In the same way, the increasing number of elderly people should help us to revise many of our attitudes to the old. I look to a time

when, instead of people being written off as they reach retirement, the wisdom and experience of old age is once more respected in countries such as ours, as it is in others.

I have some announcements to make. As hon. Members know, we are faced with particular problems concerning AIDS. The Government are determined to press ahead with efforts to combat that disease. The Health Education Authority, which we set up earlier this year to undertake the important task of public education, has produced a strategy for the development of the AIDS campaign and is now ready to take forward its work. On 26 October, the Health Education Authority will, therefore, assume responsibility for the development of new work on the AIDS public education campaign. There will be a gradual transfer of work already in hand in the Department of Health and Social Services during the remainder of this financial year, with the exception of the current anti-injection campaign which will continue to be managed by the DHSS for the time being because of its links with the drug prevention work. The Health Education Authority will be working in close collaboration with its counterpart organisation in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. An initial allocation of £4·1 million is being made to the authority in order to meet the cost of new work during the remainder of this financial year.

Of all the areas where prevention has a significant role to play, perhaps none is more important than smoking. It is still the biggest preventable cause of death and disease. It accounts for at least 100,000 premature deaths each year, that is nearly 300 deaths every day. It is a cause of prematurity and defects in the babies of smoking parents and it directly affects our hormones. A woman who smokes reaches menopause up to five years earlier and is more likely to suffer from osteoporosis afterwards.

Thankfully, people in this country have been successful in giving up smoking or not starting in the first place. The number of adults who smoke cigarettes has been falling steadily. There has also been a marked change in attitudes towards smoking. According to a recent EEC study, more smokers in the United Kingdom want to give up than in any other EEC country. People in the United Kingdom are also more likely to be disturbed by other people smoking. However, we are worried about the level of smoking among young people, particularly among girls.

We are publishing today the biennial survey carried out by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys on smoking among secondary school children. There is some welcome news in it on boys smoking. In England and Wales only 7 per cent. of boys aged 11 to 15 were regular smokers—50 cigarettes per week—in 1986 compared to 13 per cent. in 1984. In other words, it has dropped from 13 per cent. to 7 per cent. in two years. However, there has been no significant fall in smoking among girls of the same age, which now stands at 12 per cent. in England and Wales. Young girls are smoking at nearly twice the level of boys. That comes on top of earlier information that smoking among young women aged 16 to 19 was not declining as in other age groups and is now roughly equal to the boys, if not slightly higher.

The position in the United Kingdom is apparently found in many other western countries. We are all finding it difficult to get across to young women the threat that smoking poses. My Department and the Health Education Authority held a two-day seminar in Bristol this week on teenage smoking. There were experts on health education from France, the United States, Canada and Australia.

As a result of that conference, I am putting in hand immediately two studies. The first study will be to find out why the rate of smoking among young women remains obstinately high whereas young men seem to be aware of the health message. The second study will be on how to devise messages that will be accepted by the young rather than rejected, and how to deal with young people, especially women, who have not started to smoke regularly as well as those who have. I expect the first results by Easter and we will base further action on the findings.

I am alarmed at the apparent ease with which young people under the age of 16 are able to buy cigarettes. That is revealed in the study published today. Last year the House passed the Protection of Children (Tobacco) Act 1986 which made it illegal to sell any tobacco product to children under 16. Retailers should realise that it is not only immoral to sell tobacco to young people but illegal. I shall be discussing with my colleagues at the Home Office what can be done to tighten up the ways in which this legislation is enforced.

What also concerns me about women smoking is that a high proportion of nurses are still smoking. Doctors do not smoke, but nurses do. It is my intention to discuss that with representatives of the profession. I am meeting the general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing shortly. I hope to explore with the RCN and other bodies that might be interested how we can help nurses with the habit to stop.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): Does the hon. Lady care to indicate whether the Government are considering lending their support to proposals that would invert the legislative structure so as to create areas where smoking is permitted rather than areas where it is banned?

Mrs. Currie: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for that suggestion. We are awaiting the final report of Sir Peter Froggatt's independent scientific committee on smoking and health which was set up in 1973. It will report to us before Christmas on the issue of passive smoking and at that stage we will be able to give detailed thought to what measures might be required to carry out its recommendations. I am reluctant to say anything until I have seen what Sir Peter and his committee are recommending. We will take into account the point made by the hon. Gentleman.

I have to make one more announcement on healthy eating. Healthy eating out is as important as healthy eating at home. I can announce today that with that in mind, the "Look After Your Heart" campaign, launched earlier this year, is launching a new national award scheme—the Heartbeat award—in co-operation with the Institution of Environmental Health Officers. It is open to all hotels, restaurants and catering establishments. To qualify for the award, they must not only fulfil certain standards of hygiene but have no-smoking areas and offer healthy food choices on their menus.

The scheme is being piloted in 55 areas and will help customers to choose the best places to eat for their hearts' sake. The first 30 award winners announced this week show the wide range of restaurants and canteens wanting to take part. They include the British Gas staff canteen in Staines, Surrey; the Royal hotel restaurant in Weston-super-Mare; Rackham's rooftop restaurant and its staff canteen in Birmingham; and American Express in Brighton — that will do nicely! If they can win the

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award, why cannot our House of Commons restaurants? I leave that to the consideration of my colleagues on the House of Commons (Services) Committee, and I shall send them details of the award.

Mr. Paul Boateng (Brent, South): All this talk of Heartbeat awards is all very well, and it is good to know that Mrs. Currie has the hearts of the nation so close to her own. However, the 56 elderly residents of the Wembley hospital and the 15,000 out-patients at the Wembley hospital, who are now threatened with being transferred to the Central Middlesex hospital as a result of the recent rounds of cuts in my constituency, are seriously beginning to wonder whether Mrs. Currie has a heart at all.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. In the House we refer to hon. Members in the third person and do not use their names.

Mr. Boateng: I am much obliged to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I am seriously beginning to wonder whether the hon. Lady has a heart at all, and, if she has, when she is going to stop wearing it on her sleeve and do something about the health crisis in this country.

Mrs. Currie: It occurs to me that if the Brent local authority, which has been the subject of much criticism —not least from its own director of social services— looked after its old people better, in its old people's homes and with its domiciliary services such as home helps and meals on wheels, we should have much less to worry about.

Ms. Joan Ruddock (Lewisham, Deptford): Has the Minister given consideration to such awards being applied to food in hospitals? I have observed that, because of the budgetary cuts being imposed by the Government, it is extremely difficult for health authorities to provide food of the standard to which she has alluded.

Mrs. Currie: A number of health authorities, including the Oxford health authority, which I signed up last week, have joined the campaign. There is nothing expensive about providing a range of healthy eating, or about providing no-smoking areas — or, indeed, as the hon. Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) suggested, smoking areas—in places where people eat. We would actively commend that, both inside and outside hospitals.

Ms. Joan Walley (Stoke-on-Trent, North) *rose*——

Mrs. Currie: Perhaps the hon. Lady will forgive me if I continue my remarks. I have almost finished them.

I have hardly mentioned alcohol, which is an important issue. One estimate puts the cost of alcohol misuse in England and Wales as high as £1,800 million a year. Our concern was recognised last month with the setting up of the ministerial group on alcohol misuse, which has a remit to review and develop the overall strategy for preventing misuse of alcohol and to oversee its implementation. The group will be chaired by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House, and will be able to look at any issue relating to the misuse of alcohol—ranging from young people, crime and drinking and driving to advertising and taxation.

Let me emphasis that my Department is not anti-alcohol. If used in moderation, alcohol does no harm to health. We welcome the active co-operation of the drinks industry in tackling the problem of alcohol abuse, and the funding that it gives for research and voluntary bodies.

The ministerial group will hold its first meeting in a few days. We intend to look first at the overall position on the misuse of alcohol, then at current preventive measures and whether we can make them work better, and finally specific ways of tackling alcohol misuse vigorously and effectively in the future.

Mr. Peter Rost (Erewash): I welcome my hon. Friend the Minister's approach in promoting better health and creating a health service out of a sickness service. But will she say something about the contribution that could be made by alternative and natural medicines and therapies to that effort, acting—as they do in other countries—alongside, rather than opposing, orthodox medicine?

Mrs. Currie: My hon. Friend and close neighbour in Derbyshire is absolutely right. There is a tremendous role for all the therapies. We hope that, if people can take some of the advice that is being offered on life styles and good health, they may need neither kind of treatment, which would be all to the good. I have no doubt that during the debate we shall hear many suggestions about ways in which health can be promoted and illness tackled.

The health of this country has never been better. However that is a relative statement. Life can be made much more enjoyable for many people by the prenvention of illness and premature death. Prevention is often more painless and always better than cure, and prevention of aviodable disease is a top priority. Our efforts are popular, wise and cost-effective. Our task is to promote the better health of the nation, and that we intend to do.

10.15 am

Ms. Harriet Harman (Peckham): To be in good health a person needs a decent income, an adequate diet, good, warm housing and a safe environment. He or she also needs a health lifestyle. But inequalities in income, diet and housing mean that different people in different parts of the country, with different jobs or ethnic origins, have differing chances of life and death.

If the Government were seriously concerned about promoting good health, they would locate themselves right at the centre of a strategy for ending poverty, eliminating poor housing and cleaning up the environment. A Government with an effective strategy would be a catalyst for the proliferation of health promotion initiatives across voluntary organsiations — local councils, industry, schools and health professionals. That simply is not happening; but it should be.

The Minister has said that people cannot be compelled to be healthy. They can, however, be compelled to be unhealthy. The hon. Lady's Government are doggedly prusuing policies that positively promote ill health among some people, even when the link is clearly established.

The inequalities in health were once again clearly established in "The Health Divide", published by the Health Education Council earlier this year. I should like to quote briefly from that report, because the Minister's speech reflected no understanding of the important points that it mentions. The report states:

"Serious social inequalities in health have persisted into the 1980s. Those at the bottom of the social scale have much higher death rates than those at the top. All the major killer

diseases now affect the poor more than the rich. Children in lower socio-economic classes are smaller and more sickly. The health of working class women is particularly poor."

The report also points out striking regional inequalities. Death rates in Scotland are the worst, followed by those in the north and north-west of England. The south-east has the lowest death rate. However, evidence is now emerging that even within regions there are considerable inequalities of health. Even in the south-east, poverty and affluence live side by side, reflected respectively by poor and better health.

This week my own borough of Southwark produced a health profile which shows markedly worse health in the poor wards of Peckham than in the wealthier wards of Dulwich.

That health divide will not be tackled by anything that the Minister has spoken about today. The growing divide between the haves and the have-nots in our society—a divide starkly mirrored in health inequalities—is not something inevitable; it is a function of Government economic policies. The British Medical Association underlined that clearly in May of this year, stating:

"Increased resources for housing, work creation, income support, education, health and social services are needed. Although low cost initiatives are possible which might alleviate the health experience of some disadvantaged groups, the problem as a whole is so great and so entrenched within the structure of society as to be insoluble without significant diversion of public resources."

We have heard nothing this morning about such a significant diversion of public resources, which would attack the health problems that the BMA has identified.

There is a growing and influential consensus on this matter, but the consensus appears to exclude the one body that is in the best position to act to prevent ill health, the Government.

The Government are also stifling local initiatives that seek to cut the link between poor housing and ill health. Again, this link is undisputed. All too often I see children with respiratory problems that have been caused, or made worse, by damp and poor housing. Why does the Minister not understand the heartbreak of the mother who not only has to see her child become ill but who knows perfectly well that, were it not for her poor housing conditions, her child would not have to be ill and suffering? All too often I meet mothers who are made ill by the stress of having to cope with young children in a cramped flat. They know that their chances of buying somewhere are remote, particularly in the south-east.

Mr. Julian Brazier (Canterbury): The hon. Lady has taken an example from the lowest age band spectrum. To give her an example from the other end of that spectrum, a local authority in my constituency has decided to close an old people's home because it is old, damp and crumbling and much better facilities can be provided elsewhere for those people, yet the local Labour party has protested that, because we are closing this home and transferring the people in it to better and healthier facilities, a small number of jobs will be lost. I have received a large number of letters, including one from a Labour councillor, on the subject.

Ms. Harman: The hon. Gentleman did not say whether these people were being transferred to other council facilities or whether they were being shipped off, at public expense, to the private sector where inspection standards are insufficient to prevent ill treatment and to ensure a high quality of care. I am glad that the hon. Gentleman mentioned elderly people. I meet many elderly people for whom every winter is an ordeal as cold attacks their arthritis. They dare not turn on the fire because they fear incurring large fuel bills. Apart from those who live in council accommodation, elderly people who live in their own homes are affected by the lack of improvement grants.

The promotion of good health is an uphill task among homeless families who are condemned to live in a hotel room. The children of homeless families are more at risk from accidents if there is an electric kettle on the floor, or if there is no fireguard or stair gate. Children are not immunised when families are moved from pillar to post. Gastro-enteritis flourishes when a family has only one basin in the room, which they have to use for emptying the potty, washing plates and clothes and cleaning an preparing food.

Local councils are, for the most part, keen to house the homeless and to improve their housing stock. That would be a major contribution to good health. However, they are prevented from doing so by the Minister's colleagues in the Department of the Environment who have imposed spending constraints. Children are to be found in hospital paediatric wards because of poor housing conditions. The Minister referred to waiting lists being cut, but her colleagues in the Department of the Environment are driving people into hospitals and general practitioner's surgeries because of their poor housing conditions.

When the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield (Mr. Fowler) was Secretary of State for Health he recognised, albeit under duress, the link between unemployment and ill health. He said that he would not question the fact that unemployment may have negative effects on health, yet this message has not got through to the Secretary of State for Employment, and it is making no impact on the Chancellor of the Exchequer who, mildly regretting unemployment, think that it is an acceptable price to pay for low inflation.

The Government should be tackling unemployment as a priority, not just because of the waste of skills when people moulder on the scrap heap, and the waste of the potential of over 3 million unemployed people, but because of the tight interlink between unemployment, poverty and ill health.

A proper strategy for the promotion of good health would also address the working environment. Some 750 people die and 300,000 are seriously injured every year as a result of accidents at work. Many more people die and are disabled through diseases that are contracted in the work place. However, by undermining the Health and Safety Executive and reducing the ability of the trade unions to organise, the Government are bound to increase that toll. The Government ought to be strengthening inspection, they should be working with both employers and trade unions to encourage a reduction of accidents and disease and to encourage the work place to be seen as a useful place in which to promote screening and health promotion.

The message about health promotion is also lamentably failing to get through to the Department of Transport. Recent tragic motorway accidents have dramatically drawn attention to the carnage om our roads. We need to improve road safety, but why has it not dawned on the Minister that we could cut road accidents if there were a

[Ms. Harman]

better rail network and better public transport on the roads, instead of cuts in the rail network and privatisation that will further undermine safety?

The Minister's message about healthy eating has not been taken on board by Minister's in her own Department, let alone by Ministers in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. As she said, healthy eating should start before birth, with good preconception care. After birth, breast feeding is the healthiest for young babies. However, maternity wards still bristle with brochures and special promotions for powdered milk. What does the Minister intend to do about that? Midwives have no time to help mothers to establish breast feeding if they are rushing between emergencies in understaffed-wards.

Schools should play an important part in educating for health and healthy eating. What are the Minister's colleagues in the Department of Education and Science doing to ensure that health education is not marginalised by the introduction of the core curriculum? The Minister said that she hopes and prays that the message on AIDS will get across. In addition to hoping and praying, perhaps there should also be some education. Will there be a place for sex education after the introduction of the core curriculum?

With so much evidence linking fatty foods with obesity and heart disease, why is the Ministry of Agriculture still subsidising fatty meats? When shoppers, rightly, are becoming better informed and more choosy, why is there not more pressure for a mandatory standardised labelling code for sugar content, fat, fibre, salt and additives? Even a voluntary code should be standardised so that shoppers can compare like with like.

Will the Minister take action to stop her fellow Ministers in the Department of Health and Social Security from drastically reducing the number of people who are eligible for free milk? The Minister referred to visiting the Maternity Alliance. The Maternity Alliance is very concerned not only about the low take-up of free milk but also about the fact that the number of people who are eligible for it is to be drastically reduced.

Mr. Ashby: Will the hon. Lady tell us what the advantages of free milk are? Most people with knowledge of the subject are trying to persuade young people not to drink so much milk.

Ms. Harman: I was about to say that at the moment milk tokens can be exchanged only for full fat milk. I should like there to be an extension of the milk token scheme. People should be encouraged to have them, and it should be possible for them to choose between full fat, semi-skimmed and skimmed milk.

Mrs. Currie: The hon. Lady is aware that recently the Chief Medical Officer issued advice that young children and babies should be given not skimmed milk but whole milk and that skimmed milk is not suitable for them until they are older.

Ms. Harman: I was aware of that fact, but it does not alter what I said about the greater availability and the greater take-up of milk tokens, as well as greater choice when exchanging them.

Is the Minister not concerned about the diet of schoolchildren? The lunch box full of crisps and chocolate is increasingly taking over from school dinners. What is she doing to ensure that her fellow Ministers in the Department of Education and Science and in the Department of the Environment try to increase the take-up and the nutritional value of school meals, instead of reducing the take-up and privatising what is left of them?

The Minister hardly referred to any plans to reduce alcohol abuse. It was merely touched on, yet drinking is undoubtedly a major problem. It causes accidents both in the home and on the roads, it causes crime and violence and it is linked to heart and liver disease. Without properly thinking through the consequences, it seems that the Home Secretary is poised to allow pubs to open all hours, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer is allowing the price of drinks to drift down by failing to increase duty in line with inflation. The Government are being slow to tackle the problems of alcohol abuse and many people believe and say that that slowness is a direct result of the financial links between the Conservative party and the alcohol industry.

The Government should be making greater progress on smoking. Tobacco kills almost 100,000 people a year and is linked with coronary heart disease, lung cancer and bronchitis. The Minister mentioned initiatives taken on this and clearly there remains a major problem of young girls taking up smoking.

The Minister talked about competing with the public relations and advertising exercises of the tobacco companies. Instead of using valuable public money and wasting public resources on an advertising competition with enormous multinational tobacco companies, why does she not ban tobacco advertising and end tobacco sponsorship of events? She said that she did not like banning things, because it does not work without public support, but the public are ahead of her on this and there is public support for banning tobacco advertising. She should perhaps refer to the recent poll in this week's Health Services journal which, again, underlines that.

The Government are dragging their feet on the prevention of illness. Clearly, before a screening programme is introduced one must be sure that one will screen those at risk, that the screening will detect the disease and that the disease can be treated. That is the case with cervical cancer. Despite the Minister's clear assurance that by early next year we shall have a full screening programme, we are not beginning to have a national cervical screening programme. Again, there is an overwhelming consensus on the matter; only the Government remain outside it. We are failing to have that screening programme which would save many lives every year because of a lack of resources. The Government are not prepared to give district health authorities the additional resources that they need to develop the screening programmes which in the long term as well as reducing pain and suffering and saving lives will save the public purse money.

The Government are not sufficiently quick off the mark on immunisation. Wherever immunisation can be used to prevent disease, it should be. Will the Minister introduce immunisation for people, particularly health workers, who are at risk from hepatitis B?

Neither can we ignore the acute services. In promoting good health it is important to treat someone when treatment becomes necessary, not at the end of a long wait. If people are treated after a long wait, often their condition will have deteriorated and may be less amenable to

treatment. An elderly person, for example, who must wait for a hip replacement often becomes accustomed to immobility, so it takes a greater effort to rehabilitate that person. The Minister talked about enjoying retirement and the important later years. That retirement is no fun or enjoyment if one is waiting for treatment on a seemingly endless waiting list.

The Minister spoke of Brent's responsibility to look after its elderly people. Perhaps she does not realise that local councils are being told by her colleagues in the Department of the Environment to cut their spending on social services. That means cuts in meals on wheels and domiciliary services. If she is thinking of mentioning that there has been a marginal increase in spending on social services, perhaps she will remember that that has come about despite and not because of the Government.

We await the White Paper on primary care. One of the major tests will be whether it encourages the family doctor together with nurses to adopt a greater role in health promotion and screening at primary level. Most people's contact with the Health Service is with their GP and there should be much more preventive and health promotion work carried out at that level. It is a worrying development that the Government appear to be happy to see screening and health checks develop in the private sector without introducing initiatives to ensure that those who use public health services have similar access to them.

It is important that the primary health care White Paper should also meet the challenge to improve mental health. One third of the people who go to their GP's surgery do so, not only with physical symptoms, but with stress, anxiety, trauma and other conditions which can lead to mental illness.

The great advances in improving the health of the British people have been organised—even the Victorians understood that. Obviously, it is right for individuals to understand their bodies and to make healthy choices, but the Government's preoccupation with exhortations to individuals smacks of blaming the victim. By urging individuals to take increasing responsibility the Government are seeking to distract attention from their culpability in promoting ill health and in failing to promote good health.

In the past great advances in health have come from research, resulting in drugs, from immunisation, clean water, better sewerage, slum clearance, clean air Acts and the establishment of the NHS. In future great leaps forward will be made when the Government develop a national strategy which cuts across all the Government Departments that I have mentioned and which energises amd enables health promotion initiatives at both national and local levels. Great leaps forward will also be made when the Government tackle poverty and end unemployment, when they deal with poor housing and homelessness and, for the sake of the people, when they free themselves from the interests of the food, tobacco and alcohol industries.

10.36 am

Mrs. Gillian Shephard (Norfolk, South-West): I am grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for calling me to make my first speech in this House during a debate on health matters which are of prime concern to my constituents in south-west Norfolk.

I am privileged to represent one of the most beautiful and certainly one of the most diverse of rural constituencies in my native county. I am no less privileged to follow in the footsteps of my distinguished predecessor, Sir Paul Hawkins, who won the seat in 1964 and whose wisdom, quiet courtesy and deep knowledge of all constituency and farming matters will be as much missed in Norfolk, South-West as in this House. In his maiden speech he described Norfolk, South-West as one of the finest farming contituencies, and, despite the many developments and changes since then, not least in boundaries, that fact remains true today.

The constituency covers more than 1,000 square miles of varied countryside. It stretches from productive fen land west of Downham Market, where crops include fruit and vegetables, where profitable holdings on the Norfolk county council smallholdings estate can be as small as 30 acres and whose inhabitants are extremely proud to be known as fen tigers, through the large Thetford forest to the unique area of Breckland, which was recently designated as an environmentally sensitive area. In the east of the constituency the farming pattern changes to large arable undertakings.

Such a large and diverse constituency is bound to have its problems, some of which I hope in due course to help solve. Obviously, there are current problems in agriculture and there can be no part of my constituency which will be unaffected by policy changes. Indeed, the percentage of people statistically described as directly employed in agriculture masks a much larger number involved in haulage, mechanical and agricultural engineering, food processing and cider making. Their livelihoods depend on a prosperous agricultural sector.

My constituents are not afraid of hard work, nor are they unrealistic, but they will look to the Government to provide a clear framework for agricultural policy within which to work and plan. They want that framework soon in a year which has seen the worst harvest weather for decades, the threat of rhizomania, flooding and a hurricane.

The economy of my constituency is not now uniquely agricultural. Thanks to a productive partnership between English Estates and the relevant local authorities we have flourishing industries in our market towns; notably Thetford, where several large industrial companies are based.

There is no shortage of enterprise in the area, but if our companies are to compete on equal terms with those elsewhere we need improved road and rail links. The completion of the dualling of the A11 and A47 and the electrification of the Liverpool Street to Kings Lynn line is essential. I hope that it will not be too long before Norwich ceases to be the only connurbation of its size—250,000 people — that is approached by a medieval network of single track roads. I shall continue to campaign for improvements, some of which are now in hand.

Much attention will rightly be paid in this Parliament, and no doubt in this debate, to the problems of the inner cities. No doubt we shall be hearing much of Watford and what lies to the north and south of it. From time to time, I shall remind the House that there are areas of the United Kingdom that lie to the east of it and that the particular concerns of scattered rural communities such as my constituency also merit attention. In an area such as Norfolk, South-West the delivery of services such as education and health requires a degree of ingenuity that is not needed in Bromley or Bradford.

[Mrs. Gillian Shephard]

Norfolk, South-West is served by three health authorities that have so far benefited tremendously from the recent RAWP allocations, which took account of our growing population and increasing numbers of elderly.

With regard to health promotion, I am delighted that East Anglia has experienced a 26 per cent. reduction in perinatal mortality since 1978 and a large increase in the numbers of children who have been vaccinated against whooping cough and measles. It is excellent that last July Norwich health authority introduced its computerised recall system for cervical cancer tests. The West Norfolk and Wisbech health authority is ready to start its breast screening programme. All those developments are particularly welcome to women of all social classes.

The delivery aspect of health education and promotion is all-important. Unless health promotion messages are comprehensible to the individual, acceptable and workable for the health professional and affordable for the public purse they are worthless. I am delighted that the point about the delivery of the health promotion message has already been raised in the debate.

I should like to commend to the House a scheme that has been devised by the Norwich health authority for localised community health care. Its main merit is the getting across to all sections of the community of the message of health promotion. The scheme is based on GPs' practices or groups of practices and it serves population groups of 25,000. It is therefore comprehensible to patients, because in Norfolk, South-West, as in other parts of the country, almost everybody is registered with a GP. Each population group is served by a multi-disciplinary team of professionals and that team includes the GP, thus spanning the somewhat artificial divide that is not perceived by the patient between health authority and family practitioner committee provided services. The team includes community and psychiatric nurses, midwives, health visitors, a speech therapist, a physiotherapist, a clinical psychologist, dietician and occupational therapist. It fosters links with social services and the voluntary sector. The contribution that such a group can make to health promotion within the community on diet, exercise and looking after one's heart can have an impact at local level, where it matters, by involving schools, adult education, commerce and industry, voluntary groups and the local media. It involves a group of health professionals as professional equals, so it can exploit and use to the full, in a way that amounts to more than the sum of the parts, the skills and knowledge of all members of that team to the enormous benefit of the community.

I should like to congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister on her enthusiastic and successful support of health promotion at national level. At the same time, I emphasise that it is the delivery at local level that will ensure that her policies reach people.

10.45 am

Mr. Sam Galbraith (Strathkelvin and Bearsden): I congratulate the hon. Member for Norfolk, South-West (Mrs. Shephard) on her excellent maiden speech. I was particularly impressed by her description of her constituency. It is obviously a beautiful place to live and work. I took to heart her description of the problems in the delivery of health care over such a wide area. Those problems are, indeed, very difficult to solve and I am only too well aware of them in a area such as the Highlands and Islands. It is a matter to which we should direct our attention. I am sure that the House is grateful to the hon. Lady for her remarks, which were delivered in an excellent and articulate manner.

I pay tribute to my predecessor, Mr. Michael Hirst. Michael and I were at university together and I well remember him from the debating chambers of Glasgow university union, where he polished his skills in preparation for the day when he would be a Member of Parliament. I understand that he used those skills highly effectively in this Chamber. My constituents have mentioned my predecessor a number of times and remarked on what an excellent constituency Member he was. It is clear from what they say that he spared no effort to look after them and deal with their problems. I trust that I will be able to do even better than he did. I should like to thank him on behalf of my constituents for the work that he has done in the past.

I am glad to be able to make my maiden speech in this debate on health, for a number of reasons. Health is of particular importance to my constituents. Bearsden is often described in our national dailies as a leafy suburb. That part of Strathkelvin is made up of Bishopbriggs, Kirkintilloch and the villages of Lennoxtown and Torrance and lies beneath the Campsie hills and along the Kelvin river. My constituency has a small industrial base of under 2,000 jobs. The largest single employer is the Health Service. That is why health is of particular importance to my constituency.

I am also pleased to be able to speak in a debate on health because I have been employed in that sector for many years. I must warn the House to be wary of so-called experts such as myself and my large hon. Friend the Member for Kirkcaldy (Dr. Moonie). People such as he and I tend to peddle our prejudices and ride our hobby horses. My hobby horse is the acute sector, its inadequate provision and its inefficient method of delivering care. That is a subject to which I shall return in the ensuing months.

But to avoid peddling prejudices, I shall talk about the promotion of health. It is a subject that is not often dealt with by doctors in the acute sector. Doctors in the acute sector are concerned with the provision of services for the treatment of disease, not specifically the promotion of health, and there is an important difference. The treatment of disease is a proper and excellent end, but it is not the same as the promotion of health. If my specialty were to disappear overnight—let us not pretend that that will happen—and there were no neurosurgeons tomorrow, there would be no significant effect on the nation's health, although a significant effect on suffering.

The promotion of health is a separate subject. It is not necessarily about the acute sector, although that is an important aspect, or about the regular checkups advertised by private organisations offering services at highly inflated prices. In such cases, a number of investigations are carried out, blood pressure is checked, chest X-rays performed and various nondescript tests of no value performed. Promotion of health is not about measuring the serum cholesterol. It is about preventing it from going up—an important point to consider.

We must grasp the fact that the promotion of health is a political issue. I am disappointed that only the junior Health Minister — the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie)—is present and that the Secretary

of State for Employment, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Chancellor of the Exchequer are not here. Every one of them should be here, because they are more important in promoting health than anyone else.

When I started medicine, rheumatic fever was a common desease, causing abnormalities and valvular desease of the heart. Nowadays, a medical student does not have to waste time listening for opening snaps and mitral stenosis. Perhaps my hon. Friend the Member for Kirkcaldy will tell me about that later, because I have forgotten.

When I was a medical student, one could not even mention tuberculosis because it was such a terrible disease. In the town in which I was brought up, we all had relatives who had died of that disease. Rheumatic fever has disappeared and tuberculosis has become a minor disease. This has happened not because of doctors, streptomycin or penicillin but because political activity has changed our social structure and social environment. The change occurred in my town because the Labour-controlled local authority gave everyone a decent house. There were school meals, good education and mass campaigns. They are important in the promotion of health. It is not necessarily a matter of doctors treating disease.

The promotion of health is changing slightly. We now talk about changing lifestyles. I am pleased that the Under-Secretary of State talked about footballers taking alcohol. That is a political issue which requires political action. The hon. Lady cannot hedge away by saying that she wants to get us all to co-operate, although that is important. But she will have to take political initiatives.

The Under-Secretary of State would like us to co-operate and encourage people. One should not start in the way the hon. Lady did when she was appointed junior Minister and blame everyone, saying, "It is all your fault. It is a matter of what you eat. If you did not eat this food, you would not get this disease." She spoke as though she had just discovered some new great philosophy on health, whereas we had been campaigning for changes for many years. To get people to co-operate, we should not blame them. We should take them along with our ideas and make facilities available. I welcome the Heartbeat award, which is a useful innovation. Perhaps the Under-Secretary of State will get the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland —the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth)—who has responsibility for health in Scotland, to look at what is happening in some hospitals, particularly the one in which I worked, which had such facilities.

It was particularly noticeable that the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security did not mention unemployment in connection with health. I can well understand why. There is no question but that there is a relationship between unemployment and health. All the evidence suggests that there is. What is that relationship? Is it spurious? Is it causal and, if so, in what way? Does unemployment cause ill health or does ill health cause unemployment? Some publications show that unemployment clearly causes ill health, especially in terms of mental health. A Sheffield study, which was reported in *Psychological Medicine* in 1982, investigated two groups of school leavers. Those who became unemployed showed a far greater incidence of mental disorders than the employed, whereas the incidence of mental disorders was the same for both groups when at school. That clearly showed a causal relationship between ill health and unemployment.

There is a causal relationship between unemployment and physical ill health. A 1984 *Lancet* publication of an article by Mosner et al, using information from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, showed that in cohorts people who became unemployed had higher standard mortality ratios than those who did not — a ratio of 136. That survey showed that unemployment caused early deaths. It showed that there was no significant increase in the first five years, which is what one would have expected. The survey showed that the wives of the men who became unemployed had higher standard mortality ratios than the wives of employed men, which is what one would expect if unemployment causes ill health.

We can no longer dodge the issue by saying that the evidence is inconclusive. There is a clear causal relationship between unemployment and ill health. Unemployment causes ill health. This requires political solutions. The promotion of health is a political issue which requires political action by every Department. No Department can shrink from this. Together they can promote health, add years to people's lives and life to those extra years. I call upon the Government to take this action.

10.57 am

Sir David Price (Eastleigh): I welcome this debate and especially the excellent maiden speeches by my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, South-West (Mrs. Shephard) and the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith). My hon. Friend spoke about her constituency and her experience of the Health Service in Norfolk. She is chairman of the Norwich health authority. The Select Committee on Social Services has been impressed on its visits to Norfolk by the improvement in health care. I was glad that my hon. Friend mentioned that her part of Norfolk had been a RAWP gainer. So often we hear of London RAWP losers.

I was impressed by the generosity of the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden towards his predecessor, Michael Hirst. This bodes well for the hon. Gentleman's effectiveness in the House. As one who has been a Member for a long time, I am convinced that an individual Member of Parliament gets his ideas across better if he gives his colleagues, especially those on the other side of the House, the benefit of the doubt in their intentions and actions. If the opposite view is taken, the House does not gain and one does not get one's views across. I regret the degree to which hon. Members' motives are being questioned in the House, because it is not good for Parliament. Furthermore, as I said, one tends to be more effective if one is generous. I like to be treated generously and I hope that I treat all hon. Members equally generously.

This debate goes very wide. I would not for one moment dissent from the views of those who point out that the concept of positive health promotion takes us very much wider than the confines of traditional medicine. I agree largely with the remarks of the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) about the importance of environmental factors.

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price). However, it would perhaps help the House if you could tell

[Mr. Frank Dobson]

us whether you have been informed by the Attorney-General that he intends to make a statement on the extraordinary decision to drop the prosecution of those charged with conspiracy to kidnap members of the African National Congress. Does the Attorney-General—in line with what the Prime Minister said yesterday—intend to come to the House——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I can indeed help the hon. Gentleman and the House. I understand that there is to be a statement at 2.30 pm.

Mr. Skinner: Further to the point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I appreciate what you have just said. But surely the important point is that it was the Prime Minister who attacked the ANC in Vancouver. Days later the magistrates' court at Lambeth was dismissing the case on the advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions. One is surely bound to reach the conclusion that the Prime Minister was in collusion on this matter. It should therefore be the Prime Minister——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is sailing very close to the wind with his allegations. He will recognise that he is taking advantage of a point of order. I remind the House that many hon. Members have been sitting here since the start of business, eager to take part in the debate. We should get on with it.

Sir David Price: As I was saying, the hon. Member for Peckham was right to bring to our attention the importance of all the background environmental issues. It is the view of many social historians that more improvements have been made in the health of the nation over the past century and a half as a result of improvements in those factors than have ever resulted from straight medical advance. We are generally agreed on that. The House would also agree that it is not only physical environmental factors that matter; It is also the social and psyhological factors, which affect not only the physical quality of our lives but our whole personality. I draw the attention of the House to the steady increase in mental illness and in stress-related disorders to make my point. I hope that we could agree that the Romans had it about right. The House will recall that their ideal was

"mens sanum in corpore sano"

That means "a sound mind in a sound body", and it is the ideal that we should work towards today.

Taking that as the aim, I draw the attention of the House to the report of the Select Committee on Social Services on primary health care. We reported in February, although I regret that the matter has not yet been debated and that we have not yet had a reply from the Government. Our report on the promotion of health states that

"the next big challenge for the NHS, and one especially for primary health care, is to shift the emphasis of the NHS from an illness service to a health service offering help to prevent disease and disability. So far as doctors and nurses are concerned, health promotion takes two forms—the giving of advice on how to prevent illness and disability or to improve health by changes in lifestyle or diet, and explicit screening programmes for conditions such as cervical cancer or hypertension."

The question arises, "How should we, as a nation, respond successfully to what the Select Committee called "the next big challenge"? To help the House I offer a 10-point programme for action now.

First, we should implement throughout the nation the concept of the multi-disciplinary primary health care unit, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, South-West referred. As she said, it should be based on the group practice, and it would extend beyond the traditional boundaries of the National Health Service. I am extremely keen that it should be associated with the local social services and the voluntary services. As we discovered in our inquiry, that is already happening in some parts of the country. I want it to happen everywhere.

Secondly, the prevention of ill health and the promotion of good health should become mainstream objectives of the whole primary health team. Incidentally, I believe that it would be made easier if we merged the family practitioner committees with the district health authorities, as happens in Scotland at the moment. Paragraph 105 of the Select Committee report states:

"There is a considerable amount of evidence that people seek a doctor's help when they are ill, but given the choice, will seek to visit a nurse to discuss wider health care issues. Nurses have more time than doctors to listen and to offer health education advice."

The most important point of all follows:

"All members of primary health care teams have a role in health education."

That is the real message.

Thirdly, we must develop further the existing screening programmes and — very important — the consequent follow-up when necessary. It is no good having a screening programme unless one can act quickly on the results.

Fourthly, we must continue to encourage immunisation programmes. However, we must improve the monetary compensation given to involuntary casualties of a voluntary system. I have been pleading the cause for years on behalf of constituents who have suffered from vaccine brain damage. Although moves have been made in that direction, compensation of £10,000 simply does not stand up to the judgments coming out of the courts.

Fifthly, I believe——

Mrs. Currie: My hon. Friend may have missed the announcement earlier this year that the amount has increased to £20,000.

Sir David Price: I did, indeed, miss the announcement. I apologise. However, the sum is still not enough when compared with the awards that have been given by the courts.

Fifthly, we must increase and extend the scope of publicly supported health promotion campaigns. More emphasis should be placed on the positive aspects—on how to keep fit rather than on how to get ill. In other words, we should emphasise the "dos" rather than the "dont's". I am thinking particularly of diet, which I know my hon. Friend the Minister has very much in mind.

Sixthly, we should at the same time, press ahead with the very important warning campaigns to the public about the obvious and known dangers, such as smoking, drugs, alcohol, and sexual promiscuity. However, we should try to target such campaigns on high-risk groups rather than going for all-embracing campaigns. The Government were right to make the AIDS campaign general at first, but the evidence suggests that it should now be targeted on high risk groups—particularly on drug abusers or potential drug abusers.

Seventhly, we should encourage periodic medical check-ups for all those in identifiable risk groups. In some occupations—airline pilots are an obvious example—it

is a condition of employment that one has regular medical check-ups. Regular check-ups would involve more and better information about all of us. The Select Committee report states:

"As part of health promotion work, more informaton is needed. Call and recall systems based on age-sex registers are now feasible and, using computers, could be extended to cover the whole population. As the Government says, 'Computer systems can be used to detect when patients are slipping through the net and to increase the effectiveness of preventive health care'."

It would help us to bring about that aim if we brought together the family practitioner service and the district health authorities.

Eighthly, we must have more general practitioners and smaller lists. Paragraph 28 of our report makes this very clear. It states:

"With an ageing population, earlier patient discharge from hospital—particularly of children, increasing opportunities for diagnosis in general practice to reduce referrals to hospital, as well as greater responsibility for the management of chronic disease in general practice and a greater emphasis on a range of preventive services, the case for further reduction in the GP list size seems unanswerable. This must mean the employment of a greater number of GPs, and a significant sharing of care with nurses and other medical workers, together with the encouragement of prevention and self care by patients. We therefore recommend accordingly."

Mr. Galbraith: I cannot disagree with anything that the hon Gentleman has said, but what method does he envisage to reduce general practice lists? Would he consider reducing the capitation fee when a list goes above 1,700 and reducing it still further above 2,500? Is he aware that the Government, in their most recent publication on this, suggested a system in which the capitation fee increased as the number of patients increased, which would lead to even larger general practice lists?

Sir David Price: The hon. Gentleman makes a fair point. I am making my speech in headline form in an attempt to be brief and I should detain the House too long if I developed my views on this, but I believe that the method of payment of GPs must change if we are to achieve what I have in mind. I think that it is sufficient contribution from the Back Benches to mark the fact that this must be done.

Ninthly, we cannot develop the National Health Service from being primarily a national illness service to a full and positive national health service without devoting more resources to it. One could argue that all that is needed is a bit of bridging money, but I do not accept that view. In the long run, one hopes that improved general practice and primary health care and better health promotion will ultimately reduce the number of referrals to hospital, but there are no secure figures on which to base a financial estimate. In my view, we have to accept that more resources must be devoted to this aspect of health.

Finally, we must involve the whole nation in health promotion if we are to succeed in our aims. We in Parliament should be careful not to attempt to impose what we regard as necessary for good health on a possibly reluctant people, on the basis that we in Westminster know best.

I end by cautioning the House not to follow the errors of our Puritan predecessors in the House who in 1652 banned the celebration of Christmas because they regarded it as pagan feasting and the house itself sat on Christmas day that year. No doubt that had something to do with the subsequent rejoicing at the restoration of Charles II. Let us, therefore, be very cautious before trying to ban burgers and chips or bacon butties.

11.13 am

Mr. Ronnie Fearn (Southport): First, I congratulate the hon. Members for Norfolk, South-West (Mrs. Shephard) and for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith) on their maiden speeches. Both have much to offer the House and I hope some day to visit both their areas. I have already visited Norwich.

I am delighted to take over the health and social security portfolio for the Liberal party as I believe that this is one of the most important issues, although it is accorded one of the lowest priorities by the Government. I pay tribute to my predecessors, my hon. Friends the Members for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) and for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood), both of whom put an enormous amount of effort and skill into the job and harried the Government relentlessly on this issue.

I am pleased that today we have a chance to debate the important issue of health promotion. We have long taken the view that the National Health Service is geared far too much to being a curing service and does not concentrate enough on the prevention of ill health. In my view, ill health prevention is far from being a narrow DHSS matter. It should include diet, housing and social policies. The alliance has said:

"To prevent ill health Government and people must attack and remove social deprivation. The most effective way to improve the health of people is to tackle unemployment, poor housing and poverty."

That statement is the complete contrast to the comment of the previous Secretary of State for Social Services, the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield (Mr. Fowler), who replied to a question from my hon. Friend the member for Southwark and Bermondsey about inequality and health:

"I do not accept for one moment that there are horrendous inequalities and the report that the hon. Gentleman is holding—

the Health Divide report—

"is no objective indication that there are." — [*Official Report*, 7 April 1987; Vol 114, c.146.]

The right hon. Member must be the only person who believes that there is no connection between illness and inequality. The appalling nature of the inequality in good health between regions and social classes is clearly shown by the Health Divide report. For example, in the northern region death rates for men of working age are 88 per cent. higher among part-skilled and unskilled manual workers than among the professional and managerial classes, and the rates for women are 70 per cent. higher.

I am concerned at the inactivity of the Health Education Authority. Announced in November but set up only in April, that organisation has done next to nothing since then. I was therefore pleased to hear that the Minister intends to hand over responsibility for the fight against AIDS to that organisation, but the budget quoted today is far too small. What will be the remit, and why has there been an 11-month delay?

Mrs. Currie: That figure was for the rest of this financial year, which is only a small part of the year. Moreover, I do not know where the hon. Gentleman has been since the spring as the whole of the "Look After Your

[Mrs. Currie]

Heart" campaign, among many others, has been run, engineered and co-ordinated by the Health Education Authority.

Mr. Fearn: I accept that, but last November it was regarded as sufficiently urgent to announce the authority of the centrepiece of the Government's AIDS proposals. Who is to be the public's advocate? Does the Minister accept that any worthwhile promotion programme is bound to come up against vested interests, whether they be the interests of tobacco companies or those of other Government Departments worried about their budgets? Does she regard the HEA as a tool of Government or does she expect it to have the power and independence to fight against the vested interests of other Departments? I am reliably informed that in its first flush of enthusiasm the HEA decided to import an American idea — the prevention index. A list of factors was sent to a series of experts and pressure groups, who were asked to rank them in order of precedence as causes of ill health. The results were not published because, I am told, unemployment came second on the list. Will the Minister confirm that and will she publish the results?

We welcome the "Look After Your Heart" campaign as the only significant thing that the HEA has done so far. The campaign is vital because heart disease kills 160,000 people per year—one every three minutes—costs £458 million per year in grants, surgery and hospital beds, and is responsible for one in nine working days lost. I agree with the Coronary Prevention Group that it is ironic that in 1987, the first year of the campaign, taxes on tobacco were not increased despite the well-documented effect of such increases on smoking. Electoral popularity triumphed over health promotion.

We support regular tax increases above the rate of inflation, on smoking, and a ban on all promotion of tobacco products. We also support a more comprehensive health warning about tobaccco and non-smoking as the norm in public places.

The prevention group points out that the Government suggest, and ostensibly support, greater use of exercise, but the Sports Council's budget has been reduced. How can the Government justify that?

We support the prevention group's call for a mandatory format for nutritional labelling which would include saturated fat levels and sugar, fibre and salt content. It is no good telling people to have a healthier diet if we do not provide sufficient information to allow them to make sensible decisions about what they eat.

The Under-Secretary said at the launch of the Government's campaign:

"Heart disease is not a Tory disease; it is not a Government disease."

We do not suggest that it is, but there is a great deal that the Government could and should be doing. If it is not to appear that the campaign is little more than a publicity wheeze for Ministers, rather than a realistic and effective campaign, a number of questions need to be answered.

How long will the campaign last? Ministers are saying different things. Will the DHSS ensure that GPs and others involved are aware of practical solutions so that they can advise their patients? We do not want a campaign aimed merely at the problems. If increased screening for cholesterol is not matched by proper counselling it will be next to useless. Will the Under-Secretary increase the number of community dieticians and restore nutritional standards for school meals? The Government abolished those standards and I do not believe that their restoration would cost money. Will the Under-Secretary also draw up a mandatory code on food labelling?

In the fight against AIDS, with no cure and even a vaccine many years away, health promotion is the only answer. It is vital to have a national co-ordination strategy to fight AIDS which will lay down guidelines and allocate resources for at least 10 years and, thus, involve all-party discussions.

The all-party Select Committee on Social Services produced a report in May, but there has still been no exact Government response. The Government have seriously underestimated the cost of treating AIDS patients; by 1992 about 3·2 million people are liable to be infected. Clearly, we cannot afford more delays.

Many of the measures necessary to combat AIDS are potentially embarrassing to the Government, dealing, as they do, with sex and drug abuse. However, the situation is far too grave for us to be squeamish. The problem is serious enough for the Government to take the bold step of making condoms available free of charge in GP's surgeries and chemist shops.

The pilot schemes involving syringe exchanges must be extended and the Government should consider the desirability of selling sterile syringes across the counter in chemist shops. The problem of AIDS in prison must also be tackled.

The Government or the HEA must plan now advertising campaigns for the next few years. They need to be explicit, but to be careful to avoid blame or to stir up unnecessary fears. More resources are urgently needed for counselling and testing or renewed advertising will swamp the system, as happened previously.

AIDS has overshadowed hepatitis B which can lead to cancers and acute illness, and we must note that there are 200 million carriers of hepatitis B throughout the world. It is different from AIDS, because vaccination is possible and the Government should issue guidelines to health authorities to ensure that health care workers and others at risk are immunised.

The Green Paper on primary health care essentially restricts itself to the family practitioner services. In contrast, the Cumberlege report on community nursing provides a comprehensive and imaginative set of proposals for developing the role of nursing in health promotion. We support the concept of the nurse practitioner and believe that it should be introduced in all areas to complement the services of GPs and to contribute to a more effective primary care service in the community.

The Government should do all in their power to enforce in industry, including agriculture, strict standards to restrict harmful pollution in food, air and water.

The Government make much of the fact that resources are scarce. Rather than cutting hospital provision, they should be investing across all Departments to tackle poor housing, poverty and unemployment, while campaigning against poor diet and, through taxation, against smoking and alcohol. They must also ensure adequate screening systems for women.

Finally, action against vested interests is vital and would be more effective than pretty pictures and words.

11.26 am

Mr. Christopher Gill (Ludlow): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for providing me with the opportunity to make my maiden speech in the debate on the promotion of good health.

May I first pay tribute to my predecessor, Eric Cockeram, who succeeded Sir Jasper More as the hon. Member for Ludlow in 1979. I am sure that the House will wish Sir Jasper a full recovery from his recent illness.

During Eric's second term at Westminster, he was a prominent and effective member of the Public Accounts Committee and of the Select Committee on Trade and Industry. While the hon. Member for Bebington between 1970 and 1974, he had been the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Eric was a capable, concerned, loyal and conscientious Member, who enjoyed the respect of his colleagues. On behalf of his constituents, I thank him for the manner in which he so assiduously represented their interests for the past eight years.

Perhaps I may be permitted to say a few words about my beautiful constituency, which is known to more than a few hon. Members as a very lovely and unspoilt part of rural England. I would describe it as an ideal place in which to live, to work, to holiday and ultimately to retire.

Living in the middle of this predominantly agricultural constituency, I am able to cast my eyes to the east, to the arable areas which have profited so much from our membership of the European Community, and to the west, where the farmer dependent upon livestock has, sad to say, been less advantaged. While the majority of the House believes that a reform of the common agricultural policy will resolve that dilemma and many others, I believe that circumstances and events will ultimately prove that majority to have been wrong in its judgment. I say that, because differences between individual member states of climate and weather, geography and topography, history and traditions, and, not least, markets are too disparate to permit a common solution — quite apart from the obvious political difficulties of achieving a consensus.

We are witness to the absurdity of bureaucrats in Brussels making or amending rules about farming, the practicalities of which are as Greek to them, and a plethora of organisations, to which I shall refer later, seeking to control or stultify the environment in which that industry must operate.

The environment in rural England today is the direct result or consequence of farmers tending their crops, husbanding their resources and producing food, that most essential prerequisite of good health. There is no such thing as bad food, only bad diets. We need to do more as a nation to improve people's knowledge in that regard.

I applaud the statement attributed to my hon. Friend the Minister:

"the Government is determined that people should get accurate information to help them make sensible choices about healthy eating"

It is indeed high time that the public were given the facts. For most people, moderation in all things and a properly balanced diet is the most appropriate advice. As a master butcher and a practical livestock farmer I should like to draw the attention of the House to other facts. Meat, for example, essential protein, vitamins and minerals, and good old-fashioned meat and two veg, is in itself an ideally balanced meal.

It is a fact that less than a quarter of all saturated fats are derived from meat and meat products. Even that proportion can be reduced simply by leaving the fat on the side of one's plate, and that is more than can be said for any other foods, very many of which inevitably contain a much higher proportion of saturated fats. Beef and lamb, much of which is produced in my constituency, is the most natural, unadulterated food in the world.

These same animals, which provide us with good, wholesome, nutritional and healthy food, also help to maintain the balance of nature and keep our countryside so attractive that in my constituency we have attracted the attention of at least half a dozen either statutory or voluntary bodies intent upon its protection and preservation. Those bodies are the Countryside Commission, the Forestry Commission, the Development Commission, the Nature Conservancy Council, the Council for the Protection of Rural England, and the Shropshire Trust for Nature Conservation.

In this one, admittedly large, constituency which it is my pleasure and privilege to represent I have conservation areas, rural development areas, intermediate assisted areas, environmentally sensitive areas, agriculturally less-favoured areas and areas of outstanding natural beauty. However, for anyone living in this idyllic environment who is unfortunate enough to be taken ill, there is but one body to which he can turn—the Shropshire health authority. Even as I speak, that authority is planning closures for want of a few hundred thousand pounds. What consolation, indeed what relevance, is it to the sick and dying, to be told that they live in an area of outstanding natural beauty?

Where is our sense of priority when we spend so much time, effort and cash on preserving the environment but deny the very people who tend that environment the basic right to be treated or, indeed, to die in their own surroundings?

Is there any realisation that the environment which has attracted so much "dogooding" cannot be maintained without people, and that without adequate schools and proper health provision it is the people, not the trees, that are at risk?

If I am conspicuous by my absence from this place, it is because I am manning the barricades in south Shropshire to fight the attempts to close the rural hospitals. Without schools and hospitals we are left with no more that a nice view. I do not believe this Government, who have already done so much to ensure that available resources are targeted towards those in greatest need, will countenance that.

Since 1979 we have had an expanding health budget, but at the same time the demands on the NHS have been growing, not only because of the age structure of the population but also because of improvements in medicine. Against this background I welcome the forthcoming debate on the evolution of the National Health Service. Doubtless this will consider the potential for developing the partnership between insurable health care and that which must inevitably continue to be funded by Government. Meanwhile, real problems exist and in Shropshire the major one is perceived to be the level of resource available. I very much hope that Government commitment to resolve these difficulties will soon be revealed.

11.34 am

Mrs. Audrey Wise (Preston): I congratulate the maidens who have given us such fluent speeches, the hon. Members for Norfolk, South-West (Mrs. Shephard) and for Ludlow (Mr. Gill). I agree with the strictures by the hon. Member for Ludlow about the closure of hospitals in rural areas. He will gain much support from the Opposition if he pursues that line of thought and action. Later in my speech I shall take issue with the hon. Gentleman on one or two of his other statements. I also congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith) and associate myself with his remarks. In his eloquent maiden speech he pointed to the close link between the improvement in social structures and conditions and the improvement in health and the conquest of disease.

I am grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for calling on me to make a maiden speech for the second time in my life. That seems to make me an experienced maiden, which is rather a contradiction in terms. At least it is a more interesting description than "retread". I am glad to be back in the House and especially glad to represent Preston.

I am privileged to follow Stan Thorne, who represented Preston so well for the 13 years during which he was a Member of this House. I know Stan very well. We came into the House together in 1974 and during those first five years I worked closely with him on the many issues in which we have a shared interest. I saw his work at close quarters then and lately I have seen the high regard in which he is held in the constituency of Preston. I am proud that he was pleased to introduce me to his constituents and I am grateful to him for the help that he has given me. I hope to achieve in the representation of the people of Preston, the high target that Stan Thorne has set for me.

I am also pleased to represent Preston because it is a fine town with a strong sense of its own identity. Indeed, it calls itself proud Preston. It has many problems, not the least of which are those associated with the closure of much manufacturing industry. I have no doubt that in the House I shall draw attention to those problems many times. Despite its problems it is a good town, a friendly town, and overwhelmingly a Labour town. I am proud to represent proud Preston.

I am less pleased to have to tell the House that people in Preston suffer higher premature death rates than the national average or even the average in the north-west. They also have a higher perinatal death rate than the national average. I assure the Minister that this is not because Preston people choose to die sooner than their fellows in the rest of the country. Premature deaths in Preston follow closely those areas with the most poverty and the worst living conditions. A recent report was produced by the director of community medicine in Preston, but perhaps the Minister has not yet had a chance to study it. I shall send it to her and ask for her comments. Directors of community medicine have an important role to fulfil and I regret that recent changes in the management of the National Health Service have reduced the influence of community physicians.

I listened with incredulity to the Minister when she said that the health divide is between those who know that their health is in their own hands and those who do not. I cannot understand in what world the hon. Lady lives when she can make such an amazing statement. They are cruel remarks directed at people who are forced to live in conditions that are emphatically not of their own choosing. She scoffs at us for appearing to think that "people are helpless pawns of their circumstances." I do not believe that people are helpless pawns of their circumstances. I believe that the common people of this country, over many years and generations, have fought to improve their circumstances, but that their task is made ever harder by the cruelty and inhumanity of the Conservative party. The way that it conducts this country's affairs is designed to reduce people to being pawns. It steadfastly takes away their rights and their opportunities to defend themselves.

The Minister interestingly talked about the fact that the United States of America spends more on health care than we do, yet we do better. I am only sorry that the hon. Lady does not listen to her own words rather more carefully and draw some conclusions from them. Surely the great difference between this country and the United States of America in the field of health care is that it spends twice as much, it has no national health service and over 30,000,000 people have no health insurance cover. It is a disaster to be ill in the United States of America and, if one is poor, it is an impossibility to be well.

Those are the conclusions that the hon. Lady should draw. When she does draw them, she should draw her Government back from their endeavours to make this country a poor imitation of the United States of America. While she is studying the problems, she should also compare Sweden with the United States, because Sweden has imcomparably better figures for perinatal mortality than the United States. They are both rich countries. The great difference between Sweden and America is that in Sweden there is much less inequality and far more social justice, which is reflected in better lives for babies and more chance for those babies to survive.

The hon. Lady willingly gave divisions by sex and age on health factors in the population, but figures relating to social class were noticeably lacking. I commend to her the British Medical Association Paper on deprivation and ill health. It is a very careful study and it comes to some striking conclusions. If the hon. Lady, who is concerned with the promotion of good health, were to take to heart the statements in the BMA paper, she might manage to convince her Government to cease increasing ill health and to act to improve good health.

I am in favour of changes to our lifestyle. I am not just a non-smoker, I am a positive anti-smoker. But it is idle to harangue people, especially to harangue women in the vulnerable state of being expectant mothers, about their smoking habits. The Government should examine the kind of stresses faced by women in their everyday lives. They should examine the poverty faced by so many women, the lack of power held by so many women and, in particular, the isolation of women. Has the hon. Lady never heard women say, "I must get out of these four walls."? What is her Government doing to reduce isolation, whether in inner cities or in rural areas?

The best way to reduce isolation is to give more social support. Items such as nursery care can make an enourmous difference to the lives that women lead. More opportunities for employment, whether full-time or part-time, would reduce the stress on women by increasing their opportunities for independence and for better incomes. Let us have less emotional blackmail of women and a good deal more help for them.

We are told that people make bad choices. I will tell the hon. Lady some of the bad choices that apparently people in Preston make. They make choices apparently to live in rotten, damp houses in areas that need a good deal of work done on them. These are not free choices.

My grandfather stood for election to a local council in a deprived area in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1932, 55 years ago. In his election address, which is a valuable possession in my family, he made the connection between ill health and bad housing. Everybody who is interested in health must make that same connection today.

There are many factors besides simple overcrowding or lack of facilities. For example, in Preston the borough council is unable to put fences around gardens so that women can allow their children to play in those gardens in safety. There are all the design factors and realities of life on estates where councils are thirsting to make improvements but are prevented from so doing by the Government, even when they have the money in the bank. Preston has over £7 million which it longs to spend on improving its housing stock, yet it is prevented from so doing by Government Ministers.

The hon. Lady said that she is surprised that nurses continue to smoke. Once again, I draw her attention to the stress factor. The nursing staff at the Royal Preston hospital spend a good deal of their time arranging the movement of patients from ward to ward. A stroke patient was moved seven times in three days, and patients are moved because of the closure of surgical beds. I appreciate that the debate is not about the acute service, but those nurses are part of the community who should be in a position to give an example when it comes to stopping smoking. However, their lives are so stressed and their morale so low that they need not lectures but assistance.

Nurses also need less harassment in relation to their residences. To save money, it is the policy of health authorities to dispose of nurses' homes and to harass nurses living in those homes in order to empty the buildings. That is disgraceful. Our nurses have neither peace and tranquillity in their working lives nor in their homes.

Last year the Government abolished the £25 maternity grant. Yet the link between ill health and poverty is so clear, and never clearer than in relation to expectant mothers. The Government said that £25 is a small amount. Anybody with a grain of logic would have increased it, but the Government decided that, since it was so small, they would dispose of it altogether, thus robbing the poorest mothers even of a miserly £25. The Government propose to go further along that path with changes in social security and the introduction of the cash-limited social fund next April.

I am in favour of better food. I take issue with the hon. Gentleman the Member for Ludlow, who said that there is no such thing as bad food, only bad diets. I suggest that good food cannot be the product of factory farming. If food is produced by cruel and inhumane means, we are diminished. I believe that one is endangered by what one puts in one's stomach because of the medication that factory farm animals require to prevent them from suffering epidemics. It does them no good, it does us no good, and it is an insult to our status as human beings.

What about the lettuces that are full of nitrates? I believe in eating a good deal of fresh produce, but I know that my best hope of getting it is to grow it in my own garden. I am lucky enough to have a garden, but my position would be better still if there were more opportunities for motorists to buy lead-free petrol, which would result in my garden being less polluted.

The British Medical Association's paper has much to say about food. It refers to the importance of individuals changing their diet to include fresh vegetables and fruit. It states:

> "Superficially, this advice appears inexpensive to follow. For example, skimmed milk is cheaper than whole milk; red meats are expensive while green vegetables are cheap. However, this cursory analysis ignores the calorific value of the foods. To obtain the same energy intake, a person needs to drink more skimmed than whole milk, at greater expense. Green vegetables and fruit are not very filling and hence even their low cost can seem hard to justify for somebody on a low income."

When the BMA referred to a "cursory analysis" it must have had in its mind's eye a clear picture of the Under Secretary of State.

The London Food Commission has estimated that a diet in accordance with current guidelines costs 35 per cent. more than the amount which poorer families actually spend on food. It detects no relationship between the supplementary benefit rates paid for children and DHSS estimates of energy needs at different ages. Similarly, the Maternity Alliance concludes that a healthy diet in pregnancy would cost a third of the income of a couple on supplementary benefit and half that of a single woman. So, one lectures a single woman about a better diet only if one has a brass nerve. The Under-Secretary of State does lecture her, so she must have that sort of nerve.

I believe in choosing organically grown food. I believe in healthy diets, and I want to know what the Government are doing to help organic growing even so that those who can afford to make the choice have the opportunity of obtaining organic foods.

I believe that the Lady's advocacy of healthy living tends to bring the concept into disrepute. Fewer words, less haranguing and more action would be a more proper approach.

I assure the hon. Lady once again that my constituents do not choose early death. Nor did they choose a Tory Government, and they can make the connection between the two. I shall continue to bring their problems forward and suggest solutions to them. I look forward to the day when a debate like this will be accompanying real action instead of being a substitute for it.

11.53 am

Mr. Michael Shersby (Uxbridge): First, I thank the maiden speakers who have contributed to the debate, especially my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, South-West (Mrs. Shephard). It was delightful to hear her speaking about the lovely county of Norfolk and the interests that she has in it and her remarks about her predecessor, Sir Paul Hawkins, who was much loved and respected in the House.

The hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith) served the best traditions of the House in the way in which he paid tribute to his predecessor whom he defeated at the general election. It is welcomed generally when Members observe the conventions of this place.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ludlow (Mr. Gill) made an extremely interesting speech which found echoes in all parts of the House. He reminded us of the beauty of his constituency. If I were a hunter, I think that I would

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go quango-hunting in Ludlow. We must investigate the vast increase in the number of quangos that appears to have taken place in that part of the country.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ludlow spoke about food being an essential prerequisite to good health, a note which I shall pick up later in my speech. May I also welcome the hon. Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) who on her return to the House made a typically robust speech. I have one thing in common with the hon. Lady in that I am a dedicated non-smoker. Unhappily, I cannot agree with the rest of her remarks, although I had the pleasure of visiting Preston briefly recently en route to another town in the area. Every time I pass through Preston I find it a very interesting historic town. I want to join the hon. Lady in paying tribute to Mr. Stan Thorne, who represented the constituency of Preston very effectively for many years in this House.

I want to declare an outside interest—that I am a member of the council of the Food and Drink Federation and other food industry bodies as declared in the Register of Members' Interests. Because the food industry in this country is very responsible and highly regulated, producing food of very high standards, I believe that it has an important role to play in the promotion of good health. I have no reservations in speaking about it today.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ludlow said that good food is essential for good health. So also is a varied and balanced diet. Fortunately, most people in Britain today have access to good food in sufficient quantities throughout the year, irrespective of the rigours of the seasons. However, not all of them necessarily have the benefit of a sufficiently varied and balanced diet. One of the principal reasons for that is a lack of knowledge about human nutrition. Another reason is that the consumer today is becoming increasingly confused by the conflicting advice received from a variety of bodies, some official and others unofficial.

It is virtually impossible to turn on the radio or television without hearing or seeing some new expert on diet telling us what we should or should not eat. I thought that that situation was described very well by Digby Anderson in the first chapter of a recent book entitled, "A Diet of Reason", published by the Social Affairs Unit. In that he said:

> "The British housewife, her husband and their children are currently bombarded with messages telling them what to eat to become, or stay, healthy."

The point is also made in the book that there is a group of activists in the healthy food debate who claim to have some conclusive evidence about healthy eating. It is time, the group states, for its opinions to be imposed on the population by specific Government policies such as nutritional guidelines and through the intervention in the composition of meals served in schools, hospitals and other institutions. These activists claim to have conclusive evidence on what they say, the population now agrees constitutes a healthy diet. We have heard echoes of that in the House today. Such people are quite sure that we all eat too much of certain foods and too little of others and that our current eating habits cause major killing diseases like heart disease.

However, as the Social Affairs Unit has said, the group urges a radical change in national diet so that we can all reduce the risk of such diseases and live longer and healthier lives. They see that being achieved through the funding of Government propaganda on healthy eating and the banning of the production and advertising of certain foods which that group decrees to be unhealthy. In their different ways, a number of expert authors of the papers contributed to "A Diet of Reason" have completely rejected that position. They make clear that the evidence relating to diet and health is not conclusive.

Much of what is presented to the public, even in reports published by unofficial bodies such as the former National Advisory Committee on Nutritional Education or the Health Education Council is not strictly scientific. There is no single, clear, simple message about the foods that we eat. There is no guarantee that if we change our diet in particular ways many of us will enjoy better health, let alone live longer. The Social Affairs Unit has done a service for the country by bringing those facts to our attention.

What should be the role of the Government in promoting good health through our diet? My hon. Friend the Minister has made it clear in a number of speeches that there will be no national diet and that individual choice is the theme of the Government's food and health policy. I am sure that that is the right policy and I am also sure that the majority of people in this country will be relieved to learn that there are to be no national dietary guidelines and no DHSS cook book, perhaps the worst horror that some of us could contemplate. My hon. Friend has also made it clear that the key to ensuring good nutrition is education, better food labelling and the ability of the consumer to make up his or her mind as to what is best suited to their individual diet. I agree with her views but I hope that she will go further.

Nutrition is a subject that should be part of the course of every medical student. I hope that I may have the support of the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden, as he has a special knowledge of these matters. I feel that if doctors are well informed about human nutrition they will be better equipped to give expert advice to their patients when they have a particular problem, be it obesity or heart disease. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will discuss with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science the need to include the teaching of human nutrition in the school curriculum as soon as possible. Perhaps it should be called the apple-core curriculum. It is certainly an important subject. Far too many people today do not enjoy a good balanced diet simply because they do not have the knowledge to make that possible.

Better food labelling and informed choice will not, by themselves, lead to an improvement in health. We must also ensure that our farmers and the food industry are encouraged to continue to provide the widest possible choice of food and drink products. In a society such as ours, where more women than ever before are at work, processed food is now providing a major part of the diet. In fact, about three quarters of the food we eat in Britain is processed and there are more than 50,000 food and drink products from which to choose. The average supermarket now carries about 10,000 products and the average family buys about 300 different products a year.

It is worth noting that about 80 per cent. of our population now live and work in urban communities and it would clearly be impracticable for everyone to grow, store and preserve their own food. In fact, without food processing it would be impossible to feed our population

of 56 million. Therefore, safe, nutritious and high-quality food makes a major contribution to the promotion of good health and provides an important addition to the availability of fresh food and vegetables.

I was particularly glad to hear my hon. Friend the Minister talk about the work of the new Health Education Authority. She told the House about the programme of health promotion to be undertaken and she made specific reference to the authority's campaigns on AIDS, smoking and heart disease. Those are all national initiatives and they are most welcome. However, a great deal more can be done at local level and I would like to give a few examples of what is happening in the borough of Hillingdon in which my consituency is situated.

Hillingdon health authority is making certain that people know what is available in terms of health care; it is doing that by producing a quarterly newsletter which is now being distributed to over 90,000 residents in the district. One quarter of the newsletter is devoted to health promotion. Trying to deal with the problem of AIDS locally, the health authority runs a helpline, which is available between 10 am and 5 pm and provides free syringes and condoms for drug addicts. Hillingdon also has a cervical cytology call and recall scheme introduced in April last year for women aged between 35 and 60 and for those who have had three or more pregnancies. It has also introduced cervical cytology screening for health authority staff.

We in Hillingdon are participating in the "healthy hearts" and "look after your heart" campaigns, and we have an annual healthy heart run at Harefield hospital. Most people have heard of Harefield, because it is one of the two great centres in this country providing the expertise to enable people to have heart transplant and bypass operations. The local health authority has restricted smoking on all its premises, as has the borough council. Those are some examples of what one borough is doing; I am sure that others are making similar moves in the right direction.

A tremendous drain on national resources is caused by the treatment of some major diseases. The latest figures for expenditure on the anti-AIDS programme show that resources of about £50 million will be expended in the forthcoming year. Heart disease is costing £400 million, smoking-related diseases another £400 million. But I was staggered to hear my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services say in his Blackpool speech that alcohol-induced illness now costs £2 billion. That is a substantial sum, and a massive drain on the resources of the National Health Service.

When the Minister winds up, I hope that she will say a word or two about measures that may be taken, either by her Department or by the Health Education Authority, to deal with that major problem. The scale of the resources demanded to deal with it makes the expenditure on heart disease pale into relative insignificance. I do not say that in any light-hearted way, and every hon. Member will surely agree that something must be done to tackle such an enormous problem. Two billion pounds is a lot of money out of a health budget of £19 billion this year, rising next year to £21 billion. Anyone who feels that we are not spending enough on health should bear in mind that £21 billion is a pretty massive sum by any standards.

My hon. Friend the Minister referred to the improvements in the lifespan of people in this country. In my own lifetime of just over 50 years, life expectancy at birth has increased from 58·7 to 71·6 years for men, and from 62·9 to 77·4 years for women. As my hon. Friend said, that is due in part to the elimination or control of major infectious diseases such as smallpox, tuberculosis, diptheria, cholera and poliomyelitis. However, it is also due to better nutrition and a better standard of living.

I accept that, as Opposition Members have said, many homes still fall below the standards that we would wish to see. There are still too many damp homes, in particular. Every hon. Member has the problem in the winter months of dealing with the complaints of constituents living in damp homes. Through our housing programmes, I am sure that we shall continue, both nationally and locally, to tackle that problem.

The principal activity in which both the DHSS and the Health Education Authority should be involved is that of tackling the major diseases to which I have just referred and securing their elimination. They are the areas in which the maximum loss of life is taking place. They are the major drain on scarce resources. If we could eliminate the expenditure of £3 billion on those diseases alone, we should have more money to spend on the improvement of the inner cities, on better housing and on ensuring the promotion of good health. Anyone who has travelled around the world knows that we are very privileged to live in a country where health standards are high and where every citizen has access to health care. That should not be lost sight of in this debate. I wish all power to the Minister's elbow. She should keep up the good work. We shall all give her our full support.

12.10 pm

Dr. Lewis Moonie (Kirkcaldy): I join other hon. Members in congratulating those hon. Members who have made their maiden speeches today. The hon. Members for Norfolk, South-West (Mrs. Shephard) and for Ludlow (Mr. Gill) eloquently described the problems that are faced in rural constituencies in an effort to maintain access to health facilities. That is often overlooked by those with less rural constituencies such as myself. My hon. Friend the Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) is an experienced parliamentarian and does not need my congratulations, but I welcome what she said and the polemical way in which she said it. At times like this it is good to introduce a little controversy on to the Floor of the House. I congratulate also my hon. and small Friend the Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith). We worked closely together for many years, and I hope that we shall do so again in this House.

It would be remiss not to say something about the speech of the hon. Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price). It was very impressive. I have rarely heard a speech from Conservative Benches to which I listened with such interest and with which I was in such agreement. I welcome the report, and I hope that it will be acted on promptly.

Today's subject is one of the most important that we shall be discussing during this Session of Parliament—the means by which a relatively wealthy nation like ours can foster the health and well-being of its people. Good health is not just a matter of ensuring that the NHS is adequately staffed and funded. Nobody would disagree that that is important. It is not just a matter, either, of another advertising campaign in an attempt to market good health like any other commodity.

Today, alas, the Minister has shown that she has learnt very little during the period in which she has been in office.

[Dr. Lewis Moonie]

What are we to say if people are unhealthy? Do we say that they are to eat Flora instead of butter, or that they should eat muesli instead of cornflakes? That is fine, but can we really expect them to take advantage of the advice that we give them? It cannot, surely, be the Government's fault if people are too foolish, or ill-educated, or live too far north to take advantage of the good advice that is given to them, can it?

Mrs. Currie: Would the hon. Gentleman join me in advising people to eat porridge?

Dr. Moonie: But of course. One can tell by the size of the hon. Member who is standing opposite the Minister that it is a most excellent food, particularly when it is eaten with cream washed down with whisky. But that is only on very rare occasions—usually on 31 December. There is only one thing that is wrong with porridge. For it to be palatable, it needs a fair amount of salt, and there is some evidence that the consumption of salt is bad for us. Perhaps, therefore, porridge is not quite so good for us as we may think.

Governments must promote good health. It cannot be left just to the individual. Individual behaviour is ultimately responsible for much ill health, but it is only ultimately so. Healthy choices can be made only in the context of a society which gives everybody a fair chance of making them in the first place. That is something which we in Britain have so far manifestly failed to provide. Death and disease arise because Governments fail to prevent them — not just this Government, but all Governments. Is the Minister asking the House to believe that a person living in poverty, in damp, overcrowded, ill-heated housing, in a bedsit with young children with no prospect of employment and miles from decent shops and, possibly, from health facilities can make appropriate choices about his or her health? I am certain that the Minister has read the reports of Sir Douglas Black and that she must have listened to the medical profession, nurses, social workers and others.

We live in a society which makes illness much easier to achieve than health, and it is up to the House and the Government to create the conditions which will make good health a reality, not just a dream. What, therefore, should our priorities be? Members on both sides have touched on general priorities—the abolition of poverty must be a prime consideration, the provision of good housing, the chance of a decent well-paid job for everybody, access to warmth and comfort and a well-funded Health Service with its objectives clearly defined and monitored by the Government to ensure that they are met.

I shall give the House an example of one way in which we fail to monitor objectives. I am from Scotland, as hon. Members can undoubtedly tell from my accent. I am sorry that the Scottish Minister with responsibility for health is not present. It was obvious that Scottish Members would speak today, and our Health Service is differently organised from that of England and Wales, as it is organised through the Scottish home and health department. When the Labour Government were in power, they commissioned a report which was published in 1980 and accepted by the then Government. It was entitled SHAPE, "Scottish Health Authorities' Priorities for the Eighties". The main priorities in the report were health promotion and the provision of services, especially community services for elderly, the mentally ill, mentally handicapped and disabled people. The money for them was intended to come from other services which were being provided.

Over the past eight years, I have worked in the Health Service in preventive medicine and I am sad to say that those priorities have not been met. Even the monitoring has not been carried out effectively, because in many cases health boards have been unable to give the Government the information that they sought. What do we have now? We have failed to meet the priorities, so we have another report called SHARPEN — the name has obvious connotations — "Scottish Health Authorities Revised Priorities for the Eighties and Nineties". It is intended to focus our attention more accurately on the priorities of the day. Sadly, the priorities have been reduced in number and the report has not yet been published, despite the fact that it was completed six months ago. Instead of concentrating on the well-being of the elderly, the mentally ill and handicapped people, only elderly people will be a priority. The others have been downgraded — not, I suspect, because we have answered their needs and developed the services that we were supposed to, but because we cannot meet the objectives set.

There are many reasons for that. Government reports tend to be unrealistic. The supposition that resources can be transferred from acute services to services for those who are chronically sick and disabled is ill-founded if acute services are underfunded in the first place. The length of waiting lists throughout the country suggest that that is so. Our acute services are underfunded, so we cannot transfer money from them.

It is difficult for authorities to work together and to plan effectively. That is perhaps a further reason why the initiative failed. Above all, it has failed because of the abysmal lack of quality in the Home and Health Departments' monitoring and control. The Government must get to grips with the problem of the inability of their Departments to do what they want them to. I hope that the SHARPEN report will sharpen our performance in Scotland.

Community care will, alas, be something of a joke unless it receives the resources that it needs. Health promotion is about promoting good care for people as well as preventing illness. It is no consolation for someone who is waiting for a hospital bed or an operation to be told that the Government are spending money on promotion. More resources must be found, but the Government will probably disagree with me as to the best method of doing that.

I have mentioned a few of the general priorities that the Government should have, and in conclusion I shall touch on some matters that have already been mentioned. I have already mentioned funding for the care of elderly, mentally ill, handicapped and disabled people. Some 100,000 death occur every year as a result of inaction on smoking. We should ban tobacco advertising and ban smoking on public transport, restaurants, public buildings and shops. We should be looking at areas where smoking is permitted rather than those where it is forbidden.

If we are to believe the Goverment's philosophy that advertising is an effective means of promoting good health, surely we must accept the corollary that it is also an effective means of promoting bad health. Some 100

times as much is spent on advertising bad health through tobacco advertising as is spent on promoting good health by advising people to avoid it.

Mrs. Teresa Gorman (Billericay): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that, by banning things that we disapprove of, we would be on a very slippery slope? Is he aware of a book called "Pure, White and Deadly", which is all about sugar and sweeties? Would the hon. Gentleman ban sugar, which is also a tremendous health hazard? The hon. Gentleman is embarking on a very slippery slope when he is talking about banning things with which we disagree.

Dr. Moonie: I have not once mentioned banning smoking or stopping people smoking altogether. I am speaking as a smoker; my pipe is in my pocket. I am not speaking as a puritanical Member or as a killjoy who is trying to deprive others of their pleasures. I know that smoking is bad for people, but the fact remains that I enjoy it, as do others. I am saying that smokers should be prevented from harming other people. Those who manufacture killing products should be prevented from advertising them. It has been demonstrated in other countries that banning advertising is effective and it makes it less likely that young people will take up smoking. Non-smokers should be allowed to exist without being polluted by those of us who smoke. Our young people should be prevented from taking up a habit that will probably lead to a life-long addiction. Tobacco is the most addictive substance known to man. It is worse than heroin, cocaine, or alcohol.

Some hon. Members have mentioned alcohol and its enormous social cost. Again, I am a drinker and I do enjoy it, but fortunately I do not drink to excess. The Government would be well advised to take careful heed of the overall experience of Scotland since the relaxation of licensing laws before attempting to do the same thing in England and Wales. There is no evidence whatsoever that that relaxation has been beneficial in Scotland. The best that can be said is that the effect has been neutral: it may not have been a good thing. I know that the Government intend to introduce legislation to relax the licensing laws, but I urge them to take careful heed—I am sure that many Conservative Members will agree with this—of the experience elsewhere before they do so. Alcohol ingestion causes thousands of deaths each year on our roads. The time has come for us to introduce random breath testing in an attempt to stamp out this curse. That is the only way to give the police the means to take effective action against it. Advertising alone will not be enough.

Health promotion depends on collective action, not just on individual behaviour. It depends on Government action. Let us remember the World Health Organisation definition of health: a state of complete mental, physical and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or deformity. Let us have action, not words.

12.25 pm

Mr. Alastair Goodlad (Eddisbury): I add my voice to those of hon. Members who have congratulated the maiden speakers. The hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith) spoke with great knowledge and authority, and I hope that he will participate in many more health debates. He succeeded Michael Hirst, who was a popular and distinguished Member. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will not take it amiss if I say that we miss Michael Hirst and hope to see him back here.

The hon. Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) has been very much in our thoughts during her temporary absence, partly because those amendments to the Finance Bill which bear her name and that of the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) were frequently on our lips. She made a characteristically robust speech and her return is welcome on personal grounds. She is welcomed back by all those who believe that a robust and healthy democracy needs a robust and healthy Opposition.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ludlow (Mr. Gill) has made a great impact in his constituency, as I know because I represent a constituency in Cheshire, the county next door. My hon. Friend's speech had much meat in it, and I know that he will have a great impact in the House, as well.

As my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State said, an important aspect of good health is the promotion of better mental health. In that context nothing is more important than the problem of schizophrenia. Sufferers from schizophrenia occupy one in four of our hospital beds. About one person in 100 suffers from the illness at some time during his life. About a third have a single attack; about a third go through a cycle of attack followed by recovery; and about a third are reliant for the whole of their adult lives on health and social security provision.

The symptoms of schizophrenia are heartbreaking for family and friends and appalling for the patient as he or she suffers delusions and hallucinations, perhaps hears voices, withdraws from family and society, loses the will to work and suffers acute mental stress. I am sure that all hon. Members have come across sufferers among family, friends and constituents. I saw schizophrenia at first hand in the mental illness hospital of which my late father was the medical superintendent and which was my home throughout my childhood and early youth.

The problem is massive. In this country there are about a quarter of a million sufferers and in the world at least 17 million. Schizophrenic patients occupy one in four of our hospital beds, although more than 67,000 inmates of mental illness hospitals have been sent into the community since 1959. About a third of our prison population suffers from the illness, many in prison for minor offences committed while under its influence. A number of sufferers live at home. Others live in various forms of accommodation in the community. Many live rough.

Beyond the statistics lie two things. First, there is human suffering on an enormous scale by schizophrenics and their families whose lives can be dominated and ruined by the effects of the illness. Secondly, there is the massive economic cost of hospital provision, community care, prison resources and the wasted lives and talents of otherwise healthy people.

What is the solution? There is no cure for schizophrenia nor is it know what precisely causes the condition. Neuroleptic drugs, such as Largactil, are used to control the acute symptons of schizophrenia by blocking the messages passing between the brain cells. Some people think that the illness is caused by the interaction between a person and his environment, but most researchers believe that it is a disturbance in the biochemistry of the brain. It may come about by the triggering of an inherited

[Mr. Alastair Goodlad]

predisposition by stress or hormonal upsets. It may be associated with viral or other infection, which may be genetically transmissible. Nobody knows.

Research is being carried out to determine, first, what, if any, is the inherited factor of predisposition, secondly, to identify the triggering factors, and, thirdly, to discover more about the biochemistry of the brain, in the hope that more effective drugs can be developed. Recent developments in molecular genetics are such that it may now be possible to analyse the genes of sufferers. The PET brain scan now makes it possible to see what is happening in the live brain. There are about 20 teams in the world using the machine. There is only one in Britain. The machines cost £2 million and the one in this country is at Hammersmith hospital. I understand that it has been out of action for some time and is rarely available for research on schizophrenia.

There is a massive task for schizophrenia research if money and enthusiasm are available. Hitherto the disease has been unfashionable and underfunded. The Medical Research Council spends over £100 million a year. Just over £5 million of that is spent on mental health and only about £500,000 on schizophrenia. It is obviously difficult for outsiders to challenge the priorities of the council, but the amount devoted to schizophrenia seems small when measured against the scale of the problem. While research into the neurobiology of the normal brain may appear more important than specific research into schizophrenia, it would be an inexcusable tragedy if suitable and promising projects failed through lack of finance.

Research into some "fashionable" diseases, for want of a better word, is funded by other means — through charities for example. However, here — as in other countries — very little extra money is available for schizophrenia research. The National Schizophrenia Fellowship of Great Britain, MIND, the Richmond Fellowship and SANE — Schizophrenia — a National Emergency, established last year—are carrying out vital work, not only in seeking to raise money for research into the cause, treatment and eventual cure of the illness, but by seeking to raise public awareness of the problem. Their efforts, and those of *The Times* and Marjorie Wallace—the winner of last year's British Campaigning Journalist of the Year Award for her work on the subject—are of major importance.

There is an unanswerable human and economic case for the Government stepping up their efforts—including the Health Service research programme — to support research into finding a cure, and I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will co-ordinate efforts to ascertain what more can be done.

In the absence of a cure for schizophrenia, I fear that, despite the dedication of those involved, the needs of schizophrenic people in the community are not being met as well as they could be, and must be. At a time when mental illness hospitals are being emptied of many of their patients but still kept open, there is an urgent need for adequate resources, co-ordination and planning so that the community can cope.

Community psychiatric nurses, day centres, voluntary organisations and so on are under desperate pressure to look after former psychiatric in-patients. Of the thousands of people discharged from mental illness hospitals, a tiny proportion go into local authority residential care. Many areas do not have a home or hostel to care for the mentally ill. It is not acceptable to run down mental hospitals before the planned network of hostels, workshops and day centres are built. It is estimated, for example, that 60 per cent. of the homeless are discharged mental patients, mostly schizophrenic. They have a crying need for sheltered employment. Sufferers are taken by the police under section to mental illness hospitals and refused admission. People accommodated as "vulnerable homeless" become "voluntary homeless" under the influence of the disease and become ineligible for council accommodation. We must not stand by and watch the creation of a new lost tribe of destitute homeless people who are abandoned without treatment and end up without care in bad lodgings, in prison or underneath the arches. That is in danger of happening.

Community care of the mentally ill is a massively complex operation, involving not only finance and dedication on the part of those involved but a readiness on the part of society to welcome mentally ill people into the community.

Understanding and, indeed, consent by the public to the community care of the mentally ill, can be achieved only with adequate resources and careful co-ordination. Mental hospitals must not be run down more quickly than psychiatric support facilities in the community are ready to take their place. The objective of returning mental patients to the community is not to save money but to provide better care and service. I understand that some regional authorities have set up bridging funds for the purpose. All should do so. The Department must be alive to the need to provide bridging finance while institutions remain open but not full and community care is under pressure. Local authorities are not consistent in the provision of more services for the mentally ill any more than they are consistent in other matters. Channelling bridging money through the joint consultative committees of local and health authorities, together with local voluntary organisations, can help to ensure that money is well spent.

Health authorities must be encouraged to contract with local authorities and voluntary organisations. Social security should be able to meet the board and lodging costs of discharged mentally ill patients in local authority homes or in NHS-run residential facilities as well as in private accommodation and voluntary homes. I should like my hon. Friend the Minister to institute and co-ordinate an interdepartmental review of the care of the mentally ill in the community to ensure that all that can be done is being done.

Until the causes of schizophrenia are known and a cure found, the responsibility for coping with this great problem lies with the Government, with local authorities, with voluntary organisations and charities, with families and with individuals. We must ensure that the burden is borne humanely, fairly and ever more effectively.

12.36 pm

Mr. John Battle (Leeds, West): I, too, congratuate all those Members who have made their maiden speeches in the debate. I thank them and wish them well in their service to the House. If it is not invidious to single out one of them, I should thank the hon. Member for Ludlow (Mr. Gill), who gave a portrait of a constituency which contrasts totally with my inner city area. To empasise one

point in his contribution, I support him in urging the Government to obtain accurate information before making decisions about health provision.

I wish to present a case study of a hospital visit. The Minister recently visited Leeds to open a charity-built bungalow for families visiting Killingbeck hospital, and to look at NHS provision in the city. Many people in Leeds remain deeply sceptical about the purpose and result of that visit in terms of the Government's promotion of good health and wonder whether the Minister took back to the Department a searching concern to tackle the real and increasing health needs not just in Leeds but throughout the country.

Crucial to this debate is the context in which the Minister's message of good health promotion is promulgated. The Minister has received representations from the Leeds western health authority, which faces a budget crisis this year. In September it announced a budget deficit of about £750,000 in the current financial year. The chairman has spelt out what that crisis means. He says that it is the result of Government underfunding for agreed national pay awards for staff, which absorb any notional budget growth, and of the fact that there was no extra provision in the budget for growth to meet increased needs such as AIDS treatment and child abuse. Moreover, there was no recognition in the setting of that budget of the fact that technology needs updating in a teaching hospital and that such hospitals receive many tertiary referrals. As the Minister commented on her visit to Leeds:

"What my visit has taught me is that we have in Leeds one of the greatest teaching hospitals in the world and we must not lose that."

The practical implication of that statement is surely that there must be proper budgets to back up the hospital and its provision.

As a result of the budget crisis, health authority managers have had, in their words, to

"lower the budget ceiling of the service."

That has meant the closure of wards. It is predicted that one ward at the Leeds general infirmary will be closed for the next eight years. A surgical ward has been reduced to five-day working and there are insufficient resources to cope with child abuse. Support services to handicapped children in the community have been reduced and there are cash limits on orthopaedic and rheumatology appliances and on the purchase of the newly developed drugs to which the Minister referred at the start of the debate. There has been no progress in promoting good health policies, which are being reduced to no more than lip service.

When the Minister made her fact-finding visit to Leeds, child cancer victims were queueing for beds. Surely the health of our children is the key to the future good health of the nation. One of my constituents, three-year-old Danielle Wilson, is a cancer victim. The Leeds children's cancer ward, which covers the whole of Yorkshire and Humberside, is desperately overstretched and underfunded. About 85 new cases are diagnosed each year and more beds are urgently needed.

The Leeds cancer centre is one of 90 in Britain and I understand that only the Bristol centre is anywhere near adequately funded. Charities have to raise funds to pay the wages of doctors working in the Leeds centre. The *Yorkshire Evening Post* is supporting a campaign for the extension of provision to cover child cancer victims. A report on the problem is with the Minister and it would be helpful to hear from her what immediate steps the Government intend to take.

When the Minister was told about the crisis facing the children's cancer unit in Leeds, she said:

"It tears my heart out."

That is not an adequate response. She has a responsibility to demand practical action from her Department. Her responsibility includes challenging the Treasury which is pressing for reduced NHS provision. Treasury-dominated budget reductions are translated by the new managers of health authorities into the language of "productivity and throughput". Patients are being regarded as units of production; people's needs are being written out of the equation.

My local health authority treasurer, told me that Treasury-led budget planning was not sufficiently sophisticated to take account of people's needs and of matters such as the demographic evidence of the increasing number of elderly people in certain areas. In that case, we need to ask why health authorities are not budgeting for the increased health needs of our people.

I should like to ask the Minister to take action on what she learned as a result of her ministerial fact-finding visit.

In the present context that must mean challenging Government budget attitudes and increasing budget provision for the National Health Service. The Minister must challenge the Treasury limits because people need to be convinced that NHS provision is not being reduced to ministerial media events. The Minister's contribution to this debate will simply be regarded as cosmetic in the context of the popular experience of reducing National Health Service provision.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): The hon. Gentleman says that he is giving us a case study, but in the intellectually valid case study one must give all the facts. The hon. Gentleman is giving us a catalogue of facts which do not include the increase in staff in his health authority, the increase in the number of patients being treated and the increase in the budget over and above inflation. Nationally, all three of those things have happened. Is the hon. Gentleman telling the House that Leeds has been singled out by the Government for a decrease in those things and is he giving us only part of the story?

Mr. Battle: I shall continue to present the case study in detail, as the hon. Gentleman has requested it. The facts and figures are there and have been put forward by the health authorities to the Government. Those authorities have asked for action to increase their budgets and they are still awaiting a reply. The Minister gave the clear message to Leeds to stop smoking, but in her wake she left an uproar because of her off-the-cuff and casually insensitive attitude. The Minister was made aware that premature babies in the city were being turned away from the Leeds intensive care unit because of a lack of facilities to cope with all the babies in need of treatment. Worse, during her visit the Minister said that Leeds women probably had a higher than average rate of premature births because they smoked a lot. Her comments hit the headlines and that evening the *Yorkshire Evening Post* carried the headline: "Parents' fury at 'insensitive' Edwina". For the interest of the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett), I shall read the article:

"Dr. Dear confirmed he had spoken to Mrs. Currie about further funding for the unit and had pointed out to her that

[Mr. Battle]

premature births in the area were above the national average. 'She implied that might be because women around here smoke a lot. I explained there were other factors but she did not seem keen to discuss the whole issue. I also told her we had to rely on charities to provide life-saving equipment and she seemed to think this was a good thing.'"

The editorial headline in last week's newspaper said, "Arrogance that calls for an apology".

Mrs. Currie: I am sure that the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman), who is on the Opposition Front Bench, would join me in saying that it does the hon. Gentleman's constituents and particularly those tragic babies no service whatever to ignore the fact that smoking has a great deal to do with prematurity and with, the incidence of handicap during pregnancy and afterwards. It is a simple matter of fact and we help no one if we ignore it or deny it.

Mr. Battle: I am grateful to the Minister for her intervention, because it prompts me to go further and press the case made by the editor of the *Yorkshire Evening Post*. In his editorial the editor spelt out in detail what he meant. He said:

"It could almost be a chapter out of a Dickens novel.

Young mother gives premature birth to twin daughters. She turns up at hospital for the vital intensive nursing care they need and is told there is no room for them.

The nearest help is over 100 miles and two hours' travelling time away."

This is an actual case and if any hon. Member wants further details he will find them on the front page of the newspaper which gives the name of the family concerned. The editorial goes on:

"But this is 1987 not 1887. And the traumatic story is fact not fiction.

Fortunately the little girls survived. We are not sure about 12 other similar cases where premature babies have been turned away from St. James's Hospital, Leeds.

An experienced doctor involved in intensive care at St. James's makes a chilling point: 'Long distance travel can be detrimental and we are not only talking about death but about the quality of survival and reducing the risk of handicap'.

The hospital is short of funds. Although it is equipped with eight intensive care cots it is so short of staff it is often reduced to operating only four of them.

Meanwhile with a characteristic turn of arrogant alacrity Health Minister Mrs. Edwina Currie dismisses the whole crisis by inferring that if mothers did not smoke there would be no premature-baby problem.

That facile remark deserves an immediate apology. Not only to the caring mothers themselves, but to the devoted medical staff who are fighting to provide a vital service on a shoestring budget.

This newspaper has already exposed the need for more facilities at St. James's paediatric unit, where the treatment of child-cancer sufferers is nearing breaking point."

In conclusion, the article states:

"The Government may continue to crow about a healthy economy, Mrs. Currie may continue to hog the public eye with her advice on healthy diets; but how long can they ignore the fundamental problem of the health of a health service which can no longer care for its patients?"

In the light of that article, what are the Minister's real objectives in the debate? Is it to have a do-it-yourself Health Service? In reality, do Ministers visit constituencies but not listen? What we are hearing from the Minister is a merciless counsel of despair — "sick people, heal yourselves".

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): It will be evident to the House that many hon. Members still wish to speak in this important debate. I appeal for short contributions. If hon. Members were able to restrict themselves to 10 minutes, there would be fewer disappointed hon. Members at the end of the debate.

12.51 pm

Mr. Roger Sims (Chislehurst): The hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) is perfectly entitled to describe the situation in his own constituency and to put his own interpretation on it. However, I am sure that he will excuse me if I do not pursue his line of argument. We in the House of Commons are accustomed to being both misrepresented and misunderstood, but one of the grossest misrepresentations is often when we see a cartoon showing rows and rows of uniform figures. Whatever else we may be, we are not that. This morning we had a further demonstration of the wide range of abilities, backgrounds and expertise that are represented in the House. I join with other hon. Members in extending congratulations and good wishes to the hon. Members who made their maiden speeches this morning. We shall look forward to hearing more from them.

I am glad to see that the hon. Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) has returned to us — with, if anything, renewed vigour. I was glad that she was able to find an alternative to the inelegant expression of "a retread", although I was slightly surprised that she preferred to call herself an experienced maiden, with its sexist overtones.

Illness and disease can affect us all at any time, unpredictably and inexplicably. We also know that there are some illnesses and diseases that can be minimised and avoided. The very fact that we are debating today not treatment but prevention, demonstrates the increasing realisation that there is scope for policies to promote positive steps to promote good health. Some 10 years ago I sat on what was then the Expenditure Committee that investigated, and produced a report on, preventive medicine, in which we made a number of recommendations. We have come some way since then, but if one re-reads the report, one realises that we still have a long way to go.

As my hon. Friend the Minister quite rightly said in opening the debate, we each ultimately have responsibility for ourselves — to use the current jargon, for our own lifestyles. It is up to us to decide how and what we eat, whether or not we drink sensibly, whether we take adequate exercise, whether we organise our lives so as to least minimise stress, and whether we have medical checkups from time to time. However, we can all be influenced by Government, by the agencies of Government and by those whom we come into contact with in the medical sphere — doctors, nurses and chemists.

The conversion of the Health Education Council to an authority has given the whole sphere of health education a higher profile, and I was glad to hear this morning of further responsibilities being transferred to it. It has a formidable task, and I shall give only brief illustrations. Its admirable document entitled "Broken Hearts" sets out an analysis of the figures for coronary heart disease and reveals that in one year 146,813 people living in England died from coronary heart disease. It appears that 17.2 per cent. of all these deaths came before the age of 55. That represents the loss of about 26 million work days a year. On average, nearly 6,000 hospital beds are occupied each day by patients with coronary heart disease, and the cost

is about £450 million a year. Only yesterday my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State produced figures in a written answer on alcohol-related road accidents and revealed that the cost of alcohol misuse is £112 million in patient treatment and general practitioner services alone. If these figures could be reduced, more money would be available for the treatment of the unavoidably ill.

Reference has been made already to smoking, the largest avoidable cause of illness and disease. I have spoken on the topic previously and made my case, and on this occasion I confine myself to say that prohibition would be impracticable. However, there is no denying that if tobacco had been only recently invented, its introduction and marketing would have been forbidden. The extent to which people are still smoking, especially the young, is extremely worrying, and there are two steps that the Government could take. One step would be to increase the price, as is being urged by the British Medical Association, which would reduce the sale of tobacco products to the young. The second step would be to invite my hon. Friend the Minister, as the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) did, to reflect on the sum that the tobacco industry spends on the promotion of its products and to compare that sum with the resources that are made available to organisations such as the Health Education Authority and ASH for advertising and education.

Alcohol is often described as a problem, but let us be clear about the issue. The problem is that there are some who consume and abuse alcohol—in other words, the problem does not lie with the product itself. When we talk about alcohol-related road accidents, we could refer to petrol-related road accidents. After all, both elements are involved. The issue is how the product is used by consumers. I must declare an interest as I am the parliamentary adviser to the Scotch Whisky Association. I became so involved through my interest and its interest in alcoholism. The association is much concerned about alcoholism and does much to promote sensible drinking as well as putting the problem in its perspective. I am interested in the establishment of the ministerial group to which my hon. Friend the Minister has referred and I hope that she will be able at a later stage to tell us rather more about its remit. It certainly has a wide area of study, including the control of under-age drinking, the need for education and information on the drinking habits of the young, the effect of alcohol and the relative strengths of measures of different forms of alcohol.

There is a need for workplace schemes to recognise and help those who have drink problems. There is a need also to support local counselling services. I am involved in one in the borough which comes within my constituency, which is doing its best to offer a counselling service on a shoestring budget. There is a need for more training for doctors, nurses and social workers to ensure that they recognise alcohol problems when they come across them.

I have no doubt that the study group will be addressing itself to pricing. Alcohol is already highly taxed in the United Kingdom compared with other countries, and to increase the tax here would penalise the majority of alcohol consumers who drink the product properly as against the 2 per cent. of users who abuse it. There is also some evidence that the real alcoholic will still buy the product whatever the price and if the price is beyong him, he will turn to an inferior form of alcohol which will do him ever more harm.

I have mentioned areas where the Government can act. However, the people most able to promote good health are those who meet the population face to face—chemists, nurses and doctors. The Green Paper on primary health care visualised a larger role for chemists. As the chemists point out, there are 6 million daily visits to pharmacies. Therefore, pharmacists have more contact with the public than any other public health professional. They are qualified professional people who see healthy people. The pharmacy is the ideal place to impart information verbally and through the distribution of health education literature.

We look forward to the White Paper on primary care shortly. In a speech which the Secretary of State for Social Services described as lifting the corner of the veil on such care, he listed one of the four objectives as the aim to boost health promotion. He hinted at a chance in doctors' contracts to encourage high performance. I hope that that high performance will include work on prevention. There could be a special role for the general practitioner. That is certainly the view of GPs in my health authority in Bromley, an area that has developed strategic proposals for health care and has a plan for improving vaccination and immunisation rates.

A group of which my GP is a member has taken as its starting point the World Health Organisation programme "Health for All by the Year 2000", which the United Kingdom is supporting. The aim is to reduce the incidence of certain diseases by specified percentages by the year 2000. That can be done and is being done in some countries.

Some diseases have not always been with us. The group to which I have referred states that heart attacks were virtually unknown earlier this century, yet it is estimated in my health authority area that 31 per cent. of deaths last year were caused by heart attacks. At the turn of the century, medical test books referred to angina as rare and something which a GP might come across once a year but which did not occur in women. Now, alas, it is all too common, particularly among women.

If these diseases gradually increase, they can be gradually diminished, as is the case in some countries. Alas, the United Kingdom still has the highest rate of heart disease in the world. We can and must reduce those figures.

The group to which I have referred has taken local mortality and morbidity figures and proposes to specify local rolls of percentages by which cardiovascular and circulatory diseases can be reduced by the year 2000. The group's programme includes encouraging, motivating and helping those who do not smoke not to start and to help those who smoke to give up; to assess the smoking status of all those aged 18 to 64 every five years; to encourage the avoidance of overweight and obesity; to promote a diet lower in fat, saturated fatty acids, salt and alcohol and which is higher in carbohydrates and fibre, and to assess the level of overweight and obesity in the 18 to 64 age group every five years. Similarly, the group aims to encourage the taking of sensible and regular exercise; to reduce blood pressure and have regular surveillance of the adult population's blood pressure every five years and encourage the avoidance of alcohol abuse. There is an interesting additional feature in the programme, as the group is trying to encourage a proportion of the

[Mr. Roger Sims]

population who feel reasonably confident to carry out cardio-pulmonary resuscitation. That would certainly save lives.

I do not suggest that that group of practitioners is unique, but I suspect that they are not entirely typical. Many doctors need persuading to adapt to treating and advising healthy and fit people as well as those who are ill. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will agree that that is an initiative which is to be commended.

However, it is not only doctors who are in contact with people. Nurses in hospitals, district nurses and midwives have such contact and could perform a similar advisory role—indeed, the Royal College of Nursing is anxious that they should do so — but they will need some training and instruction. My hon. Friend the Minister commented on the extent to which nurses smoke. It is worrying to note that 64 per cent. of student nurses are smoking and that 40 per cent. of district nurses are smokers. Something will have to be done.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Has the hon. Gentleman ever thought that one of the reasons why nurses are such heavy smokers is the tension under which they have to operate, and their difficult working conditions? I am totally opposed to smoking by anybody in any place but, before we hear sanctimonious lectures about nurses and their smoking habits, there should be more action by the Government to increase their wages and improve their working conditions.

Mr. Sims: I hope that nothing I said was sanctimonious or preaching. I was simply making the point that nurses could do a more effective job by example. However, I accept the hon. Gentleman's point. They do have a stressful job. They are not the only people with stressful jobs and I appreciate that some people find that taking a cigarette relieves that stress. I am simply suggesting that there are other ways of relieving it.

In the light of your admonition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall conclude. I was hoping to say a little about dentistry, which I believe is a success story for prevention.

This is a wide area and I have touched on only a few aspects. I urge my hon. Friend the Minister to press on with the "Look After Your Heart" campaign and her own personal campaign on subjects such as diet. I hope that she will develop them. Her manner is sometimes considered controversial, but if she stirs up controversy and brings about more discussion of these issues, it will be better for the health of the country and for its economy.

1.7 pm

Mr. Andrew Smith (Oxford, East): I welcome the fact that we are having this debate on the promotion of good health. One of the advantages of sitting here since the debate started is that I have been able to see the extent to which there are common points of focus on both sides of the Chamber. However, it grates a little to hear the Minister, quite rightly, refer to the role that clean water and the sewerage system have played in improving the nation's health over the years at a time when half the nation's sewers are collapsing under our feet for want of the necessary infrastructure investment. It also grates to hear her refer to the value of good nutrition for our children's development and growth when her party has done so much damage to the school meals service, which provided such an essential element of nutrition for many poor people in this country.

However, I welcome the degree to which there is a drawing together in promoting effective strategies for health. We have to be clear as to what those strategies require. They require co-ordination, sensitivity and accountability to local needs. They require adequate resources and they need to be set in a framework of social and economic policies for jobs, houses and social justice. There is wholly insufficient evidence to date to show that the Government properly understand, and still less intend to respond to, those requirements.

It is important, and it would be a mark of good faith, for the Government seriously to consider the role of local authorities in health promotion. Some local authorities, in partnership with health authorities, are beginning to develop cost-effective and efficient health promotion programmes. Those initiatives have the advantage of being local, sensitive to community need, inter-sectoral — involving partnership with the voluntary and private sectors — and effective in terms of delivery of services and health information to local schools and work places where the needs are greatest. I am pleased to say that in those respects Oxford city council has shown something of the potential of partnership and genuine joint planning. A joint healthy city strategy has been developed, bringing forward action on many fronts in a way that involves the local community. A monthly health promotion strategy group is held to guide forward the policies, involving a medical officer and his team, and the city environmental health officer and his staff.

There are several good examples of the progress that has been made through this approach of closely involving the local council: the development of an AIDS strategy and the appointment of Britain's first local authority AIDS officer; the joint facilitation of the "Look After Your Heart" campaign; the 13 health contracts with local industry, representing 40,000 workers, which the Minister saw when she was in Oxford recently; and the action on home heating, with the appointment of a home heating officer, and on home safety, with a home safety officer. All that has been achieved by the local council working together with the health authority to take action at the grass roots. It has been possible for the city council and the health authority to work jointly with neighbourhoods and the voluntary sector, and to link with the commercial and industrial sector.

I feel that the Oxford model has national implications. But, for that model to work successfully, we need support in the following respects.

The Health Education Authority and other national health bodies must link with local authorities, as well as with health authorities. As with the links with the Health Education Authority, Oxford has made progress on that. We also need many more pump-priming resources to help to finance joint work on health promotion, and to supplement the somewhat cumbersome machinery of joint consultative committees. Flexibility and speed are often essential — witness the lead-in time for the AIDS awareness programmes. Local effort needs to be backed by health promotion initiatives nationally, as with the "Look After Your Heart" and AIDS campaigns. National campaigning and local networking and delivery of services

and health information are a powerful combination. One without the other seriously impairs the effectiveness of the effort.

If we are serious about moving towards a national health promotion strategy, it must be recognised that at present the nation lacks a systematic approach. Ministries do not address themselves sufficiently to the health agenda relative to their area of responsibility, whether it be in agriculture, energy—think of the nuclear power stations—or transport. There is insufficient co-ordination of effort in their promotion of health. Except in regard to AIDS, political will seems to be lacking, and even in that respect it has been misdirected.

I think that it would be useful to extend the Cabinet working party on AIDS to encompass health promotion generally, and to require the Health Education Authority to produce a national health promotion strategy in line with the World Health Organisation targets—to which, after all, the United Kingdom is a signatory. It would also be useful to begin a health audit of Ministries with the adoption of health targets, progress towards which could be reviewed annually, and to publish a popular and annual national health assessment.

Such an analysis should contain a considered analysis of the causal factors in what is monitored, rather than covering up, as Governments in the past have covered up, the Black report and other, subsequent reports. Above all, local councils and health authorities should be given the tools with which to get on with the job, in terms of freedom and resources to respond to local needs. I am sorry to have to say that nothing could be further from that goal than present local experience. I shall give a couple of examples from my constituency.

Mention has already been made of the fact that the quality of housing is universally acknowledged to be a very important factor in standards of health, yet in Oxford there are 3,000 families on the waiting list, while 70 families are in bed and breakfast accommodation. The Government are piling on pressure to cut the building programme and to force up rents. The Minister for Housing and Planning has promised to end council building altogether and to drive rents still higher. It costs the same in Oxford to keep a family in bed and breakfast accommodation as it does to provide a perfectly good, new, three-bedroomed house. That brings home just what a waste of resources bed and breakfast accommodation is. One wonders whether there is a predilection among Conservatives to shovel money towards the profiteers in the private sector and to deprive those in the public sector who are in the greatest need.

Homelessness, and all that that means, makes you sick. We are not referring, as the Minister did, to the helpless pawns of their circumstances. We are dealing with people who are the victims of circumstances that are the result of the Government's policies, and they can be altered.

If the Government want to be taken seriously on health promotion, they must take to heart the lesson that health cannot be built up with the one hand if housing programmes are demolished on the other. The Minister said that there are major preventive elements in mental health, but she failed signally to suggest what she thought these were. There are, indeed, major preventive elements. They are called homes, jobs and a safe and secure environment.

As for health cuts, yesterday the Oxfordshire health authority announced options on the £1·75 million of cuts that, even on the most optimistic assumption, will be needed to balance its budget next year, as it is required to do by law. The cuts will result in the closure of 140 hospital beds, sharp cuts in the ambulance service and a £100,000 raid on the joint finance budget. What price health promotion then? Where will the money be to follow through the breast cancer screening initiatives? It is all very well to set out these initiatives in a great fanfare of publicity, but they are no use whatsoever if the resources are not there to undertake diagnosis and carry out treatment thereafter.

Cuts on the scale that Oxfordshire health authority is now thinking about will hit local people, especially the elderly, very hard. Waiting lists will shoot up and old people will suffer and die. Some will risk a fate even worse than death. They will be stuffed into the kind of brutal, private residential establishments that were exposed a couple of weeks ago in a film about what is happening in Kent. Places of that kind are bad for people's health.

Mr. Brazier: The matter to which the hon. Gentleman referred is sub judice, so I cannot say very much about it. However, it should be stressed that the home upon which that thoroughly unbalanced film concentrated was removed two years ago from the ownership of the people involved, because of the action that was taken by the social services.

Mr. Smith: I cannot comment on the details of any particular incident in that film. The film pointed to examples of good private residential care as well as to bad ones, but the good examples were very few and far between. It referred to circumstances that the elderly are being forced to endure. According to the statements of care assistants, old people are lying in urine and are tied down at night. Lights are turned off on upstairs landings to save electricity and to boost owners' profits. The conditions were so scandalous that the makers of that film did a service to the whole country by exposing what is going on in such terrible places.

I shall meet the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in the near future to make the case for funds to stave off the crisis which faces the Oxfordshire health authority. The people of Oxfordshire will undoubtedly do their bit on health promotion by saying in no uncertain terms that the cuts must be stopped. I can promise Ministers that they will run into a solid wall of opposition to the damage that they threaten to inflict. I have no doubt that the public, health authority members, consultants, nurses, trade unions and our community health council will be as one in demanding Government action to divert this crisis and if the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State is interested in preserving and promoting her good health, she should listen.

Oxfordshire has had not one, but three visits from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary in as many months and I am sorry that she is not present to hear what I have to say. Each visit has had as much to do with promoting the Minister as with promoting good health, but it has not worked. Each visit has upset more people than the previous one. Even for someone evidently operating on the maxim of "There is no such thing as bad publicity", it is a dangerous preoccupation.

The front page of a local newspaper stated:

"Heart of Ice!

Another rap for the minister 'who couldn't care less . . . '"

and followed it up with "Ice-cold Currie" items.

[Mr. Smith]

When asked whether old folk would die this winter because of NHS cash restrictions, the Minister said that we must all die some time. As has been suggested, perhaps it is her style to stir things up and catch the headlines, but Conservative Members have no idea of the damage being done to their party by these off-the-cuff remarks on visits. Perhaps they do.

We in Oxfordshire do not want any more public relations visits or stupid complaints, such as when the Minister was last there and complained to the health authority because it did not give her a hot lunch. We want not promotional floss but some understanding of the structural underfunding historically present in Oxfordshire's budget. Most of all, we want funds to stop the cuts and the deaths that will otherwise inevitably occur. That is the best contribution that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State can make to the real promotion of good health.

If someone is taking notes for the Minister, may I ask for two clear assurances when she replies? First, will she give an assurance that the important contribution that local authorities must make is not only recognised but that the Government will match words with action and press for the damaging restrictions on local councils' spending to be eased so that they can play their full part in promoting good health through both housing and services, and co-ordination and publicity? Secondly, will she give an assurance that the immense financial pressure under which most health authorities work will be lifted through a commitment now to examine carefully the regional and sub-regional problems which will otherwise be created by the sorts of revenue allocations which are being talked of for next year?

If, as I fear, the Government are not prepared to give either commitment, today's debate unfortunately will be seen as no more than a smokescreen for their real policies of cutting public provision, eliminating local democracy and condemning more people to genuine suffering. The matter is made all the worse by the fact that so much ill health is avoidable. While health promotion and prevention are better than cure, they are not cheap options. Neither of them is a substitute for cure for those who need care and curing now or who needed it last year but are still on the waiting list. The Government's attempt to have their cake and eat it is not only implausible but downright unhealthy.

1.24 pm

Mr. David Tredinnick (Bosworth): There are two key aspects of the promotion of good health that are grossly underrated — alternative, or complementary, medicine and preventive medicine. I wish to bring to the attention of the House my personal experience of complementary medicine and the vital preventive work of an association in my constituency that is fighting, almost single-handed, a vicious killer disease.

Interest in complementary medicine is increasing at a phenomenal rate. The 1986 report of the Institute for Complementary Medicine revealed that the number of people interested in natural therapies is increasing at the rate of 15 per cent. a year; that is on a 1984 base figure of 2·5 million people living in this country. A "Which?" magazine report of October 1986 on complementary medicine found that one in seven people had consulted an alternative practitioner in 1985 and that 80 per cent. had claimed to have been cured or improved; further, that over 70 per cent. of them would definitely use complementary medicine again and that over 70 per cent. would recommend it to others with a similar complaint.

I must declare an interest, because I am very much part of that 70 per cent. who have used complementary medicine and who would use it again. I want to share my experience with hon. Members, because about 10 years ago I suffered a very bad fall. It was so bad that I cracked three vertebrae in my back. I was paralysed in one leg for a time and I had to lie flat for three and a half months, which gives plenty of time for contemplation. I will always be grateful for the excellent medical treatment that I received from my general practitioner. I was also seen by a surgeon. In the end I had to decide whether to have an operation that might have been risky and not 100 per cent. successful. I decided not to and I turned to alternative or complementary medicine. I saw a chiropractor and he said that he thought that he could stop the pain in my back. Over a period of six months of gentle realignment he did just that. He stopped the pain and managed to straighten my spine again. However, I still suffered from massive knotting of muscles in my back, so I turned to another alternative medicine practice—osteopathy. An osteopath was able to loosen my muscles and again my back improved.

A couple a years later I went a stage further when I heard of the Alexander technique. That has been described as applied engineering for bodies. It is all about getting balance right and getting muscles in equilibrium. I went through its discipline and as a result I am completely cured. One of the side effects of that technique is that it loosens tension in the back and gets one to relax. One often grows one inch or half an inch, changes shape and expands across the chest. I have never been fitter than I am now and I owe it to complementary medical techniques. But for complementary medicine I do not think that I would be here today.

I should like to bring to the attention of the House one other aspect of complementary medicine of which I have experience. When I first met my dear wife, who I am glad to say is today sitting under the Strangers Gallery, she suffered from severe migraine. Over the years, her doctors had not been able to find a solution to the problem. We agreed to see an allergy specialist. Currently such a service is on the fringe of medicine. We carefully looked at my wife's diet and analysed certain foods, to which she was found to be allergic, and the migraine was eventually cured completely. Although my wife cannot talk here, as she is not a Member, I think that she would agree that this made her life easier, although she is married to me, which does not help.

All these therapies have helped in different ways. Different people respond differently to the various techniques. There are horses for courses and there are benefits from these techniques, which I commend to hon. Members. There is no question but that the treatment works.

I pay tribute to the Council for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, which has done much in recent months to establish codes of professional conduct and to set standards for the different complementary medical groups. My hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash), who has done so much to promote the cause of complementary medicine, is here to support the debate.

In this debate, we have heard much talk about AIDS and ways of alleviating the problem. In August, a report in the *Sunday Telegraph* magazine showed that the use of complementary medicine in conjunction with conventional medicine can double the life expectancy of some AIDS sufferers. If ever there was proof that complementary medicine gets results, surely it is there.

It has always been held that prevention is better than cure. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security — the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) — on her efforts to increase preventive medical care. Under this Government such care is greater than ever before. I draw attention to the preventive medical work of Combat, the association to combat Huntington's chorea, which has its headquarters in my constituency. Huntington's chorea is one of the most horrific of hereditary diseases. It drives sufferers insane and kills them. Whole families can be affected. Sufferers' children have a 50 50 chance of catching it. Two years ago, the genetic marker of the disease was found. A predictive test has been derived to help sufferers. Combat provides family support officers who arrange for those needing tests to get them from the authorities, thus preventing further heartbreak in those families. Combat's officers support the DHSS carers and the families of the afflicted. They help families stay together. That is why I was so pleased to receive the letter written on 14 October by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security — the hon. Member for Enfield, Southgate (Mr. Portillo) — assuring me that Combat's application for funding for next year will be given sympathetic consideration and that a decision will be reached as soon as possible.

Mr. Ashby: My hon. Friend will know that in my constituency, which adjoins his, there has been a number of cases of Huntington's chorea. In a particularly sad case, someone was severely at risk as a result of the disease. Will my hon. Friend join me in making representations to the Home Office for sympathetic secure provision for people who may be suffering from the disease and who put themselves and those around them at risk? There are problems because the Home Office will not provide secure provision for these people, who may be put in prison when they should not be.

Mr. Tredinnick: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who also represents a Leicester constituency, and of course I shall support him in his application to the Home Secretary. As I said, my constituents and I greatly appreciate the concern of my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary. Combat has been very grateful for previous grants and I assure my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services who has joined my hon. Friend on the Front Bench that Combat has put those grants to very good use. My constituents, Combat and I will be most grateful if my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary will comment further today on Combat's grant application for the forthcoming year.

In conclusion, good health would be better promoted were greater attention paid to the great benefits of complementary medicine, and if there were an increased commitment to preventive medicine.

1.35 pm

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): My hon. Friends the Members for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith), for Peckham (Ms. Harman) and for Preston (Mrs. Wise) have put a most convincing case to the House on the correlation between ill-health and social deprivation. There can be no doubt that the connection is especially marked in respect of preventable illness, including mental illness, some cancers and heart disease. The Minister's contribution, in what some would call doublespeak, flew in the face of the expert opinion of eminent bodies — opinion expressed in the Black report, which looked into inequalities in health, the British Medical Association's paper, and the study by the now abolished Health Education Council, entitled "The Health Divide", which proved conclusively that bad housing, inadequate diet and low incomes damage health.

In a recent report, the Child Poverty Action Group concluded that, overall, those now living in poverty or on its margins increased in number by 42 per cent. between 1979 and the mid-1980s. More than 16 million people now live in poverty. That is a shameful record for any Government to contemplate. No Opposition Member doubts that the Government's economic and social policies have led to the growing divide. If present policies continue, the divide will widen.

I shall concentrate on one aspect of policy: the Government's attack on the school meals services. That attack will lead to further deterioration in health for some social classes. At the beginning of the century, school meals were introduced because even the most ardent free marketeers were shocked to discover that members of the working classes recruited to fight in the African wars died like flies from dysentery and other poverty-related diseases. Men at the front died before they could be used as cannon fodder. Physical deterioration was endemic among certain classes. A pamphlet published by the Labour party in 1905 spoke of the nation being awake to the danger of physical degeneration. A 1902 Royal Commission looked into the problem. The report was clear. It recommended that children who suffered from lack of food should be fed, if necessary by the local authorities, and the Provision of Meals Act 1906 was passed as a result of pressure from Labour Members. I warn the Government that Labour Members today recognise the signs of physical deterioration again and that we are just as committed as were our forebears to ending the injustice.

After the dreadful poverty of the 1920s and 1930s, the Education Act 1944 fully recognised school meals as a valuable method of alleviating poverty, improving nutritional standards and therefore the health of children. The 1944 provisions made it clear that on every school day there shall be provided and on every other day there may be provided for every pupil as a midday dinner a meal suitable in all respects as the main meal of the day. That statement was accepted by all Governments until 1979. Since then, it has been downhill all the way for this vital service and for thousands of innocent children, victims of a savage and pitiless ideology which makes virtues of greed and selfishness and puts self-help as a serious option to the five-year-old child and the single unemployed parent.

One is left with no alternative but to conclude that the Government are determined to end the school meals service for good. The attack began in 1980 when nutritional standards were abandoned. Since then, prices have risen steeply, in some instances to as much as 70p per day. A further report from the Child Poverty Action Group reveals that the proportion of children taking meals

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has dropped from 64 per cent. to 49 per cent., largely due to price increases, and that the number receiving free meals has risen from 18 per cent. to 37 per cent. — a clear indication of the growing poverty in our society.

The House should bear in mind that the school dinner is often the main meal of the day and that for some children it is a vital meal. The Minister said in her opening remarks that she was against too much legislation. If that is so, perhaps she will persuade her right hon. Friend the Minister for Social Security and the Disabled to repeal that part of the 1986 Act which will mean that 500,000 children will be disqualified from entitlement to free school meals in 1988. In Halifax, free school meals are provided at the discretion of the local authority to children from families on supplementary benefit, on family income supplement or on low incomes. The entitlement to free school meals is a passport to other benefits and thus a vital element of benefit to low income families.

In April 1988 the discretionary powers to provide free school meals will be removed from local authorities. My local authority estimates that this will reduce the number of free school meals served by up to 6,000 per day, so the size of the problem is clear. About 35 per cent. of the total meals served will be lost and 3,000 children will lose free meals worth up to £3·50 per week per child.

The cash compensation on the new family credit system may be as little as 44p per day and will in no way compensate for the loss of a vital service. Moreover, the viability of the school meals service itself is threatened, which could mean damaging job losses for people in my constituency and others. I hope that no Conservative Member will try to lecture the House about good management as a way of stretching totally inadequate benefits and scandalously low pay. That would be the ultimate hypocrisy in view of the recent pay award to Members of Parliament.

In the past three or four years, towns and cities in west Yorkshire have experienced epidemics of dysentery. We all know that damp housing, lack of services to repair bad drains and many other external conditions contribute to diseases of this kind and it is no coincidence that children from families on low incomes are the most vulnerable. The Minister for Health must take note of the comments and recommendations of the Black report, which states that any reduction in the provision of school meals or in eligibility for free meals would mean putting further at risk the development of significant numbers of children. Even before the massive increase in the number of people living in poverty, a study showed that children receiving free school meals were significantly shorter than their wealthier peers. The Black report's recommendations were unequivocal. The committee recommended that local authorities should be required to provide nutritional meals at all schools and that the service should be extended in areas where there is underprovision. It also recommended that there should be regular consultation between local authorities, communities, dieticians, parents and teachers about the provision of those meals, and that the meals should be free.

The Lancet said in 1980 that the school meal was

"the principal source of nutrition for many poor children."

In view of the Minister's campaign on heart disease, I hope that she will note that the Coronary Prevention Group said this year:

"In the face of long-term unemployment and current levels of state benefit, the school meals service is as important now as it was in 1890."

My hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) put the case movingly in a recent report when he said:

"A hungry child cannot learn."

A child who does not have an adequate diet will be stunted physically and mentally. Children who do not learn what food is good for them will feed poor food to themselves and their families.

The Minister will rightly be accused of the most outrageous neglect of the health of the nation's children if she ignores the plea to save the school meals service. I believe that we are again in a serious period of physical deterioration. The process is not inevitable and it is an obscenity that diminishes us all. We should be ashamed of ourselves as a nation that we are not prepared to help those on very low incomes. The Minister can see the evidence. She and the Government have the power to reverse the decline, and they could start to reverse the attack on this vital service by repealing the relevant section of the Education Act.

1.46 pm

Mr. Peter Rost (Erewash): I join this excellent debate with hesitation because I have never claimed to be an expert on health. However, I know something about alternative medicine and, like my hon. Friend the Member for Bosworth (Mr. Tredinnick), I and my family have benefited from it. I also declare an interest as the parliamentary adviser to the Natural Medicine Society and because the major manufacturer of herbal products in this country, Weleda UK, is situated in Ilkeston in my constituency.

I have studied the contribution that natural medicine makes alongside orthodox therapies abroad, especially in Switzerland, Germany and France, where alternative treatments and herbal medicines are more widely accepted by Governments and medical professions as having a useful contribution to make alongside and complementary to orthodox treatments.

The health establishments in those countries are modest enough to acknowledge that, despite the enormous advance in technology, modern drugs and treatments may not have all the answers or always offer the best solutions.

It seems in this country that those radical enough to admit that there may be more in homoeopathy and the holistic approach to illness and preventive medicine are still too often derided by the medical mafia as cranky outsiders.

From what I have seen from those who have benefited from alternative medicine and in countries that have a more enlightened approach and a less conservative, entrenched medical establishment. I am convinced that our nation's health would be a great deal better if we listened more and accepted more readily the growing concern about modern drugs and if we did more to educate the nation about better health instead of running a national sickness service.

Too many drugs are being prescribed by the NHS and its practitioners to too many people. Too many patients have become overdependent or addicted to certain drugs, especially to drugs such as tranquillisers, and there are too many deaths and adverse reactions. The United Kingdom has one of the worst health records in the western world,

not because the NHS is under-financed but because it is badly managed, not enough resources are allocated to health care, prevention and education and there is too much prejudice in the DHSS and in those who run it against those who offer contributions from alternative therapies.

Orthodox medicine has become the dominant feature in our philosophy over the past 100 years and is supported, of course, by the enormous financial muscle of the pharmaceutical industry. Many of the products from that industry have worked wonders in making progress against disease. However, I suggest that perhaps we have become a little over-confident and over-entrenched in the accepted modern orthodoxy. We have become over-dependent on pills to cure everything to the point where we have, perhaps, been blinded by prejudice against the contribution that herbal, natural alternative health medicines and therapies have to offer.

The Minister's advisers are dominated by experts in orthodox medicines. Three, or perhaps four, early-day motions that I helped to sponsor and which were signed by over 200 hon. Members, urged a stronger recognition of these alternative therapies and, especially, the establishment of a special advisory committee on alternative medicines. Such a committee is provided for under the Medicines Act 1971 and such committees exist in other countries. Despite those early-day motions, the DHSS continues to obstruct what could be a constructive contribution to a wider debate and to better health in Britain.

Instead of encouraging a broader debate about whether, for example, we need to shift the balance of power and influence a little bit away from orthodoxy back to an emphasis on the holistic or homeopathic approach of preventive, healthier living natural medicines, the DHSS is harassing the producers of herbal products. Under the current review of medicines, products are expected to prove their safety. That is fair enough and we all agree with that. Natural medicines have been proved safe over many hundreds of years. It would be good if all modern synthetic drugs could claim the same record.

The review currently being undertaken also demands that all products prove their efficacy. This completely misunderstands the different philosophy of those who prescribe or wish to use herbal products or practise alternative therapies. It is almost impossible to finance the huge cost of the long clinical trials that this directive demands. Of course, the large drug companies finance such trials. They then have patented products and recoup their large capital investment when the drug is marketed.

Companies like Weleda which market several thousand natural herbal products cannot prove the clinical efficacy of the products because they affect different patients in different ways, and in any case they are not synthetic but natural products. As a result licences for some of these natural products are already being removed, although the licensing system is the same as that which applies in other parts of the European Community where such products remain on the market. This will cause a major public outcry. Governments in countries such as France and Germany which have the same EC directives are overcoming this problem by accepting that natural products have to be assessed differently from laboratory-made products such as drugs. Why cannot the DHSS accept the same system?

If a fraction of the research and development finance that goes into the orthodox medicine and drugs industry were made available to improve the scientific data base about the efficacy of herbal products and alternative therapies, we might make greater progress in the prevention and cure of illness. The Natural Medicine Society has this week published a most interesting pamphlet entitled "The Health Crisis". It should be compulsory reading for all hon. Members and I hope that the Select Committee looks at it and considers an investigation into the status of alternative medicine and the contribution it could, and should, be making to our Health Service.

I shall make one or two suggestions to my hon. Friend the Minister because I know that she is sympathetic. I enjoyed and support her opening remarks in the debate. If the Government are really serious and concerned about improving the health of the nation, as I believe they are, first, we should take urgent steps to encourage the integration of orthodox medicine with complementary and alternative medicine, as happens in other countries. It should not be an either/or situation; we should have both together.

Secondly, the Medicines Commission should be restructured to allow for more balanced advice on how this can best be achieved. Thirdly, mainstream complementary medicines and medical treatment should be available under the National Health Service. There should be greater priority in education given to health care and particulary to the more holistic approach to illness and its care. There should be fewer drugs administered to fewer people. We should encourage and finance more education and training within our medical schools for alternative medical treatments and their holistic approach. There should be more research and development supporting whatever contributions complementary medicine can make.

Finally, the Government should fund the establishment of holistic centres in major towns, staffed by qualified orthodox and alternative practitioners working together. The National Health Service is inefficient and too costly because it has failed to promote good health adequately enough, which would have reduced, and would reduce in the future, the demand for its resources in disease management. We have failed to incorporate cheaper, safer and often more beneficial alternative therapies and medicines within the Health Service. Unless the Government accept those fundamental failings, given complementary medicines proper recognition and accept their useful role, we shall get more dissatisfied customers and, above all, we shall not get a healthy nation. I hope that today's debate will at least lead to a change in attitudes and policies.

1.59 pm

Mr. Tony Worthington (Clydebank and Milngavie): A realisation is spreading throughout the House that illness is not something that is afflicted by nature. We are beginning to understand that it is a product of our way of life, but the developing appreciation of this must be taken much further. One of the major challenges of the next few years is to change the way in which we think about health. Unfortunately, there have been some major omissions in the thinking of some of hon. Members today, and it is intriguing that the Under-Secretary of State appears to have read the first few chapters of books on the prevention

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of health but ignored the final chapters, which draw attention to the significance of the social structure of a country and the impact that that has on care within it. As I said in an intervention in the Minister's speech, the text which was prepared for her was directed almost entirely to physical health, ignoring mental health almost totally. With the exception of the hon. Member for Eddisbury (Mr. Goodlad), who made a fine contribution on schizophrenia, the entire debate has been skewed towards mental health.

Mrs. Currie: I think that the hon. Gentleman means physical health.

Mr. Worthington: I am sorry, towards physical health. I am relieved to know that the Minister is listening to me. It was clear that she was not listening to many of the earlier contributions of my hon. Friends.

I think that it is generally accepted that we now know much more about epidemiology and the different incidences of diseases in different parts of the United Kingdom and in other countries. In the greater Glasgow area there is great awareness now about the shameful record of the health board area, it being a cancer capital of the world, and the regrettable rates of heart disease. We can now identify the self-damaging aspects of life such as smoking, drinking and fatty foods.

The Government would like to think that everything rests with the individual, but we know without fear of contradiction — source after source can be quoted to support this contention—that unemployment is a causal factor of ill health. We know that poor housing is a similar factor. Mental health conditions such as clinical depression are a reflection of the life that we lead. One of the most interesting studies undertaken since the second world war was that carried out by George Brown and his associates on the social causes of depression. It showed that in an area such as Camberwell clinical depression was endemic among women, and that in an area such as the Outer Hebrides it was not. That is a reflection of the lives that women lead in some parts of our country.

Every society makes decisions about the extent to which it will allow the people to die or suffer, and the present Government choose by lack of attention to the health of the nation that more will die or suffer. They have chosen to have a high level of unemployment to discipline the work force. They have chosen also to have a low-wage policy, and everything that they introduce is geared to that approach. Examples are the community programme and the Government's claim that young people are pricing themselves out of jobs. The Government are to introduce a poll tax, the effect of which will be to withdraw resources from poor areas. The effect of the DHSS cuts that they are imposing will be to withdraw resources from poor areas. The Government are introducing school meals cuts. What will be the effect of that? They are to privatise many council jobs, and the effect of their hidden agenda will be lower wages in the local authority sector. They are introducing reduced housing resources, which will have an impact on the fabric of houses. At the same time they are deliberately causing rates to increase. What will be the impact of these policies?

We know that unemployment and poor living conditions are a cause of ill health, and yet these are elements of Government policy. This suggests that the Government are deliberately pursuing policies that will worsen the health of the British people. This is demonstrated by a report that appeared this week from Edinburgh, which reveals that those living in the smart suburbs of that city are more than twice as likely to live to retirement age than those in the poorer areas. That is not essentially because of the behaviour of these people but because of the lives that they have to lead. A minority of the population has the majority of ill health, and by the Government's choice of priorities they are deliberately imposing poor health on our poorer citizens. The Government have made that choice.

Health has been over medicalised. We have attributed to doctors magical powers and we must now withdraw that attribution. The medical model of health in the 19th century is now inappropriate. It is clear that high-tech medicine is not resulting in longer lives. Research undertaken in 1970 by John Powells, for example, indicates that middle-aged men nowadays are living longer not because of the presence of high-tech medicine but because of what happens to them earlier in their lives. The disease theory of illness is no longer appropriate. The idea of the body as a car engine which can occasionally go wrong and be put into hospital to be restored does not now apply.

The type of problems that people take to doctors is ludicrous. They go to doctors with marital problems and in the west of Scotland with that ubiquitous problem of nerves. Indeed, they go to doctors because they are suffering from sleepless nights, sexual and alcohol-related problems. Doctors do not have the answers for those conditions in the boxes of tricks. The resources, skills and the answers must come from other areas, some from other parts of the health industry, through social work or other counselling services. We must consider that area and abandon the pharmaceutical industry with its addiction to psychotropic drugs. We must have more appropriate answers. We have grossly overmedicalised our lives and we should consider the real issues.

The real issues include such questions as why more women than men are admitted to mental hospitals. There is nothing about the nature of woman which shows that that should happen. The answer lies with the importance and self-esteem of women——

Mrs. Teresa Gorman (Billericay): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Worthington: I would be delighted to give way when I reach the end of these comments.

Why are progressively more and more members of the ethnic minorities admitted to mental hospitals and why are poor people more likely to be admitted when we consider their proportion of the population? The reasons lie in the style of life that is inflicted upon them.

Mrs. Gorman: Is the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) aware that women in the age group of 50 and over are afflicted to a greater degree by Alzheimer's disease or senile dementia? Is he also aware of the strong connection between that and their loss of hormones which happens to all women as they pass childbearing age? One of the most effective and growing forms of preventive medicine in that area is the replacement of those hormones and I hope to address my remarks to that matter if I have the opportunity to speak later. The high incidence of women in mental hospitals is

not due to social deprivation to which the hon. Gentleman referred. There is a physical cause which I hope that we can address.

Mr. Worthington: That is not true. I regret that the hon. Lady has just taken the opportunity in my speech to make points that she wanted to make but which she probably will not be able to make today. However, I had been looking forward to her valued contribution on those matters because that is an interesting subject.

All the research shows that more women are in receipt of treatment for mental illness at all ages than men. We must ask serious questions about that. It cannot be due to diet, cigarettes or alcohol. The reasons must lie with social factors in society.

The factors that predispose us to health lie with areas of social change, social isolation, lack of social networks, unemployment, housing conditions and life events. We must look at more effective ways that are not centred on the medical profession which lacks such skills, to help people to cope with stresses in life.

When we have another debate on this subject — shortly, I hope—I trust that more attention will be paid by the Government to the impact of Government policies upon ill health and the fact that the Government are seizing on individual causes and ignoring social structure. Next time I hope that the Minister will remember that a huge amount of the misery and suffering in this country is related to mental illness. I hope that attention will be paid to that in future.

2.9 pm

Mr. Simon Coombs (Swindon): I am grateful for the opportunity to address the House in this debate. I speak as the secretary of the all-party parliamentary food and health forum. That is a Back-Bench Committee which looks forward to seeing many of the contributors to today's debate at its future meetings. One welcomes the interest in health promotion that has been demonstrated by some, if not all, speakers in today's debate.

Britain has been governed over the past eight years by a Government who have succeeded in making the country a more wealthy one. It is now important that we turn our attention to making this country a more healthy one. Therefore, I welcome the Government's initiative to bring about the campaign entitled "Look After Your Heart". I want to address my brief remarks to that campaign and what lies beyond it.

The campaign is a useful first step towards creating greater awareness of the links between coronary heart disease and the diet enjoyed by the people of this country. I do not agree with some hon. Members who have spoken who have suggested that the link is not yet an established matter of fact. There is now widespread consensus about the fact that there is a link between heart disease and aspects of our diet. It is time that the Government went beyond the existing campaign to hammer home the lessons that need to be learned.

Expert committees for some time, including the National Advisory Committee on Nutrition Education and the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy sub-panel have emphasised the need to change the balance of the British diet—less fat, more fibre and no increase in sugar and salt intake—and to provide the people of this country with the information necessary to enable them to make a judgment about what they buy and consume. That can be done only by providing helpful and clear food labelling. The current guidelines have been before us for a brief time and have been the subject of intense consultation in the past. I hope that the Government will move swiftly to introduce a mandatory, statutory basis on fats and clear voluntary guidelines on other aspects of nutrition. There is no further reason for delay. In the House yesterday I asked the Minister responsible whether there was any reason under the laws of the EEC why that should not be done. He was at pains to assure me that there was no such reason.

Some people have deduced that the Treaty of Rome makes it impossible for this country to introduce food labelling ahead of other members of the Community. However, article 36 of the treaty makes it clear that where a matter of public health is concerned a member of the Community can act independently for the benefit of its people. I urge the Government to do so. We need to see the labelling of fat, sugar, fibre and salt content. We need pictorial representation on items wherever that is possible and we need an education campaign for the entire country to tell people what they are seeing on the labels and how they should react to them.

Exercise has barely been mentioned in the debate. No one has mentioned the importance of a regime for all the people of this country which involves as much exercise as they are physically capable of. Regular exercise helps weight loss and reduces blood pressure and cholesterol in the blood stream. It is also useful in coping with the aspects of stress, about which the Opposition have made great play. The advertisements on that aspect of health in the "Look After Your Health" campaign may be an ad man's dream and they may lead to the sale of a few more bicycles, but they do not address the central issue, that all people would benefit from a much greater amount of exercise in their daily lives than the majority enjoy at present.

We now have the technology to undertake the screening of blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels. Indeed, there is much happening in that area which leads one to be hopeful that it is on the increase. However, screening must be accompanied by practical advice on what to do when problems are identified. The trouble is that far too many of the people responsible for our health—general practitioners and others — are as yet not adequately aware of the consequences of identifying problems with blood pressure and, in particular, blood cholesterol. Part of the campaign must involve the provision of more detailed information to general practitioners and others involved in primary health care on how they should react when faced with a patient who presents such problems. The amount of training that has so far been made available to general practitioners is inadequate, and something must be done very soon.

A number of hon. Members have referred to school meals, and I agree broadly with much of what they have said. The Department of Health and Social Security published a survey in April 1986 entitled "The Diet of British Children". The survey highlighted the fact that many schoolchildren have a poorly balanced diet, high in fat, sugar and salt and, conversely, low in fibre and in the vitamins and minerals that children need if they are to develop satisfactorily. It has already been said today that, in many instances, school meals provide a substantial proportion of children's daily nutritional requirements. However, they can do more than that. A good, balanced

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school diet will increase children's awareness of the nutritional standards which the Government, in their wisdom, decided to do away with in 1980, and which are now needed more than ever.

I hope that the message that both sides of the House have been putting forward in this debate attended by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State will be heard in other Departments. They, too, are responsible for the health of the nation. Let me refer particulary to the responsibility of the Department of Education and Science for the nutritional well-being of school children. I find it very strange that when questions are addressed to that Department, the answers sometimes seem wofully lacking in understanding of nutrition. That may be the fault of the structure of Government, rather than of individuals in the Department, in which case we should address ourselves to the problem in the near future.

I also think that we must press the DES to examine the national core and foundation curricula. The matter of physical education, on which I touched earlier, needs to be addressed. I see from the consultation document that 5 per cent. of the core curriculum is suggested as being appropriate, but I hope that physical education will not be brushed aside or put at the bottom of the list. I also hope that a place will be found for nutritional education in the core curriculum, and that it will not be treated merely as a part of chemistry, biology, home economics, cooking or any of the other convenient pigeon holes in which it could be placed. The national curriculum is an important aspect in the discussion of education; it must also be an important aspect in the discussion of health, as it impinges on the well-being of our children.

I hope that the Minister is thinking ahead from the present "Look After Your Heart" campaign to what will happen in phase two, which must address itself to evaluating the results of phase one. Here we have a problem: the Government, properly in my view, have targeted income groups C2, D and E for their campaign. Many hon. Members have referred to the health problems caused by a low income. As far as I am aware—I hope that the Minister will put me right on this—there do not appear to be any plans to collect statistics on mortality and morbidity in order to assess the effectiveness of the "Look After Your Heart" campaign. I hope that the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys will be invited to provide data and statistics on the effectiveness of the campaign. More research is needed into effective means of promoting health care among the low income groups.

As for the Government's overall strategy, it is noticeable that this debate has been attended by only one Minister. I recognise that the Minister in question is the one who is most concerned with health promotion, but no representative of the Department of the Environment has attended this debate. The Minister for Sport ought to have been here to answer questions about the Sports Council's budget having been cut at a time when we are trying to promote good health. No representative of the Department of Education and Science has been here, to whom we could have put questions about school meals and the importance of nutrition in children's education. No representative of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has been here to whom we could have put questions about nutritional labelling and the Common Market's common agricultural policy.

All these matters are closely concerned with the promotion of good health. When they return from their many and varied activities around the cour try today—I do not criticise them because they all work very hard—I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends will read what has been said in this debate and that they will act upon it.

The Government, rightly, reacted quickly to the Hungerford tragedy, but the tragedy of loss of life through poor health, because of the lack of good health promotion, is far greater. It kills more people than a single gunman could kill in one tragic and crazed incident. It behoves all of us to ask the Minister to take even more vigorous action than she has taken so far. I commend her on what has already been done, but rapid action needs to be taken to reverse the worrying trends in our society.

2.22 pm

Mrs. Currie: We have had an excellent debate. There were 20 speakers, and I imagine that another 20 have been disappointed. I cannot possibly answer in detail all the points that have been made, but I shall write to those hon. Members whose speeches I do not mention. I have listened to nearly all the speeches. Indeed, that was the purpose of having this debate in Government time. I wanted to know what hon. Members feel about what the Government are trying to do.

There have been four excellent "maidens" today, and I am delighted to join hon. Members in paying tribute to them. My hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, South-West (Mrs. Shephard) was the chairman of the Norwich district health authority. For many years she was also a mental health commissioner and a member of the national council of MIND. She will bring those talents and that experience to this House. My hon. Friend the Member for Ludlow (Mr. Gill) is a butcher. He told us very effectively about meat. I understand that he is a member of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust. He will be joining a rare breed here. He will obviously be a Member who looks after his constituency with great determination and courage.

I heard what my hon. Friend said about the Shropshire health authority. I merely point out to him, as I did to my hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham (Mr. Conway) in an Adjournment debate, that for many years the occupancy rate of available hospital beds in Shrewsbury has been around 75 to 76 per cent., so there are probably a few areas in which the Shrewsbury health authority could make some improvements. The Shrewsbury health authority has 26 hospitals. It is about to have another one—the brand new and marvellous Telford district general hospital. With the best will in the world, I do not think that Shropshire needs 27 hospitals. How that question is resolved, however, will be a matter for that area.

I join colleagues in thanking the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith) for the generous tribute he paid to his predecessor, Michael Hirst. I understand that when the hon. Gentleman came to the House he had to give up a substantial chunk of salary, about £10,000 a year. I hope that simply proves that we look after our doctors in the Health Service, if no one else. Whatever he has given up, he has clearly gained a platform which will benefit not only his constituents but health matters in this House and we welcome him.

I had not heard the hon. Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) speak in the House previously as she left the House before I came. In a typically robust speech she developed

one or two important themes, but perhaps I may point out to her some slight inconsistencies. She is worried about the cost of a healthy diet to her constituents, yet she is keen to get rid of what she calls factory farming. The alternative can be expensive. One of the reasons why chicken is now cheap and not a luxury is because of modern forms of farming. That must be taken into account.

I listened with interest to another doctor, the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Dr. Moonie), who is no longer present, but is perhaps in the Tea Room. He is an extremely rare breed, being a smoking, drinking and eating doctor. He finished his speech with a demand for action, not words and the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden and I will watch him in future to see if he means it. We now have six doctors in the House and, of course, the most well known of them did not turn up.

I was pleased to hear my hon. Friend the Member for Bosworth (Mr. Tredinnick) back Combat. I know that other hon. Friends take an interest in Combat and in the appalling disease of Huntington's chorea. The application of Combat for section 64 funding is with my hon. Friend the Minister for Social Security and the Disabled and I know that he is giving it urgent and sympathetic consideration. It will be for him to make announcements and I know that he will take into account what has been said.

I am ever so sorry for the upset I have given to hon. Members, such as the hon. Members for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) and for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle), but if Labour Members are against it, obviously it is worthwhile and I shall go on doing it. Perhaps I should do a little more of it. I learn a great deal on these visits and find them extremely useful.

The hon. Members for Peckham (Ms. Harman) and for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) are concerned about school meals and milk vouchers. It is worth pointing out that when we had nutritional guidelines for school meals they were not a fat lot of use because a great deal of food was thrown away. About 30 per cent. of children entitled to free school meals do not take them now. Many local authorities are doing much better than that and with good health education we think that we can make progress. Supplementary benefit claimants will still receive free school meals and milk tokens. That is about 80 per cent. of claimants for milk tokens. Probably twice as many families will qualify for the new family credit and will receive cash in lieu, so the new system will be much more generous than the old.

Several hon. Members mentioned mental illness and I listened with interest to the words of my hon. Friend the Member for Eddisbury (Mr. Goodlad) on schizophrenia. I entirely accept the criticism that we are not giving as much attention to the preventive side of mental illness as we could and we shall try to take that on board.

Much has been made of the difficulties of those in hard circumstances. But the inequalities of health and social class can be tackled and the changes in perinatal mortality show what can be done. Perinatal mortality is down for all social classes. The death rate for social class 5 is roughly where it was for social class 1 when the Labour party was in Government. *[Interruption.]* I hear the Opposition bleating, but I refuse to write off whole groups of society as beyond help. Many of the examples of illness we have had from Opposition Members are caused by heavy smoking among the poorest members of society. I would ask them to bear in mind that each packet of cigarettes smoked a day takes £500 a year out of a family's pocket. Therefore, we shall make some sort of achievement if we can persuade those people to give up.

My hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) commented on targeting. The point that has been made by such people as Professor Rose is that most people are running risks, particularly of heart disease. It would be a mistake to concentrate on small groups to the exclusion of others. If we can make small changes for large numbers of the population that will have the most effect.

I am a little hesitant with regard to the point that was made by my hon. Friend the Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs) about screening for blood pressure. Screening is not enough; it must be accompanied by good advice and follow-up.

We have had a marker debate. It is the first proper debate that we have had on prevention and health for many years and I welcome the points that have been made by many hon. Members. We have a healthy country and we are lucky to be living in this country, with its National Health Service. We have a better housed, better fed and more prosperous population than ever before and certainly more so than under any previous Labour Government. We intend to keep it that way and see prosperity spread.

It being half-past Two o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

Mr. Frank Larsen and Others (Prosecution)

2.30 pm

The Attorney-General (Sir Patrick Mayhew): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement on the prosecution of Mr. Frank Larsen and others.

On 15 July 1987 Frank Larsen, John Terence Larsen and Jonathan Richard Wheatley were charged with offences of conspiracy to kidnap. The charge read

"That they on divers dates between the 1st October 1986 and 10th July 1987 within the jurisdiction of the Central Criminal Court unlawfully conspired together and with other persons to kidnap members of the African National Congress resident in London contrary to Section 1 of the Criminal Law Act 1977 as amended by Section 5 of the Criminal Attempts Act 1981."

On 19 July Evan Dennis Evans was charged with the following offence:

"on divers dates between the 1st September 1986 and 10th July 1987 within the jurisdiction of the Central Criminal Court unlawfully conspired together and with other persons to kidnap members of the African National Congress resident in London contrary to Section 1 of the Criminal Law Act 1977 as amended by Section 5 of the Criminal Attempts Act 1981."

Those charges arose from events beginning with the arrest on 9 July of Frank Larsen in a lavatory at a hotel in London. He produced a document purporting to be a warrant card, but which was not. He claimed to be an assistant chief constable in the Ministry of Defence Police, which he was not, and he had with him documents in different names.

Mr. Frank Larsen's home in Aldershot was subsequently searched by police. A quantity of documents were found which, among other matters, purported to relate to a plan to kidnap members of the African National Congress living in London. On 21 September leading counsel advised that there was sufficient evidence available to justify continuance of the proceedings. He advised that there was no sufficient evidence to justify continuance of the proceedings against Mr. John Terence Larsen. He was accordingly discharged on 1 October 1987.

On 28 and 30 September, meetings took place at the Director of Public Prosecutions' offices between officers of the Crown Prosecution Service and solicitor and counsel acting for Mr. Frank Larsen, at the request of his solicitors.

Following the first meeting, certain documents were referred by the Director of Public Prosecutions to the Security Service, who advised that the documents, purporting to be governmental documents, were not genuine. Leading counsel advised on 7 October that there was insufficient evidence to warrant proceeding with the prosecution. The Director's staff accepted this advice.

The police were consulted on 12 October, and the decision was taken by the Director of Public Prosecutions' staff to offer no evidence against the remaining three accused. Although the evidence against these accused had been quite sufficient for their arrest and charging, it was considered that it was not likely to be sufficient to secure their conviction at trial. Accordingly, on 22 October the case was listed at Lambeth magistrates court, when no evidence was offered against the remaining three defendants. The decision not to proceed was reached by the Director's office alone.

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): I listened carefully to what the Attorney-General said. Reports in the newspapers this morning suggested that the prosecution had been dropped not because there was insufficient evidence but for "security reasons." That latter reason suggests that either there was a prima facie case but that security considerations overcame presenting it, or, worse than that—this has been suggested and the Attorney-General should deal with this point—the defendants were connected with the British security services. We want to know which version is correct. Was it that there was no evidence or was it that any disclosure of certain evidence and documents would have been embarrassing?

If there was no evidence and the case was simply to be dropped for that reason, why—notwithstanding that reporting restrictions had not been lifted—did the court meet in camera and why was the court cleared of the press and, I understand, of members of the public? Why was that necessary if no security consideration was involved?

The background to this case is extraordinary, involving an alleged plot to kidnap members of the ANC, associated with a plot to overthrow the Government of the Seychelles, and the expulsion of a member of the South African diplomatic service. If there were these major security considerations, was the Prime Minister at any point consulted as head of the Security Service? Were the decisions reached in any sense coloured by her bigoted view of the ANC and South Africa?

We are told that certain papers were forged. What will happen to the papers? We understand that they refer to at least two Members of this House, who have protested their innocence. What opportunity will there be for Members of the House who have had their names dragged in to this case to clear themselves?

We are told that no charges will be brought against Mr. Frank Larsen. On the basis of what the Attorney-General said, we know that Mr. Larsen was found in possession of forged police documents and was pretending to be a police officer. Are any charges to be brought against him? What is the explanation for Mr. Larsen remaining in Wormwood Scrubs prison and being, according to reports afraid to turn up in court—a court sitting in camera—because he thought that he would be a sitting target? What makes it impossible for people safely to appear in the dock of the court?

Lastly, and most important, may we have a categorical assurance that none of the defendants in this case was in any way working for or connected with the British Security Service or the South African security services?

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Answer that one.

The Attorney-General: I shall gladly answer that one. Naturally, I have made inquiries. I am given to understand that there is and has been no connection. I have been asked whether there has been any connection with the Security Service. The security and intelligence services do not fall within my ministerial responsibility but — [HON. MEMBERS: "Ah."]—but I have had inquiries made and I am advised that none of the defendants in this case has at any time been employed in any capacity by any of the security or intelligence services.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): Well, you would say that, wouldn't you?

The Attorney-General: I would say it if it were a correct statement. If it were not to my knowledge a correct

statement, I would not say it. I hope that that is not a dichotomy that strikes the hon. Gentleman with any surprise.

Mr. Heffer: I have heard it all before.

The Attorney-General: If the hon. Gentleman has heard it all before, perhaps he will allow me to proceed.

I was asked why certain proceedings yesterday in the magistrates court were in camera. I understand that such proceedings that took place in camera were at the request of the defence. At any rate, they were not at the request of the prosecution, who went to Lambeth magistrates court to offer no evidence against any of the three defendants, the fourth having been discharged earlier.

Then I was asked whether the Prime Minister was consulted. I must answer, "Not to my knowledge." It would not occur to me that she had been consulted. I have no evidence that she was; I should be surprised if she was. My answer to the hon. Gentleman's question is, "Not to my knowledge."

I was then asked why subsequent charges have not been brought against Mr. Frank Larsen. The question whether any charges should be brought against Mr. Larsen would be for the Director of Public Prosecutions, and certainly not for me.

I hope that I have dealt with the matters raised by the hon. Gentleman. If he wishes to ask me any further questions, I shall be only too glad to answer them.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Is it not clear that the statement of my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General is a total rebuttal of all the trumped-up allegations that have been made by the Labour party? Is it not clear that my right hon. and learned Friend's statement was called for by Opposition Members in the hope of injuring Her Majesty's Government and the security services? Will my right hon. and learned Friend make it clear that there is absolutely no justification in any of the allegations made against the security services or against the prosecution in this case?

The Attorney-General: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. The action taken by the Director of Public Prosecutions, which I have described, was taken in pursuance of advice given to him on 7 October by independent leading counsel. My hon. Friend, with his long experience of these matters, will know that the Director of Public Prosecutions is wholly independent in the judgment that he brings to bear on these matters—as he is required to be. It seems to me that in this case, having received the advice, he behaved with the utmost propriety in coming before the magistrates court and discontinuing the proceedings. That is exactly what he did.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): Will the Attorney-General tell the House whether his statement means that the statement reported by the solicitor for the defendants—that his clients did not deny that they had been "Government agents"—is completely without foundation? Will he amplify his statement and tell us whether he has any indication that any of the defendants were, at any time, either directly or indirectly employed by this Government or by the South African Government in their security forces?

Is there truth in the allegation that the prosecution still has in its possession documents relating to the former hon. and learned Member for Fylde and including statements of evidence from the right hon. and learned Member for Ribble Valley (Mr. Waddington) and the right hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery)? Will he also tell the House whether the decision not to go ahead with the prosecution on the evidence as reported—that the defendants were not capable of any conspiracy—is not an unusual decision at least? The decision should be whether there was prima facie evidence of a conspiracy. That is a matter for the court to decide and not a matter to be decided behind closed doors.

Is the Attorney-General prepared, therefore, to bring into the public domain the details of the conversation that took place at the DPP's office between the DPP and the solicitors for the defendants—if they agree to that—so that we may know what deal was struck before the matter was dropped in the court yesterday in an extremely unusual and extraordinary manner?

The Attorney-General: I do not think that there is anything unusual or extraordinary in the DPP deciding to withdraw criminal proceedings, having received the advice that I have already described. The Director considered the matter afresh after receiving the advice from leading counsel on 7 October. That seems entirely proper and the House would expect him to come forward, as soon as reasonably practicable, to tell the court that he was no longer proceeding with the prosecution. That is exactly what he did.

I do not know that I can add anything further. The Director of Public Prosecutions is entirely independent in the judgment that he brings to these matters. He did not consider it necessary to refer the matter to me and I make not the slightest criticism of that. The decision was taken by his staff. I believe that that was entirely proper and, no doubt, if the matter had been referred to me, I should have taken precisely the same view.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): Are we to understand that the decision to drop the proceedings in this case was taken without any reference at all to the Law Officers? If so, given the political sensitivity of the subject, would it not have been wiser for the matter to be so referred?

The Attorney-General: The decision to drop the case was taken without reference to me or to the Solicitor-General and I make absolutely no complaint about that. I have quite enough to do without considering every case in which the Director of Public Prosecutions believes it right to withdraw proceedings. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] The House is very versatile. Had I been consulted on the matter, no doubt certain Opposition Members would have accused me of putting pressure on the Director. Those who know him, of course, know perfectly well, first, that I would not do so and, secondly, that he would pay no attention if I did.

Mr. Donald Anderson (Swansea, East): The defence says that a large quantity of classified material was seized at the home of Mr. Larsen by the anti-terrorist squad and retained. Was Mr. Larsen in authorised possession of that material and, if not, why were not charges preferred against him under the Official Secrets Act?

The Attorney-General: I do not have a comprehensive list of everything that was discovered in the premises occupied by Mr. Larsen. A very large quantity of documentation was taken away and examined.

Mr. Anderson: Was it classified?

The Attorney-General: It was on the basis of that examination, in the circumstances that I described in my statement, that it was considered by leading counsel that there was insufficient evidence to warrant continuation of prosecution. [HON. MEMBERS: "Was it classified?"] I have no knowledge that any classified material was discovered at the home of Mr. Larsen.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Then you should find out.

The Attorney-General: If there were, it would be a matter for the Director of Public Prosecutions to consider, but I have no knowledge that it was.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): Is not the truth of the matter that the Opposition have yet again made themselves look rather foolish? Is it not high time that they called a halt to the constant attempt to vilify our security services, an honourable institution which does its utmost to protect the safety of the citizens of Britain? Would not the appropriate charge here be that of wasting police time?

The Attorney-General: It is perfectly proper to question any decision taken by the Director of Public Prosecutions, just as it is proper to question any decision taken by the Attorney-General. In these circumstances, I took no decision because none was put to me. However, it is legitimate to ask ourselves what would be the situation if, in the face of advice from leading counsel that it was proper to withdraw the charges, the authorities and the Director had insisted on pressing on with the prosecution of the people in custody. As soon as the advice had been given and the Director had considered it, he took the view that it should be acceded to. He referred the matter to the police on the same day—12 October—that he took the decision to discontinue. That seems a perfectly proper, and indeed admirable, decision to take.

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): Does the Attorney-General recognise that his statement was properly confined to the pressing of charges, but it has not cleared up many of the surrounding matters? There is ministerial responsibility for those matters, and other questions will have to be tabled about them. This cannot be regarded as the end of the matter.

The Attorney-General: I am never sufficiently optimistic as to suppose that any statement by me is the end of any matter. I am responsible for the decisions of the Director of Public Prosecutions and I therefore thought it right to volunteer a statement this afternoon on this particular decision. I am sorry if I have shot any foxes.

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): The Attorney-General keeps saying that none of this had anything to do with him. However, if there were security implications and any question of a prosecution under the Official Secrets Act, the matter would have to be referred to him, because such prosecutions can take place only with his authority. If there were security implications, why was the Attorney-General not at least informed about it?

The Attorney-General: The matter was referred to an official in my Department at the end of July. [HON. MEMBERS: "Ah!"] If I have brought some excitement to a lead-clouded afternoon, I am glad. An official of my Department was notified of the fact that charges had been brought in the sense that the House now knows. No request for direction was made and none was given. I was notified of that communication. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh".] If that has provided some excitement, I am delighted. I was notified of that conversation.

Thereafter, matters proceeded as I have described and the Director of Public Prosecutions, having consulted independent leading counsel, came to the view that he did. He did not think it necessary to come back to me and to say, in effect, "Will it be okay if I drop these prosecutions?" I would not expect him to do so, and nor would the House. Having taken the advice of independent leading counsel, the Director of Public Prosecutions decided to discontinue and that is exactly what he did.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): I should like to say to my right hon. and learned Friend that Conservative Members do not regard the burden of proof or the judgment of the Director of Public Prosecutions on whether he can satisfy it as matters for public debate. We have full confidence in him.

Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree, from experience, that in cases involving facts such as these, defendants inevitably point to the fact that they are involved in the security services, but that in the vast majority of those cases the jury inevitably rejects that defence? Is my right hon. and learned Friend surprised that these people are repeating the same allegations?

The Attorney-General: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. The Director of Public Prosecutions has to consider whether it is just or oppressive to proceed with a prosecution. He has to decide that matter before a case starts and at every stage where the question arises along the line before the case comes to court. In this case, he had meetings, at the request of the solicitor and counsel for Mr. Larsen, on 28 and 30 September. He referred certain matters to the Security Service and in the light of the information that he received, he concluded that it was probably right to withdraw the prosecution. He put the matter to leading counsel as I have described and leading counsel advised as I have described. I have mentioned the result to the House. That seems to me to be an entirely proper way for the Director of Public Prosecutions to discharge his responsibilities.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall allow questions to go on for another five minutes before I call the Opposition Front Bench spokesman.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): Will the Attorney-General confirm that he said in his statement that the decision not to proceed with the prosecutions was made because of the discovery of some documents that were thought to be genuine and were subsequently found to be false? In upholding the principle of the separation of the judicial and executive arms of government, does not the right hon. and learned Gentleman believe that that separation must not only be sustained but be seen to be sustained? Would not a prosecution for possession of classified documents, as revealed by my hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson), or for forgery be appropriate? Unless those prosecutions take place, the separation to which I have referred will not be made manifest.

The Attorney-General: Following the first meeting on 28 September which I have mentioned, certain documents were referred by the Director of Public Prosecutions

personally to the Security Service. The Security Service advised that the documents purporting to be governmental documents were not genuine. That seemed to me an entirely proper step for the Director to take. The matter was not referred to me; he dealt with it himself. I cannot accede to the proposition by the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) that, notwithstanding advice from leading counsel that a conviction was unlikely, criminal proceedings should be continued against people then in custody in order to satisfy the concern that the hon. Gentleman expressed. Had the Director done that, he would have been subject to much greater criticism. I cannot accept that criticism.

Mr. Paul Boateng (Brent, South): Given that proceedings in Lambeth magistrates court and, indeed, in the House today will be viewed with a considerable amount of glee by the gangster regime in Pretoria, would it not be appropriate for the Attorney-General to make it absolutely clear to the House and to the world that any future acts by agents of the South African regime in this country in the furtherance of international terrorism will be vigorously pursued with the full force of the law?

The Attorney-General: There are so many begged questions in that contribution that I hardly know where to start. I am responsible for the discharge of the responsibilities as a Law Officer in this Government. One is generally accused of encouraging criminal proceedings where there is insufficient evidence. Now I am accused when the Director of Public Prosecutions, for whom I am answerable to this House, takes the view, after he has been advised that there is an insufficient case against defendants in custody, that he ought to discontinue. That is exactly what he did, and I am sorry if that shoots any foxes. The director was right to do what he did. I have no ministerial responsibility for any other regime. I find it quite enough to look after my own ministerial responsibilities.

Mr. Heffer: The right hon. and learned Gentleman has said a number of important things, but he uses the phrase "not to my knowledge". He also says that they were "not employed". What exactly does that mean? Can he say whether they are agents of the Government, because one does not have to be employed to be an agent? Can he tell us the precise status of those people?

The Attorney-General: The inquiries that I have made have established to the best of the information available to me—*[Interruption.]* I am not an employer. I am not the employer of these people or of any people connected with the Security Service. I have given the House the information that was provided to me and have said that there was no connection between any of these persons and the security services. I believe it right to say that. It was perfectly proper to make that plain, and I reiterate it.

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): In view of the fiasco surrounding this case and the obvious trumped-up nature of the allegations made by the Opposition, will my right hon. and learned Friend transmit to the relevant authorities the strong feeling of Government Ministers who very much hope that the security services will take a very close interest in the operations in this country of the ANC?

The Attorney-General: The security services and their operation are not matters that fall within my ministerial responsibility. I have quite enough to do with what is properly on my own plate. However, my hon. Friend's point is noted.

Mr. John Morris (Aberavon): The Attorney-General has chosen his words exceedingly carefully. He has told us that he has been advised, that he has made inquiries and that the Prime Minister was not consulted with his knowledge. The truth of the matter is that he has no departmental responsibility for many of the questions that have been asked. Since the Prime Minister is the only person answerable for security in the House, will she come along and give a categorical assurance that no aspect of this conspiracy or of any of the individuals concerned has any connection whatsoever with the security services? I ask him directly, first, why there are still two men in gaol. Secondly, if the defence made the request to have the hearing, or part of it, in camera, was that request acceded to by the prosecution? In view of the fact that this is a very unusual course, why did the court agree that the proceedings, or part of them, should be in camera if there were no security aspects involved?

Lastly, the only body that can really alleviate concern and deal with many of the unanswered questions is the Security Commission. Since its terms of reference are wide enough to cover any related failure of departmental security arrangements or neglect of duty, will he consult the Prime Minister so that the whole of this matter and the questions that have not been answered are referred to the Security Commission?

The Attorney-General: I am glad that the right hon. and learned Gentleman considers that my words were carefully chosen. I would have been liable to more stinging criticism if they had not been. No sufficient evidence has been revealed that there was any unlawful behaviour on the part of those who were in custody to warrant prosecution. In those circumstances it seemed to the Director of Public Prosecutions right to tell the court immediately and to withdraw those proceedings by offering no evidence. I hope that he will not be criticised for taking that view on those premises.

I do not know that I can answer on behalf of the Security Commission or answer the other questions that the right hon. and learned Gentleman has put. I am answerable in the House for the Director of Public Prosecutions, in the sense that there is no other Minister who is responsible. I believe that he has acted in an entirely proper way. I do not believe that there is anything sinister in it at all. I venture the thought that, had he acted differently in the face of the advice that he received, he would have been open not only to much more criticism but to much more justified criticism.

The prosecution was not consulted concerning the defence application that the court go into camera yesterday. That is the end of the matter. I am sorry if that has shot—*[Interruption.]* I am sorry if hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite feel that a fox has been shot, but it is not my responsibility to maintain or to urge the Director of Public Prosecutions to maintain criminal proceedings once reliable advice has been received from leading counsel that that would not conform to the guidelines laid down by successive Attorney-Generals.

Mr. Tony Banks: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, seeking your guidance.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Skinner: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I hope that this is not an attempt to carry on this statement, which has gone on for the usual length of time, for as long as I would normally allow for a statement. I will take Mr. Winnick first.

Mr. Winnick: I want to seek your advice, Mr. Speaker, as to whether we will now be in a position, arising from the Attorney-General's statement, to table questions to the Prime Minister on matters relating to events yesterday, but particularly on the security aspect. The Attorney-General has given us information that he states was based on what he was told. I do not question that in any way, but it will not come as a surprise to anyone to learn that Labour Members remain dissatisfied with the reply from the Attorney today. That in no way questions the statement he made based on the information he was given regarding the security services. If we go to the Table Office on Monday to table questions to the Prime Minister, will we be allowed to table them? The Attorney-General has mentioned certain matters and I understand that that will entitle us to table questions accordingly.

Mr. Speaker: There are already some questions on the Notice Paper for answer on Monday. The hon. Gentleman asks a hypothetical question. If the hon. Gentleman submits his questions, the Table Office will let him know whether they are in order.

Mr. Tony Banks: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. There were some exchanges recently about the alleged threat to the security of the Palace involving an hon. Member's research assistant. It appears that a person can be found in possession of a Ministry of Defence police warrant card, which is forged——

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is not a matter for me.

Mr. Banks: It may very well be a matter for you in a moment, Mr. Speaker. According to *The Independent*, a person can have a colonel's uniform and travel to Aldershot to meet Army officers. I am assuming that such a person could come to the House of Commons and be allowed in with his MOD police warrant card or colonel's uniform, or whatever else is the form of his impersonation. I should like to know, Mr. Speaker, why the man in question is not to be prosecuted. The security of the House is involved as well.

Mr. Speaker: I am not the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Mr. Skinner: After listening to the Attorney-General explaining the squalid cover-up between the Government and the Director of Public Prosecutions and protecting the Prime Minister's back because of her known hatred of the African National Congress, the electorate will find it strange that on a Friday afternoon, with plenty of time available, there is seemingly insufficient time to continue the questioning of this squalid operator on the Government Front Bench——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I allowed the usual length of time for this statement and it is reprehensible for the hon. Gentleman to seek to continue it in this way. He knows that virtually every day in this place it is not possible for every Member who wishes to be called to catch the eye of the occupant of the Chair on that specific day. There are other opportunities available to hon. Members, and I hope that the hon. Gentleman will take them.

Mr. Skinner: I hope Mr. Speaker, that you will give me the opportunity to ask the Prime Minister, when she turns up on Tuesday, what role she played in this affair. Some of us will never believe, as the Attorney-General tried to tell the House, that she was not involved. Are we to believe that this crisis started in July and that the Prime Minister did not know about the cover-up until three or four months later, when she is reckoned to know all the statistics about Canada and everything else? That is asking us to believe one hell of a lot.

Cyprus

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn. —*[Mr. Maclean.]*

3.8 pm

Mr. Cyril D. Townsend (Bexleyheath): It is a pleasure to have rather more hon. Members listening to me introduce this Adjournment debate on Cyprus than there were present on the previous three occasions when I raised the matter. I first raised the Cyprus tragedy in August 1975, a few months after first entering the House, and again in 1981 and 1983. The passing years have brought little joy and little hope and all too much suffering and misfortune for this remarkably beautiful Mediterranean island which is becoming increasingly well known to our constituents.

Britain's close ties with Cyprus go back to 1879. Cyprus is a fellow member of the Commonwealth and of the Council of Europe. More Cypriots live in London than in Nicosia. A large and growing number of British tourists visit Cyprus. Our two sovereign bases, which in international law are as much a part of the United Kingdom as Devon and Cornwall, cover 98 square miles of the island. We play the main role within the United Nations force in Cyprus, we administer that force and we have the largest single national element.

Cyprus matters to Britain. No country in the United Nations has a greater responsibility for Cyprus. In a debate on Cyprus in another place on 23 June 1983 Lord Caradon, the last colonial governor of Cyprus — I guarded him at Government House in Nicosia for a short time—said:

"We see that lovely island now cut in two, when we the British undertook—I do not forget that I signed the treaty myself on behalf of Her Majesty's Government—that the island would never be divided. We have failed to live up to a clear responsibility and, month by month, year by year, we see discussions going on and leading nowhere. We have a responsibility; we gave our undertaking, and we have utterly failed to cary it out."—[*Official Report, House of Lords,* 23 June 1983; Vol. 443 c.66.]

Most of those who have followed what has taken place in Cyprus since independence in August 1960 and who are aware of the political errors, cruel mistakes, suffering and misfortune that have come to the island, will agree with Lord Caradon's words. Our country has failed in its special commitment. We have left undone certain things that ought to have been done. The arrival of Nicos Sampson as President of Cyprus in July 1974—he was a EOKA terrorist whom I spent some time looking for—was an outrage. However, we decided to take no action in the United Nations. That was the fault from which other disasters flowed.

We shall not on this occasion give ourselves to recriminations, and repetitions of actions with which hon. Members on both sides of the House are only too familiar. It is sufficient to recall that following the Turkish invasion of Cyprus some 38 per cent. of the total territory of the Republic of Cyprus still remains under Turkish military occupation, although back in 1974 Turkish Cypriots represented only 18 per cent. of the population. The area occupied happened to contain 60 per cent. of the agricultual land, 90 per cent. of the tourist accommodation, 83 per cent. of the cargo handling capacity and 55 per cent. of the mines. The area under Turkish control is bordered by the so-called Attila Line known to the United Nations as the Green Line which runs from Lefka in the west to Famagusta in the east. In view of most international observers, the occuption is the first and most obvious barrier to a free and independent Cyprus.

The plight of the refugees was well described at the time of the invasion. The 200,000 Greek Cypriot refugees, including 50,000 children, represented 40 per cent. of the Greek Cypriot population. The Government and people of Cyprus did a wonderful job in looking after such large numbers.

I am currently chairman of the British Cyprus Parliamentary Group and I have been a regular visitor to Cyprus. I have spoken to many refugees and I visited them in their tented camps in 1976 before proper housing had been built for them. They have never failed to remind me that they are still prevented by force from returning to their homes, businesses and farms. Many elderly refugees fear that they will never see again the villages where they were born, brought up and where they in turn brought up their children. It begins to look as if that is so.

Looking north from the hot, dry plains of Nicosia there is a fine view of the Kyrenia hills. However, for many thousands of Cypriots, although those hills are the hills of home, they are forbidden territory and that jewel of a harbour at Kyrenia is but a poignant memory.

The Turkish authorities have settled 60,000 settlers from Anatolia and former soldiers on land seized from Greek Cypriots. I welcome my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the Chamber. She has kindly come along to reply to this short debate. I hope that I have not deprived her constituents of her presence. I would welcome from her an up-to-date assessment of the number of settlers in the north. I hope that she will condemn without reservation the shameful altering of the demographic structure of Cyprus.

There have been disturbing reports of the damage done to certain antiquities in the north, and the deeply distressing question of the missing people has never been cleared up. The wives, lovers, mothers and fathers of the many missing young soldiers from both sides have a right to know whether those soldiers are alive or dead. In its resolution dated 8 December 1982 the third committee of the United Nations General Assembly stressed the need for

"a speedy resolution of this humanitarian problem."

That resolution was supported by all members of the European Community except Britain, which abstained. Almost certainly, all those missing people are now dead, but it is a failure on the part of the Foreign Ministers and Foreign Office officials of the Western world that it has never been possible to establish the true facts. What action has the Foreign Secretary taken to try to stop the Turkish Government from increasing their occupying forces? It is thought that those forces now number 35,000 and that the number of tanks has increased by some 50 per cent. to 300. It takes little imagination to appreciate the concern in the south when there are 300 modern tanks situated in the north. I believe that the Turkish occupying forces serve no conceivable military purpose. Turkey's main airfields are only four minutes flying time away. The array of troops and tanks adds to the problem and damages Turkey's image abroad.

All recent British Governments have recognised that the Turkish contribution to NATO is vital. Turkey has the largest army in NATO after the United States and it has a 1,000 mile border with the Soviet Union. However, those

[Mr. Cyril D. Townsend]

factors have led the present Government to play down Britain's clear obligations to Cyprus and to over-emphasise the diplomatic difficulties. For example, the Cyprus problem was mentioned in the Gracious Speech between 1975 and 1978 but it was left out between 1979 and 1984. When did a British Prime Minister last visit Cyprus, as opposed to visiting our two sovereign bases? Since 1979, Foreign Office Ministers have a poor record in terms of visiting Cyprus to become acquainted with the places, politics and personalities. They have been changed round too quickly to become well informed.

In order to secure NATO's south-east flank and to prevent a further deterioration in the relations between Greece and Turkey, it is necessary to have a settlement in Cyprus. My purpose this afternoon is not to cheer on one side or another but to cheer on the people of Cyprus in their determined struggle for a just, honourable and lasting settlement. My purpose is also to give our re-elected Government an opportunity to tell the House how they intend to discharge the commitment to Cyprus that Britain so rightly undertook under a Conservative Government. That is what many supporters of Cyprus, at home and abroad, will want to know when they read the *Hansard* report and the press reports. It is unthinkable that we should do nothing. That would be unworthy of the Government and the British people who do not intend to allow a fellow Commonwealth country to fall by the wayside.

I recognise that a settlement cannot be imposed, but propositions which neither side would oppose and which both sides could accept could be put forward. Of course, the weight of world opinion must be brought to bear. The Cyprus question represents a grave challenge to the authority of the United Nations, the decisions of which are being treated with armed contempt. There is a rule of law in the world and, although the Government are sometimes slow fully to recognise the point, at this moment in history the guarantee of that is the United Nations.

However great the provocations, the Turkish invasion of the republic of Cyprus was an open breach of the United Nations charter. Since July 1974, the Security Council has passed a series of resolutions laying down the requirements of justice. The resolutions call on all states to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Cyprus, and demand the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops. There is no doubt that that last demand is fully within the competence of the Security Council. If its wishes continue to be ignored, be it over Cyprus or the Gulf, the House should have no doubt of the serious implications for every member country. The clock of international order is being turned back.

In the past, we all put our faith in the seemingly endless intercommunal talks. It is now obvious that no progress is possible in that way, as there is no real dialogue between north and south. We have put our faith in the Secretary-General, who has had first-hand practical experience of Cyprus over many years. He came close to success in January 1985, but today we are well over the top of the hill and descending deeper into the valley.

If some of my hon. Friends feel that I am exaggerating a little, let me remind them of the words of the Secretary-General in his recent report to the General Assembly:

"The state of affairs in Cyprus gives increasing cause for concern. And as I have reported to the Security Council, a potentially dangerous military build-up is taking place in the island. The possibility of serious confrontations cannot be excluded in the months ahead, if present trends continue. Troop-contributing Governments, without whose generosity the Peace-keeping Force could not be maintained on Cyprus, are increasingly dissatisfied both with the lack of progress towards a settlement and the growing financial burden they bear. It is particularly disturbing that in these circumstances, efforts to reactivate productive negotiations are deadlocked."

I wonder whether my right hon. Friend would at least hint at what might happen if the Secretary-General's mission should fail during the course of this year. We would like to know that some sort of contingency planning is taking place. Perhaps three statesmen of world repute could be dispatched to Cyprus to meet both sides, and to put forward in private proposals for bringing the two communities together.

I feel that I should say—although I shall not gain popularity for saying it, and I certainly do not enjoy doing so—that if a settlement is not reached in the next few years, perhaps in the lifetime of this Parliament, it may never be reached. You may agree, Mr. Speaker, that it is a great sin in public life to tell people that matters are not what they really are, that one believes that that is what they want to hear. Since 1974—in reality, since 1960—the two communities have been growing apart. That is why Friends of Cyprus has so sensibly been organising meetings of professional Greek and Turkish Cypriots and politicians. As an independent organisation, Friends of Cyprus is well qualified to call such meetings. However, I ask the Front Bench whether the British Government, through their able diplomats and agencies, cannot play a role as well.

Before concluding, let me invite my right hon. Friend to comment on some other points. Does she agree with the proposal by the President of the republic for the demilitarisation of the republic? Does she support his idea of the UN-sponsored international conference? Does she accept that Varosha should be given to the United Nations to administer? I saw the state of that city a few years ago, and I warmly welcome the proposal. Cannot more be done by the Commonwealth Action Group, set up in 1983 in New Delhi? We have heard remarkably little from it and about it. Will the Government be finding time in the near future to debate the important and controversial Select Committee report on Cyprus? Would not its suggestion that the boycott of the north should end accelerate the pace towards de facto partition? A mountainous island of 3,572 square miles is too small to be divided. In economic, industrial and agricultural terms, it must be seen as a whole.

I remain convinced that the majority of Cypriots want a permanent settlement that will uphold their security and prosperity. They want a settlement that will eliminate both Enosis and Taksim and yet ensure that the Turkish community is given the safeguards that it seeks and that it is entitled to expect.

As with the Palestinian question, security is the fundamental issue. Surely the historic evidence is that both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, although different in religion, character and temperament, share a love of their island and can live and work peacefully together. They are doing so today on the sovereign bases. Perhaps since 1974 they may have a greater readiness to work together in happiness, understanding and mutual respect.

for they have witnessed the murders and massacres that were born out the dreadful mistakes that were made by both sides.

With time running out rapidly, with the two sides unable to agree on how the negotiating process can be kept in being, with a national contingent being withdrawn from the United Nations force on the island, with military units in both northern Turkey and in the republic being reinforced and re-equipped, the Government must strain every sinew over the next four years to try to achieve a settlement of one of the world's longest-running disputes.

A Mediterranean island that is blessed with great charm remains tragically and cruelly divided. That division poses one of the great questions of our age: can international support save countries from conflict and chaos? True friends of Cyprus will continue to insist that it must.

3.27 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mrs. Lynda Chalker): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath (Mr. Townsend) on raising this matter in his fourth Adjournment debate on the subject. Like many other right hon. and hon. Members, he has a particular interest in Cyprus. That is natural. Close ties of friendship, a long historical association with the island, the presence of our sovereign bases and both professional and personal ties continue to exist between us, and we hope that they may help in the eventual solution of this terrible problem.

In the time available I shall try to answer as many of my hon. Friend's questions as I can. I shall write to him about any that I am unable to cover today. The extent of many hon. Members' interest in Cyprus is shown by the recent report of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs. We are studying the report very carefully, and the Government's reply to its conclusions and recommendations will shortly be laid before the House as a Command Paper.

My hon. Friend asked about the Government's aims for Cyprus. Our policy has a clearly defined objective. We wish, as he does, to see a peaceful, just and lasting settlement in Cyprus. We believe that such a settlement is in the interests of all the people of Cyprus. It is also in our interests.

The reasons why we want a solution are clear. My hon. Friend pointed out that the Cyprus problem is, above all, a human problem. Thousands of people have been displaced from their homes — homes which, in some cases, had belonged to their families for generations. Others have relatives who are missing and unaccounted for —in some cases for as long as 23 years.

Apart from the human dimension, the continued division of Cyprus is a source of dispute between two of our friends and allies. That, of course, is bad, a point to which my hon. Friend specifically referred. The division between the north and south of Cyprus, as it is sometimes colloquially described, weakens Cyprus in all sorts of ways and it weakens the Nato Alliance. Obviously, it is a potential source of instability in the eastern Mediterranean which is of great importance to the whole of the Western world.

I can assure my hon. Friend that we are not inactive. Our objective is to achieve a settlement, just as it has been the objective of successive British Goverments. But how do we try to achieve our objective? When Mr. Halefoglu, the Turkish Foreign Minister, visited London in July this year my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary was adamant that the Turkish forces should be reduced in northern Cyprus. I have raised that issue when I have met other members of the Turkish Government. The United Kingdom's initiative was launched in 1978 with the Canadians and the Americans to try to achieve a settlement but, unfortunately, no settlement was agreed.

Over the years our initiative led to the United Nations Secretary-General's initiative, and we share his frustration. My hon. Friend read out a good example of that from an article. Since that first initiative failed the Secretary-General has continued to pursue a settlement in Cyprus with skill and determination and we should all pay tribute to his efforts.

The two parties to the dispute continue to reaffirm their support for the Secretary-General and the goal he pursues —a unified federal Cyprus, but, as we know, that has not resulted in the solution that we want. We believe that support for the Secretary-General's mission of good offices represents the most effective way of pursuing our goal in Cyprus and we are not alone in that belief. The United Nations Security Council, the European Community and the Commonwealth all support his efforts.

In March 1986 the Secretary-General came close to an agreement and it remains a source of great regret to us that one side was unable to accept his proposals. We continue to believe that they form a good basis for a settlement and we urge their acceptance even now. We believe that the proposals took account of both the internal and international aspects of the Cyprus problem. They were put forward on the basis that acceptance of each part depended on the acceptance of the whole. I cannot speculate on what will happen in the future, but towards the end of my remarks I shall say that we have contingency plans. Meantime it is essential that we continue to support the Secretary-General in two ways.

First, we are supporting the Secretary-General through our diplomatic effort in contacts both with the protagonists and the other guarantor powers at all levels. The High Commission in Nicosia has regular contacts with the Government of Cyprus and informal contacts with the leaders of the Turkish Cypriot community over matters of direct interest to us, such as property claims by British citizens. We also explore their thinking on the Cyprus problem. Through our embassies in Ankara and Athens we have regular contact with the representatives of the Governments of the other guarantor powers. We also have contact with the Cyprus Government and our co-guarantors at ministerial level.

Over the past 12 months there have been many of those contacts. Most recently my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister met President Kyprianou in Vancouver during the Heads of Government meeting last week and she discussed Cyprus with him. In July my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed Cyprus with the Turkish Foreign Minister. I met the Turkish Foreign Minister earlier this week and further talks are planned. The Greek Foreign Minister will be coming to London shortly and Cyprus will be one of the main items covered in our talks with him.

Sir Antony Buck (Colchester, North): Will my right hon. Friend be able to persuade the Greeks to accept the UN resolution, as the Turks have?

Mrs. Chalker: We shall do our best and continue to make use of all our contacts within Cyprus, Turkey and Greece to bring about a solution. All contacts, including those of my hon. Friends, must urge both parties to show the flexibility and political will that is necessary to make progress towards a settlement.

The second way in which we support, and will continue to do so, the Secretary-General is through our contributions to the United Nations force in Cyprus, the UNFICYP. The United Nations Secretary-General has repeatedly stressed the vital role that the United Nations force in Cyprus plays. It provides the background of stability that he needs to pursue his mission of good offices. We share his appreciation of the United Nations force. Our support is reflected in the size of our contingent, 740 men, which is the largest in that force. The cost to the United Kingdom of that is some £23 million per annum, which is the biggest contribution that we make to any single peace-keeping operation. By any standards, it is a substantial contribution, both as a peace-keeping commitment and as a measure of our desire for a settlement in Cyprus.

There are many other issues on which I could reply in this debate, but one other important aspect of our policy to Cyprus lies in our refusal to support any move that, in our view, makes a settlement harder to achieve. It is for that reason that we refuse to recognise the so-called 1983 declaration of independence by the Turkish-Cypriot leadership. To do so would simply cement the division on the island.

We were instrumental in drafting Security Council resolutions 540 and 551, which condemned Turkish Cypriot UDI and called upon other states not to recognise it. So far, no state other than Turkey has done so. On the other hand, it is not our intention that individual Turkish Cypriots should suffer as a result of our policy; we therefore continue to trade. Turkish Cypriots continue to come to the United Kingdom. We also try to ensure that the aid that we give Cyprus benefits Turkish as well as Greek Cypriots.

In that context I should like to mention the protocol that was signed earlier this week to the EC-Cyprus association agreement. It implements an important commitment in the original agreement to develop the relationship into a custom union. The protocol is governed by article 5 of the association agreement and it stipulates that the agreement shall not give rise to discrimination between nationals or companies of Cyprus. I believe that that is most important.

On Monday the EC presidency took the opportunity to reaffirm the support of the EC for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Cyprus. I can well understand the frustration that is felt by many hon. Members, and many outside this House, at the lack of substantive progress towards a settlement in Cyprus in recent months. This leads to calls for us to pursue a different policy. We all want to see more rapid progress, so what about the suggestion of an international conference? Despite the fact that it has been difficult for Senor Perez de Cuellar to make progress in recent months, we are aware that he is actively seeking ways to do so. We believe that that is the right way to proceed and that an international conference would not help us at the present time to achieve the solution that we want.

With regard to the United Kingdom, I do not believe that that conference would be timely because we do not wish to undermine the efforts of the Secretary-General. We have contingency plans to cover the fact that, sadly, it might fail. I hope that we will not need to put them into action and I am sure that my hon. Friends will understand that those contingency plans need to remain confidential.

The Motion having been made after half-past Two o'clock and the debate having continued for half an hour, MR. SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at twenty-two minutes to Four o'clock.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 20 July 1987

PRIME MINISTER

Middle East

Mr. Latham asked the Prime Minister whether she will make a statement on her most recent discussions with His Majesty King Hussein regarding a possible international conference on the dispute between the state of Israel and its Arab neighbours; and what estimate she has made of the willingness of other permanent members of the Security Council to support such a proposal.

The Prime Minister: King Hussein and I agreed that an international conference remains the best way to make progress and that it is important not to miss the present opportunity to take a step forward.

The United Nations Secretary General is continuing his informal consultations with the parties and the permanent members of the Security Council on the conference proposal.

Blowpipe Missiles

Mr. Ron Brown asked the Prime Minister if she has received any representations about the supply of Blowpipe missiles to Afghanistan; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on 13 July, at column *335*.

Europe (Department of State)

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister if she has any plans to create a new Department of state responsible for Europe; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: No.

Mr. David Walker

Mr. Foulkes asked the Prime Minister if, in view of the testimony of Colonel North that a British subject, David Walker, carried out attacks on military aircraft in Nicaragua, she will give instructions that neither David Walker nor his company KMS is to be considered for future Government contracts.

The Prime Minister: No.

Telecommunications

Mr. Douglas asked the Prime Minister what information she has as to whether the United States Government have received an assurance from their Japanese counterparts that two licences are to be issued in relation to the development of the second KDD telecommunications network; and whether she has herself received such an assurance from the Japanese Prime Minister or his Ministers.

The Prime Minister: When I saw Prime Minister Nakasone at the Venice summit, I discussed the bid by Cable and Wireless, with its IDC partners, to obtain a licence to provide alternative international services in competition with KDD, the existing operator. Mr. Nakasone said that the Japanese Government would be prepared to consider two applications for licences.

Mr. Michael Marshall asked the Prime Minister whether the conclusions drawn from Her Majesty's Government's comparison of British and Japanese practices in the liberalisation of their respective telecommunications industries will affect the attitude of her Administration to future collaborative projects in this field.

The Prime Minister: The Government welcomed the changes in Japanese law in 1985 to permit liberalisation and competition in the field of telecommunications. This followed similar developments in the United Kingdom. The Government hope that the application of Japanese law will enable co-operation to develop in this sector.

Research Development

Mr. Sumberg asked the Prime Minister when the Government's response to the First Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords on science and technology on civil research and development, Session 1986-87, will be published.

The Prime Minister: The Government's response to the First Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords on science and technology is today being presented to Parliament. The Government are grateful to the Committee for its full and considered review of civil research and development. The response recognises the importance of increasing the civil share of the very substantial sums allocated to publicly funded R & D. The Government agree with the Committee that the main responsibility for investing in development rests with industry; its own role is to create a climate in which industry is encouraged to do so. Some sectors have responded and are increasing investment in R & D: others need to do more.

The White Paper announces a strengthening of the central arrangements for improving the contribution of Government funded R&D to the efficiency, competitiveness and innovative capacity of the United Kingdom. The main steps are the collective ministerial consideration, under my leadership, of science and technology priorities, and the establishment of the Advisory Council on Science and Technology (ACOST) which will report to me. The Advisory Council for Applied Research and Development (ACARD) will be absorbed within ACOST with widened membership and terms of reference to embrace all science and technology. Public spending on science and technology will be directed towards areas of high national priority by an annual assessment of new opportunities drawing on the advice of ACOST and on the work of the new Centre for Exploitation of Science and Technology.

The response welcomes the general thrust of the Select Committee's thinking on research councils and higher education. The Government are seeking comments on the Advisory Board for the Research Council's (ABRC) proposals for greater concentration and more purposive management of research resources as set out in "A

Strategy for the Science Base," which is published today. The White Paper also announces a review by the Department of Trade and Industry of its role in supporting and encouraging innovation in industry; and the publication today of a study by Inland Revenue and Her Majesty's Treasury officials of tax incentives for R & D spending in 10 developed countries.

EMPLOYMENT

Expats International Ltd. (Correspondence)

Mr. John Fraser asked the Secretary of State for Employment why it took his Department from 6 March to 2 June to reply to a letter from Expats International Ltd. about potential fraud by Asset Enterprises Ltd.

Mr. Lee: My Department's employment agency licensing office at Stanmore acknowledged the letter dated 6 March from Expats International on 17 March. An inspector visited Asset Enterprises on 1 April to investigate possible offences under the Employment Agencies Act 1973, including unlawful charging of fees to workers. The office took steps to end the illegal practices found and wrote a further letter to Expats International on 15 April informing them of the action taken. Following complaints about continuing illegal activity by Asset, the office began to gather evidence with a view to prosecution. In a letter dated 2 June it informed Expats International that Asset Enterprises had left their premises and were being investigated by the police for fraud.

Small Businesses

Mr. David Shaw asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department in helping small businesses over the last three years; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

Mr. Cope: Overall responsibility for small firms sector was transferred to the Department of Employment on 3 September 1985. The promotion of enterprise and the exploitation of its potential for job creation have a high priority in the Department's objectives. The Department also monitors and seeks to influence relevant policies of other Departments so that they will benefit the sector. In England the regional enterprise units have been set up to represent and promote the Government's interest in enterprise and small firms at a regional and local level.

The number of small firms in the United Kingdom has been steadily increasing. From 1980 to 1985 there was an average net increase of around 500 per week in the total stock of businesses registered for VAT. The number of self-employed people in the United Kingdom has also risen continuously in recent years, from 1·9 million in mid-1979 to 2·7 million in December 1986.

Steps taken by the Department of Employment during the last three years specifically to help small firms are listed below:

Advice and Information

A major priority has been to make information and advice more accessible to small businesses and the self-employed through the small firms service, local enterprise agencies, the Manpower Services Commission's jobcentres and the publication "Action for Jobs".

The small firms service monitors performance by three main indicators as set out below, the figures refer only to England. The operation of the service in Wales and Scotland is administered by their respective development agencies.

	Inquiries	*New cases*	*Counselling sessions*
1984-85	242,101	24,955	34,180
1985-86	255,228	25,361	35,114
1986-87	280,328	27,158	38,210

Local Enterprise Agency Grant Scheme

A five year scheme of financial assistance designed to establish a network of viable self-supporting enterprise agencies was introduced on 1 April 1986. The purpose of these agencies is to provide advice and help to both the budding and the existing entrepreneur. The objective of the scheme is to encourage greater private sector support for the agencies — by matching, up to a limit, the amount of that support with Government support—and towards that end approximately £2·5 million in grants was made available in the first year to about 170 agencies. A further £2·7 million is being made available in 1987-88.

Training

The Manpower Services Commission has been refocusing its adult training programme at the Department's request to take greater account of small firms' training needs. Its Training for Enterprise budget has been increased from £9·0 million in 1984-85 when it assisted 7,870 people, to £11·6 million in 1985-86 which assisted 25,000 people and £18·6 million in 1986-87 benefiting 67,000 people. The estimate for 1987-88 provides for expenditure of £19·3 million helping 68,600.

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

Over the last three years the scheme has expanded rapidly and the number of entrants in each year were as follows:

	Number
1984-85	46,036
1985-86	60,036
1986-87	86,751

Provision for 102,500 entrants has been made for 1987-88. The rules of the scheme were widened in 1986 to allow non-independent businesses such as franchises, agencies and distributorships to be set up with scheme support, and greater emphasis is now being placed on counselling and training for applicants. The results of a survey of applicants joining the scheme in 1984 showed that of those received the allowance for a full year 76 per cent. were still trading 18 months after start-up, and for every 100 of these businesses 91 additional jobs have been created.

(6) *Loan Guarantee Scheme*

This scheme was extended for a further three years in the 1986 Budget. The cost to borrowers through the premium payable has been reduced from 5 per cent. to 2·5 per cent. of the guaranteed amount outstanding. The guarantee covers 7 per cent. of the loan.

In 1986-87 1,050 guarantees were issued with a total value of £40·4 million.

(7) *The Prince's Youth Business Trust*

The Department has agreed to match private sector donations to the Prince's Youth Business Trust. The Department's contributions is to be used to provide loans to young people setting up in or expanding an existing business.

(8) *Health and Safety*

The Health and Safety Commission's small firms working group, chaired by an employer-nominated commissioner, has special responsibility for the interests of small firms. A number of publications aimed specifically at small firms, have been produced and distributed. The Health and Safety Executive is also preparing a general guidance handbook on health and safety problems in small businesses, which will be available shortly. In addition, inspectors receive training on the problems of small firms. In 1985-86 the factory inspectorate visited 17,650 new establishments of which they believe the majority will have been to firms with 25 or fewer employees.

(9) *Employing People*

The Department has produced a simplified guide to employment legislation for small firms' advisers, along with a model employment form and notice board kit aimed to help small firms in particular. In March the Department published a cartoon leaflet and series of fact sheets on employment law, designed to help those employing people for the first time. In addition, the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service has published a booklet for small firms with information on various aspects of employing people.

(10) *Performance Indicators*

The Department monitors all its schemes with a view to assessing additionality, job creation, displacement and other relevant factors. Evaluation reports on particular schemes are published where relevant. The size of the small firm sector is regularly monitored by reference to the number of such firms registered for VAT.

Jobstart

Mr. Leighton asked the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the take-up of jobstart in the London borough of Newham.

Mr. Lee: The information is not available in the form requested. Between 1 July 1986 and 26 June 1987, 31 applications for the jobstart allowance were accepted by the East Ham restart team which covers the boroughs of Newham, Barking, Dagenham and until October 1986, Tower Hamlets. Nationally there have been 12,666 accepted applications since the scheme began and take-up is currently running at around 400 weekly.

YTS (Chelmsford)

Mr. Burns asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the number of young persons on YTS in the Chelmsford local authority area in each of the last 12 months.

Mr. Cope: The information is shown in the following table:

Date	*Number of young people on YTS in Chelmsford local authority district*
31 July 1986	576
31 August 1986	474
30 September 1986	652
31 October 1986	659
30 November 1986	643
31 December 1986	636
31 January 1987	623
28 February 1987	612
31 March 1987	591
30 April 1987	557
31 May 1987	562
30 June 1987	646

Labour Statistics

Mr. Burns asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the total number of people unemployed in the Chelmsford local authority area in each month since May 1979 until the latest available date.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. Statistics of unemployment for local authority areas are derived from the ward-based system and are available only from June 1983.

Unemployed claimants Chelmsford local authority area

	Number
June 1983	3,370
July 1983	3,491
August 1983	3,481
September 1983	3,719
October 1983	3,581
November 1983	3,627
December 1983	3,558
January 1984	3,749
February 1984	3,777
March 1984	3,737
April 1984	3,690
May 1984	3,707
June 1984	3,659
July 1984	3,947
August 1984	3,947
September 1984	4,186
October 1984	4,060
November 1984	4,065
December 1984	4,100
January 1985	4,304
February 1985	4,313
March 1985	4,177
April 1985	4,182
May 1985	4,050
June 1985	4,066
July 1985	4,215
August 1985	4,254
September 1985	4,413
October 1985	4,241
November 1985	4,224
December 1985	4,142
January 1986	4,378
February 1986	4,376
March 1986	4,294
April 1986	4,271
May 1986	4,246
June 1986	4,172
July 1986	4,260
August 1986	4,239
September 1986	4,243
October 1986	4,068
November 1986	3,897
December 1986	3,766
January 1987	3,909

	Number
February 1987	3,792
March 1987	3,583
April 1987	3,532
May 1987	3,397
June 1987	3,281

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are currently signing on in the Birkenhead constituency.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. On 11 June 1987, the number of unemployed claimants in the Birkenhead constituency was 9,016.

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are currently signing on in the Wirral, South constituency.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. On 11 June 1987, the number of unemployed claimants in the Wirral, South constituency was 3,615.

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are currently signing on in the Wirral, West constituency.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. On 11 june 1987, the number of unemployed claimants in the Wirral, West constituency was 4,022.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the total number of people unemployed in London for the latest date available.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. On 11 June 1987, the number of unemployed claimants in Greater London was 361,370.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many people in London, by sex, have been unemployed for *(a)* less than six months, *(b)* between six months and one year, *(c)* between one year and two years and *(d)* more than two years; and what percentage each of these groups represent of the total figure.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library.

Unemployed Claimants in Greater London, 9 April 1987

	Males		*Females*	
	Number	*Percentage of total*	*Number*	*Percentage of total*
Unemployed for under 6 months	98,260	37·1	49,599	43·5
6 months to 1 year	49,542	18·7	27,437	24·0
1 to 2 years	46,263	17·4	16,927	14·8
Over 2 years	71,113	26·8	20,141	17·7

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Employment (1) how many people in London are employed in manufacturing industry for the latest date available ; and how many were so employed in 1983;

(2) how many people in London have been employed in the service industries for each of past four years.

Mr. Lee: The available information is as follows:

Employees in employment in Greater London

	Manufacturing industries	*Service industries*
December 1983	585,000	2,696,000
December 1984	569,000	2,738,000
December 1985	556,000	2,784,000
December 1986[1]	530,000	2,812,000

[1] Latest available.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many people, by sex, work *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time in London, for the latest date available and for each of the last four years.

Mr. Lee: Estimates of the numbers of full-time and part-time male employees in employment in regions for the period specified are available only from the September 1984 census of employment. Regional estimates of the numbers of self-employed people do not separately identify full-time and part-time employment.

The available information is given in the following table:

Employees in employment in Greater London

	Males			*Females*		
	Full time	*Part time*	*All*	*Full time*	*Part time*	*All*
December 1983	[1]—	[1]—	1,983,000	988,000	506,000	1,494,000
September 1984[2]	1,835,000	137,000	1,971,000	998,000	494,000	1,492,000
December 1984	[1]—	[1]—	1,984,000	1,002,000	510,000	1,512,000
December 1985	[1]—	[1]—	1,992,000	1,020,000	508,000	1,528,000
December 1986[3]	[1]—	[1]—	1,985,000	1,020,000	516,000	1,536,000

[1] Not available.
[2] Census of employment.
[3] Latest available.

Disabled Employees (Adaptation of Premises)

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many grants have been given to employers to adapt their premises to meet the needs of disabled employees; and how much has been spent on this programme in each of the last five financial years.

Mr. Lee: The information requested is set out below, showing the number of grants given to employers and expenditure on the programme in each of the last five financial years.

Year	*Number of grants*	*Expenditure* £
1982-83	117	107,334
1983-84	170	134,412
1984-85	145	243,649
1985-86	165	295,000
1986-87	253	256,457

Disabled Persons (Training)

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what plans he has to ensure that disabled young people eligible for YTS will not have decreased access to training programmes as a result of preference being given to those who must have places or risk losing their supplementary benefit;

(2) how he will ensure that the quality of training places for disabled young people will be maintained at a high standard and improved against the pressure to provide a large quantity of training places.

Mr. John Lee: I do not anticipate that the availability or quality of places for young disabled people will be affected by the new supplementary benefit proposals.

The Government have not yet announced how they will implement their commitment to ensure that those under 18 who choose deliberately to remain unemployed are not eligible for benefit, but they are equally committed to protecting other young people, including those who suffer from disabilities. There will be no impact on YTS opportunities for the disabled.

Construction Workers (Training)

Mr. Stuart Holland asked the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has as to what share of the work force in the United Kingdom construction industry was trained at employers' cost and for what training period by private contractors.

Mr. Cope: This information is not currently available. As part of a study of funding of vocational education and training in Britain, the Manpower Services Commission is undertaking a survey of employers' training activities. The survey will examine costs and volumes of training across all major sectors, including the construction industry. The results of the survey are expected to be available in 1988. The annual report of the Construction Industry Training Board provides financial data on training activity involving the board.

National Dock Labour Scheme

Dame Peggy Fenner asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he intends to take any action in the course of this Session to seek to abolish the national dock labour scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: There has been no change in the Government's position with regard to the scheme. I cannot speculate about the view they are likely to take over the rest of this Session.

Job Vacancies

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the total number of job vacancies in London for the latest date available.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. On 5 June 1987, the number of unfilled vacancies at jobcentres in Greater London was 37,801. These do not represent the total number of vacancies in Greater London. Estimates suggest that nationally about a third of all vacancies are notified to jobcentres, but an equivalent estimate for Greater London is not available.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Payroll Giving

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Lord Privy Seal why the detailed arrangements for charity payroll giving, referred to in his predecessor's answer in the *Official Report*, 4 March, column *630*, have not yet been implemented; what has been the cause of the delay; and when the scheme will become operative for hon. Members.

Mr. Wakeham: As I am sure my hon. Friend will appreciate, the charity payroll giving scheme is both new and detailed. It is necessary to appoint an agency or agencies to which the contributions deducted from donor's salaries will be paid for subsequent distribution to the individual charities nominated by the donors. The agency must be a charity and must have been approved for the purpose by Inland Revenue. As my hon. Friend will recognise, the agency must be carefully selected and the necessary contractual and administrative arrangements must be examined in depth before prospective donors are invited to participate in the scheme. It is hoped to introduce a scheme when the House returns after the summer recess. The £120 limit applies to the tax year as a whole.

Widows' Pensions

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will set out in tabular form in the *Official Report* the percentage of pension lost, in each case, by the widows of those former Members who died between 1 March 1984 and 30 April 1987, taking into account the level of salary recommended by the TSRB in its report No. 20 and the salary actually in payment at the relevant date.

Mr. Wakeham: There are eight such cases. The proportion by which the pensions of the widows concerned would have been greater if the TSRB recommendation relating to Members' salaries had been implemented in full from 13 June 1983 depends mainly on the salary in payment at the time of death. Increases in that salary between 1983 and 1987 mean that, broadly speaking, the percentage gain forgone was least in the most recent cases. The following table sets out the percentage gain forgone in descending order of size.

Case	Year of death	Percentage
1	1984	19·62
2	1984	16·98
3	1985	13·7
4	1986	11·47
5	1986	7·45
6	1986	7·42
7	1987	5·87
8	1987	5·8

WALES

Mentally Disabled Persons

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales what measures have been taken, or are under consideration, to ensure suitable housing for mentally disabled persons being discharged from hospital under the policy of caring in the community.

Mr. Grist: Responsibility for ensuring that suitable housing is provided for individuals discharged from mental illness and mental handicap hospitals rests with district health authorities and local authority social services departments, working in conjunction with other bodies such as local housing authorities, the Housing Corporation and voluntary organisations, where appropriate. We support care in the community developments with special central funding and will continue to do so.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many mentally disabled persons have been discharged from hospital under the policy of caring in the community; how many more he expects to be discharged during the coming years; and if he will give the figures by health authority area.

Mr. Grist: Information is not available in the form requested, but tables 1.19 and 4.15 of "Mental Health Statistics for Wales (No. 6, 1986)"—a copy of which is in the Library—provide an analysis of discharges from mental illness and mental handicap hospitals by category of recommended aftercare. The resident population of mental illness hospitals and units fell from 6,227 in 1970 to 4,181 in 1985. That of mental handicap hospitals and units fell from 2,490 in 1970 to 1,906 in 1985.

Elderly Persons (Accommodation)

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales what provisions exist in each county of Wales for the inspection of nursing and residential homes for the elderly; and how many people in each case are employed in the inspection of such homes.

Mr. Grist: A statutory duty is placed upon health authorities and county councils in Wales to inspect regularly private nursing and residential homes, including those for the elderly. It is for each individual authority to determine the numbers of staff it employs for this purpose.

Nursing and Residential Homes

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the average number of residents in privately owned nursing and residential homes for the elderly in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The latest figures available indicate that there were 4,937 residents in the 340 private and voluntary residential homes for the elderly at 31 March 1986, an average of 14·5 per home. There were 1,356 beds designated for the elderly in the 78 private nursing homes at 31 December 1985, an average of 17·4 beds per home. No information is available centrally on the occupancy of the private nursing home beds.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales what guidance his Department has issued on the ideal maximum number of residents at nursing and residential homes for the elderly.

Mr. Grist: The Department has issued no specific guidance on this matter.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) what is the average cost per annum of accommodating an elderly person in *(a)* a private nursing or residential home and *(b)* a local authority owned nursing or residential home in Wales;

(2) what is the total annual cost to public funds of accommodating those elderly people in Wales who live in private nursing or residential homes; and what were the equivalent figures for each year since 1979 at 1987 and outturn prices.

Mr. Grist: The information available to the Department relates only to the expenditure incurred by local authorities in providing residential homes for the elderly, and does not include expenditure by other Government Departments. No reliable comparative information is available for private nursing or residential homes. The estimated average net expenditure incurred by local authorities for accommodating elderly persons (over 65) in local authority residential homes in 1985-86 was £3,900 per head.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many and what proportion of the retired population of each county of Wales are accommodated in *(a)* local authority owned and *(b)* privately owned nursing and residential homes; and what were the corresponding figures for 1979.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: I shall reply to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Disabled Persons (Higher Education)

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) what guidance his Department has given to local education authorities regarding guaranteeing places in higher education to disabled persons;

(2) what measures have been taken by his Department to encourage Manpower Services Commission projects to improve access to the colleges of the university of Wales for disabled students.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: In the recent White Paper "Higher Education — Meeting the Challenge" the Government reaffirmed its policy of providing access to higher education for all who have the necessary intellectual competence, motivation and maturity to benefit from it and who wish to do so. It remains the Government's policy, however, to leave to institutions the decision on which individual students to admit.

With regard to the question of physical access, section 8 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 requires that provision for the needs of disabled persons shall be included in the design of universities, schools and colleges of further and higher education.

The Welsh Office has provided funds under the education support grant arrangements to encourage local authorities to purchase special equipment designed for the use of students with special educational needs. Provision was made for expenditure of £80,000 to be supported through education support grant in 1986-87 and a similar level of support is being made available in the current financial year.

The MSC, in deciding which applicants it should select for financial support under its adult training programme, which includes the funding of adults on suitable courses in further and higher education institutions, is prepared to relax its general eligibility rules where the disabled are concerned.

Schools (Financial Delegation)

Mr. Gwilym Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement about the Government's plans to provide financial delegation to schools.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: I am today publishing in Wales a consultation document seeking views on the Government's proposal to legislate to give all secondary schools and larger primary schools control over their own budgets. I have asked for comments to be submitted by 16 September. Copies of the document have been placed in the Library.

Open Enrolment

Mr. Gwilym Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement about the Government's plans to provide for more open enrolment to schools.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: I am today publishing in Wales a consultation document seeking views on the Government's proposal to legislate to change the present arrangement for admissions to schools so that local education authorities and governing bodies would be required to admit pupils up to the limit of that school's available capacity. I have asked for comments to be submitted by 16 September. Copies of the document have been placed in the Library of the House.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

EC Treaties

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Newham, South on 8 July, *Official Report*, column *149*, if he will state the earliest and latest dates when he expects the full amended version of the main treaties of the European Economic Community to be available from the Community Publications Office and Her Majesty's Stationery Office, respectively.

Mrs. Chalker: The amended version of the treaties, which will be published in all the Community languages, is expected to be available from the Community Publications Office by the end of the year. Her Majesty's Stationery Office expect to publish its edition three to four months thereafter.

UNESCO

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will take steps to ensure that UNESCO is not subjected to controls or regulations concerning foreign exchange or fund transfers in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will take steps to ensure that UNESCO is immune from certain legal process in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will take steps to ensure that UNESCO continues to have the capacity to acquire and dispose of immovable and movable property in the United Kingdom and to receive income therefrom without tax liabilities;

(4) if he will take measures to ensure that UNESCO retains in full its capacity for entering into contracts in the United Kingdom protecting it from future limitation by a law or an act affecting the judicial personality of bodies corporate;

(5) when he hopes to be able to announce a decision on the granting of privileges and immunities to UNESCO comparable to those it normally enjoys in the states that are not parties to the convention on the privileges and immunities of the specialised agencies; and if he will make a statement;

(6) if he will take steps to ensure that UNESCO has access to the same facilities in respect of communications in the United Kingdom as those accorded to foreign Governments; and if he will make a statement;

(7) if he will introduce measures to ensure that members of the executive board, staff members, experts or other persons travelling on UNESCO business may freely enter, transit through and exit from the United Kingdom without restrictions, and may be immune from legal process in respect of acts performed by them in their official capacities; and if he will make a statement;

(8) if he will take steps to ensure that representatives of member states of UNESCO can attend meetings convened by UNESCO in the United Kingdom without impediments or restrictions on a permanent rather than an ad hoc basis.

Mr. Eggar: The United Kingdom is a party to the convention on the privileges and immunities of the specialised agencies of the United Nations, and, pursuant to its terms, has undertaken to apply its provisions in respect of most of the specialised agencies of which it is a member. Our record in this respect is better than that of many other countries. Effect is given to the convention in United Kingdom law by Orders in Council under section 1 of the International Organisations Act 1968. The principal order is the Specialised Agencies of the United Nations (Immunities and Privileges) Order 1974 (S.I. 1974 1260). The Act only allows such orders to be made in respect of organisations declared by order to be organisations of which the United Kingdom is a member.

When we ceased to be a member of UNESCO, the order ceased to have effect in respect of that organisation, and we therefore no longer had the legislative powers to apply to UNESCO the terms of the specialised agencies convention. We accordingly notified the Director-General of UNESCO on 13 December 1985, and also the Secretary-General of the United Nations, that the United Kingdom intended to withhold from UNESCO the benefits of the said Convention.

In the light of concern subsequently expressed by UNESCO, the head of the UNESCO observer section of our embassy in Paris wrote to UNESCO on 17 March 1986 to clarify our reasons in detail and to assure the organisation that in our opinion the practical

consequences for UNESCO and its staff would in fact be minimal. To avoid any possible misconceptions, he drew particular attention to the following points:

(i) Whilst in theory the withholding of privileges and immunities would render inapplicable to UNESCO exemption from foreign exchange control regulations, in fact the United Kingdom does not operate foreign exchange controls.

(ii) Although it is possible that in some cases secretariat officials who have income liable to United Kingdom tax may not enjoy quite the same degree of tax relief as hitherto, it is unlikely that any British citizens working for UNESCO will be regarded as resident in the United Kingdom for tax purposes, and for this reason such individuals will not be liable to tax on their salaries from UNESCO. Furthermore, even if there were any UNESCO officials who are resident in the United Kingdom for tax purposes, they will, under certain conditions, be able to claim exemption from tax on their earnings where their duties of employment are performed either wholly or partly outside the United Kingdom.

(iii) The withholding of privileges and immunities will not, in general, make it more expensive for UNESCO to purchase goods in the United Kingdom. In practice, any goods exported from the United Kingdom are not liable to value added tax. Our understanding is that the volume of equipment purchased by UNESCO in the United Kingdom for use in the United Kingdom itself is extremely limited. In any case, in the United Kingdom the supply of goods and services incidental to the provision of education, training or retraining is, subject to certain conditions, exempt from value added tax.

At the same time we assured UNESCO that we had publicly confirmed our willingness to consider any particular issues or cases where it could be shown that withdrawal of privileges and immunities could be an obstacle to any continuing co-operation which UNESCO may wish to have with bodies in the United Kingdom. The secretariat has not so far drawn any such cases to our attention.

At its May 1986 session UNESCO's executive board invited the Director-General to initiate negotiations with the United Kingdom:

"with a view to securing from that State an assurance that UNESCO will be granted the privileges and immunities the Organisation normally enjoys in States that are not parties to the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialised Agencies".

I wrote to the Director-General of UNESCO on 11 July 1986 suggesting that this matter be pursued by the secretariat and the Head of our UNESCO observer section. Many of UNESCO's member states are not themselves parties to the convention and I added that as a first step it would be helpful if she could be informed precisely what is meant by the phrase used by the executive board.

On 7 April our observer received a letter from the Deputy Director-General of UNESCO proposing an arrangement based on the provisions of the headquarters agreement between the United Kingdom and the International Maritime Organisation. On 15 May 1987 the head of our UNESCO observer section informed UNESCO that we do not consider this an appropriate parallel and repeated our request for clarification of the phrase used by the executive board in its decision, that is, "the privileges and immunities the Organisation normally enjoys in States that are not parties to the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialised Agencies". We await a reply.

It is noteworthy that in a press release issued by UNESCO on 19 June it commented as follows:

"Negotiations between UNESCO and the UK are going forward satisfactorily. They concern questions arising from the UK withdrawal from the Organisation, the costs of maintaining observer status, conditions of UK contributions to certain UNESCO activities and the diplomatic privileges and immunities of UNESCO and its personnel when in the UK. Mr. Michel de Bonnecorse UNESCO's Deputy Director-General, who is personally in charge of these negotiations, stated at a press conference held on 5 June that these talks were taking place in a cordial and apolitical atmosphere which he was sure would lead to positive results."

While we stand ready to consider any practical difficulties which arise for UNESCO and its staff arising from the absense of privileges and immunities, we are not prepared to amend our domestic legislation for the benefit of an organisation of which we are no longer a member.

Middle East

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Her Majesty's ambassador in Kuwait sought any meeting with Mr. Yasser Arafat on 12 July in Kuwait to discuss Mr. Arafat's rejection of the proposed international conference on the middle east; and whether he will make a statment.

Mr. Mellor: No.

Zambia

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make a statement on the response which he has received from the Government of Zambia regarding the blocking of funds lawfully due to British subjects formerly resident in Zambia, but now living in the United Kingdom; and what further action he intends to take on this matter.

Mrs. Chalker: The Zambian authorities are committed to honour their obligations to remit blocked personal remittances when foreign exchange flows in to the country improve. We continue to remind the Zambian authorities of these obligations and to draw to their attention the hardship which the delay in repatriation of funds can cause in individual cases.

Mr. David Walker

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has received any representations from the Nicaraguan Government relating to Colonel Oliver North's testimony that a British subject, David Walker, carried out attacks on military aircraft in Nicaragua; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: No such representations have been recieved from the Nicaraguan Government. Mr. Walker's company, KMS, is a private company registered in Jersey. Allegations that we authorised KMS involvement with the contras are totally unfounded. Information concerning the alleged involvement of KMS has come to us through the Congressional investigation. We are not responsible for KMS and cannot answer for its actions.

Mohammad Jamail Khan

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs why Mohammad Jamil Khan, a 10-year-old Pakistan national, has not been issued with a visa to visit his uncle in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Mohammad Jamil Khan was issued with a visit visa on 20 July 1987.

Pankajbhai Bhagubhai Patel

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when Pankajbhai Bhagubhai Patel is to be issued with a visa by the British post in Bombay to join his wife in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Eggar: Mr. Patel will be issued with a visa on the satisfactory completion of medical clearance, which is in hand. It is hoped to issue the visa this week.

THE ARTS

North West Arts Association

Mr. Butler asked the Minister for the Arts what information he has as to the percentage by which resources have risen for the North West Arts Association since 1979.

Mr. Luce: Between the period 1979-80 to 1986-87 North West Art's resources have increased by some 54 per cent. in real terms.

Museums and Galleries

Mr. Alton asked the Minister for the Arts (1) if he will list the grants made by him to the national museums on Merseyside, and constituent institutions, in every year since their inception; and if he will break the figures down by whether they are for capital costs, operating costs, or for purchases;

(2) how much of his Department's expenditure on museums has been set aside for the replacement of the Greater London council and metropolitan authorities grants to museums in every year since the Greater London council and metropolitan authorities were abolished; which institutions have benefited; and by how much;

(3) what the total expenditure by his Department on museums and galleries has been in every year since 1976-77; and, within the totals, what sums have been allocated to (*a*) the national museums, (*b*) the Museums and Galleries Commission, and (*c*) the remainder.

Mr. Luce: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

CIVIL SERVICE

Recruitment

Mr. Amess asked the Minister for the Civil Service how many people have been recruited into the Home Civil Service in each of the past 10 years.

Mr. Luce: The information is as follows:

Home Civil Service: Non-industrial staff

Year	*Numbers of entrants*
1977	57,354
1978	64,684
1979	48,623
1980	48,620
1981	32,390
1982	30,997
1983	30,658
1984	40,928
1985	46,964
1986	[1]48,561

[1] Provisional.

Source: Civil Service Statistics (annual publication)

Departmental Staff (Statistics)

Mr. Frank Field asked the Minister for the Civil Service if, for each Government Department, he will give the numbers of officials at assistant secretary level and above who have been educated privately; what percentage of each grade in each Department these figures represent; and how these figures compare with those for 1980-81.

Mr. Luce [*pursuant to his reply* 17 July 1987]: This information is not held centrally.

ENERGY

Hinkley Point (Reactor)

Mr. Flynn asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has as to the Central Electricity Generating Board's plans to build a pressurised water reactor at the site at Hinkley Point.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Following consent by the Secretary of State for Energy to the Sizewell B power station, the CEGB announced that it intended to submit an application for the construction of a further PWR at Hinkley Point later this year. As yet no such application has been received by my Department.

Sellafield Reprocessing Plant

Mr. Flynn asked the Secretary of State for Energy what meetings he has had with representatives of the European Commisssion concerning the implementation of nuclear safeguards of the Sellafield reprocessing plant.

Mr. Michael Spicer: In reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Penrith and the Border (Mr. Maclean) my right hon. Friend the Member for Worcester (Mr. Walker) said on 4 June 1986, at columns 594-595, that consultations on an inspection regime to cover the mixed civil non-civil areas at Sellafield had been completed. Following the completion of these consultations various meetings have been held between my officials and officials of the European Commission on the detailed implementation of safeguards procedures at Sellafield.

Nuclear Safety

Mr. Frank Cook asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) whether the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority's information programme funded by his Department provides details on the number of occasions Her Majesty's Government have invited operational safety (OSART) teams from the International Atomic Energy Agency to visit the United Kingdom in support of the nuclear facility safety programme;

(2) whether the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority information programme funded by his Department provides details on the number and outcome of successful prosecutions brought against British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. for contravention of its operating licence;

(3) whether the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority nuclear information programme provides details on the annual investment made since the programmes of construction began on both the Magnox and advanced gas-cooled reactor;

(4) whether the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority public information programme provides details on the annual research and development costs of Magnox and advanced gas-cooled reactor programme;

(5) whether the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority public information programme provides details on the number of occasions, with reasons, for the withdrawals from nuclear safeguards of nuclear materials covered by safeguards;

(6) whether the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority public information programme provides details on the number of incidents reported since February 1977 in regard to each United Kingdom civil nuclear facility recorded by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate;

(7) whether the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority public information programme provides details on the sources and quantities of uranium imported for the civil nuclear programme;

(8) whether the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority public information programme provides details on the texts of the contracts presently in being between British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. and its foreign partners;

(9) whether the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority public information programme provides details on the specific uses to which all plutonium arising from the electricity board nuclear reactors has been put in the United Kingdom or abroad since the first fuel was reprocessed at Sellafield for each respective reactor;

(10) whether the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority public information programme provides details on the number of visits and resultant reports of Euratom and the International Atomic Energy Authority safeguards inspectors who have visited all United Kingdom nuclear facilities since safeguards agreements were concluded to cover them;

(11) whether the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority public information programme indicates whether any financial support was made available to objector groups which presented evidence to the Thorp, Windscale, Sizewell B pressurised water reactor and Dounreay EDRP public inquiries, respectively; and if he will make a statement;

(12) whether the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority public information programme will provide any previously unpublished information on civil nuclear matters relating to commercial considerations, national security or cost of provision restriction.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Details of the UKAEA public information programme are a matter for the authority. I have asked the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

Magnox Nuclear Reactors

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether his Department has carried out studies into the efficiency of the filtration system for gaseous discharges from Magnox nuclear reactors; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer [*pursuant to his reply*, 10 July, c. 288]: My Department has not carried out studies into the efficiency of filtration systems and gaseous discharges from Magnox reactors.

However, certificates of authorisation granted under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960 set an upper limit to the amount of radioactivity which may be released and, in addition, require that Mannox operators employ best practical means to minimise releases. In part this is achieved by the use of appropriate filtrations and the CEGB carries out regular checks on the efficiency of the filters used in its Mannox reactors. The NII would, as part of its inspections, monitor these checks.

Electricity Industry Staff (South Africa)

Mr. Boateng asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has concerning the loan of United Kingdom electricity supply industry staff to ESCOM in South Africa.

Mr. Michael Spicer [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 July 1987]: This is a matter for the Electricity Council. I will ask the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Developing Countries (Debt Repayment)

62. **Mr. Wallace** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the developing nations which, in the last year, have imposed debt repayment ceilings as a proportion of export earnings.

Mr. Chris Patten: The clearest cases are Peru, Sudan and Zambia.

Aid Programme

64. **Mr. Wood** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what he is doing to increase public awareness of the British aid programme.

Mr. Chris Patten: The ODA will be publishing before Parliament rises its latest annual review together with the annual reports from its scientific units. These reports provide a comprehensive and detailed account of the British aid programme in 1986. Copies will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

In May we published a new, illustrated guide to the aid programme, "British Aid", together with a wallchart for schools. The demand for "British Aid", particularly from schools, has been unprecedentedly high. It has therefore been reprinted.

India

69. **Mr. Janner** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many representations he has received during the last 12 months concerning the level of aid to India.

Mr. Chris Patten: I have answered three questions and received three letters from right hon. and hon. Members.

Aid (Voluntary Agencies)

70. **Mr. Squire** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to increase official aid funding through the voluntary agencies.

Mr. Chris Patten: The voluntary agencies provide appropriate and very cost-effective aid to some of the poorest communities in the developing world. Our financial support for them has increased considerably in recent years. Decisions about next year's spending have yet to be made, but I look forward to being able to offer substantial support in the future.

Tanzania

71. **Mr. Robert B. Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance Her Majesty's Government have provided to Tanzania in support of its economic reform programme.

Mr. Chris Patten: After Tanzania reached agreement with the International Monetary Fund last August we made an initial pledge of £25 million, all for fast-disbursing balance of payments support. When I visited Tanzania in March I committed a further £25 million for development projects, the railway sector and, subject to the reform programme being maintained, for additional balance of payments support.

Women (Third World)

72. **Mr. Matthew Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what new proposals he intends to institute with regard to training and education for women in the Third world.

Mr. Chris Patten: We are encouraging aid-recipient Governments to nominate more women for training under our aid programme. We are also commissioning independent research into the constraints which limit nominations. When I know the results of these initiatives, I will decide whether further actions are necessary.

Overseas Civil Service (Pensions)

73. **Mr. Stanbrook** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his estimate of the cost of allowing for war service in the pensions of members of the Overseas Civil Service; and how the estimate is calculated.

Mr. Chris Patten: We estimate that the cost could be perhaps £5 to £6 million a year. The estimate is based on a sample of Colonial Service pension files. In some instances, information on war service was missing or incomplete. The estimate, therefore, is subject to a significant margin of error.

UNICEF (Immunisation Programme).

74. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has about the financial commitment of other nations to the UNICEF global immunisation programme in comparison with that of Her Majesty's Government.

Mr. Chris Patten: Her Majesty's Government gave over £5·3 million to the global immunisation programme, putting the United Kingdom fourth in the league of donors. I shall publish full details of the comparative figures in the *Official Report*.

The following is the information:

UNICEF global immunisation programme: 1985–1987

Donor	*Imputed US$*
Italy	41 240 121
Canada	19 737 944
Sweden	13 758 892
United Kingdom	8 076 328
United States	5 000 000
Norway	1 925 000
Australia	239 865
Netherlands	204 884
Nigeria	145 865
Burma	40 702

Note: Some figures are approximate.
Source: UNICEF.

Health Care and Community Rehabilitation (Third World)

76. **Mr. Rowe** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to encourage the development of primary health care and community rehabilitation in Third world countries.

Mr. Chris Patten: We spend about £38 million a year on health and population assistance. In future, we shall be giving more emphasis to the development of primary health care programmes, which reach the most vulnerable and needy sections of the community.

Homeless Persons

75. **Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his Department's support for the international year of shelter for the homeless.

Mr. Chris Patten: To mark the year the Government have made special financial contributions to the relevant United Nations special fund and to support the British IYSH Trust.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on United Kingdom investment in the United Nations international year of shelter for the homeless; what new grants for shelter-related projects he has announced in 1987; and what percentage of his Department's budget has gone on aid to shelter-related projects in each year from 1977.

Mr. Chris Patten: To mark the year the Government are contributing £70,000 to the special fund run by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements which supports the shelter programme. We have similar contributions in mind in future years. In addition, the Government have made £44,000 available this year to help meet the costs of the British IYSH Trust. We are also financing the publication of three books — an "Urban Projects Manual", "Shanty Upgrading", and "Housing and Culture after Earthquakes" — providing valuable guidance in these fields for developing countries.

Information on grants and on the percentage of the budget spent on shelter-related projects is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Education Projects

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to increase funding for development education projects.

Mr. Chris Patten: In addition to the ODA's grants of £100,000 to the Centre for World Development Education (CWDE) and £6,000 to Scottish Education and Action for Development in this financial year, I am always willing to consider requests for funding other carefully selected development education projects taking into account work already done, particularly by CWDE.

The widespread distribution to schools of our new booklet "British Aid" constitutes a major development education initiative this year.

Minister's Speech (Printing Costs)

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the cost to his Department of printing, publishing and distributing the speech of the Minister for Overseas Development, the hon. Member for Bath (Mr. Patten) entitled "Idealism and Self-Interest: Britain's Aid Programme" delivered to the Royal Institute for International Affairs at Chatham House on 18 March.

Mr. Chris Patten: It costs £303·60 to reproduce 1,000 copies of this speech in booklet form.

Overseas Aid

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by what absolute figure and by what percentage the 1987-88 estimate for overseas aid falls short of achieving the United Nations' target for official development assistance of 0·7 per cent. of gross national product.

Mr. Chris Patten: The United Nations target is based on net official development assistance, which differs in various ways from public expenditure planning figures for the aid programme, and for which estimates for 1987-88 are not available. In 1986, the latest year for which figures are available, net official development assistance fell short of the target by £1,430 million or 55 per cent.

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proportion of Her Majesty's Government's expenditure on overseas aid is spent directly through United Kingdom-based organisations; and if he will name those organisations and the amount spent through each during the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Chris Patten: Most bilateral aid grants, apart from those made from the country programmes, are spent through United Kingdom based organisations, and amounted to 13 per cent. of the gross aid programme in 1985-86. The main organisations are listed in table 3 of "Statistics of the British Aid Programme by Financial Year" and in the ODA's "Report on Research and Development", both of which are in the Library of the House.

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proportion of Her Majesty's Government's overseas aid is spent through European Community aid programmes.

Mr. Chris Patten: In 1986 the proportion was 16 per cent. of gross public expenditure on aid.

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures his Department has taken to ensure that Her Majesty's Government's overseas aid programme does not support projects which are potentially damaging to the environment.

Mr. Chris Patten: The environmental implications of all aid projects are examined before approval. Policy guidelines and check lists exist to assist in this process. Our apporach is set out in more detail in a booklet "The Environment and the British Aid Programme" published earlier this year. Copies are available in the Library of the House.

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the total amount spent by Her Majesty's Government on aid to overseas countries in each year since 1979 both at 1987 and outturn prices.

Mr. Chris Patten: Gross public expenditure on aid in current and in constant 1986 prices (the latest available) was as follows:

	£ million Current prices	£ million Constant prices
1979	939	1,617
1980	966	1,387
1981	1,184	1,525
1982	1,085	1,297
1983	1,174	1,336
1984	1,318	1,441
1985	1,316	1,355
1986	1,358	1,358

UNICEF

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was Her Majesty's Government's financial contribution to UNICEF in each year since 1979 both at 1987 and outturn prices.

Mr. Chris Patten: The information at outturn prices and 1986 constant prices is as follows:

Year	Contributions at outturn prices (£ million) General Fund	Special Appeals	Total	1986 prices (£ million) General Fund	Total
1979	[1]5·800	1·582	7·382	10·0	12·7
1980	4·300	0·691	4·991	6·2	7·2
1981	5·900	1·456	7·356	7·6	9·5
1982	5·900	0·083	5·983	7·1	7·2
1983	6·000	0·069	6·069	6·8	6·9
1984	6·000	0·025	6·025	6·6	6·6
1985	6·300	2·100	8·400	6·5	8·7
1986	6·500	0·238	6·738	6·5	6·7
1987	[2]7·000	[3]5·000	[3]12·000	[3]6·7	[3]11·5

[1] Special increase to mark International Year of the Child.
[2] Pledged.
[3] Estimates.
Information at 1987 prices is not yet available.

Agricultural Development

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what measures are being taken to ensure that agricultural research institutes in the United Kingdom contribute to the support for agricultural development overseas; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will list the research projects funded through Her Majesty's Government's overseas aid budget which are being carried out in co-operation with agricultural research establishments in (*a*) England, (*b*) Scotland and (*c*) Wales.

Mr. Chris Patten: In meeting the requirements of developing countries, the ODA seeks help from the scientific community in the United Kingdom and particularly the agricultural research institutions and universities which have the necessary research capacity and expertise.

Much research is undertaken and advice provided by the ODA's own scientific units the Land Resources Development Centre and the Tropical Development and Research Institute. There are close links between these and United Kingdom research institutions and joint work is carried out. The ODA also commissions research and development in the agricultural sector at numerous agricultural research institutions in the United Kingdom. Institutions may submit proposals for funding to the ODA as a result of overseas contacts made by them and these are considered by a projects committee twice a year. Worthwhile projects are included in the ODA's portfolio.

A list of research projects carried out in co-operation with agricultural not including forestry and fisheries research establishments in England, Scotland and Wales, as at 1 July 1987, follows. It illustrates the wide range of research currently funded from ODA research and development funds.

We have increased our research budget in 1987-88 by about 20 per cent. for renewable natural resources. The ODA is currently assessing in some detail United Kingdom institute capability to assist developing countries.

Additionally, there are a number of linkages between agricultural institutions in developing countries and those in the United Kingdom which are funded by the ODA either by core fund contributions to the United Kingdom institutions or by the commissioning of work using bilateral funds.

(a) England

Research Project and Administering Body

Downy Mildew on Millet. University of Reading.

Tamsat (Tropical Agricultural Meteorology using Satellite and Other Data). University of Reading.

Varietal Differences in Root Systems in Relation to Crop Improvement in Dryland Areas. University of Reading.

Studies on Rice Protoplasts for Plant Genetic Manipulations. University of Nottingham.

Study of Virus of Vegetatively Propagated Tropical Food Crops and Production of Virus-Free Planting Material. Institute of Horticultural Research (formerly Glasshouse Crops Research Inst.)

Adaptation of Lentils, Faba Beans and Barley to different Environments and Cropping Seasons. University of Reading.

Ergot in Millet. Imperial College, London

Wide Crosses Maize Sorghum. Plant Breeding Institute, Cambridge.

Wheat Wide Crossing Techniques for Wheat and Related Species Plant Breeding Institute, Cambridge.

Rice Nematodes Commonwealth Institute of Parasitology

Microclimatology of Millet and Groundnut.—University of Nottingham.
Research to Increase Salinity Resistance in Rice.—University of Sussex.
Investigation of Dwarfing Genes.—Plant Breeding Institute, Cambridge.
Biology and Distribution of American Pathotypes Races of Halo-blight on Phaseolous Vulgaris.—National Vegetable Research Station.
In-breeding afid Potato Seed Production.—University of Birmingham.
Exploitation of Natural Insect Resistance in Phaseolus Vulgaris.—University of Durham.
Barley Yellow Dwarf Virus.—Rothamsted Experimental Station.
Development of Spraying Systems to Integrate Chemical with Biological Control on Tropical Food Crops.—Imperial College.
Project to Produce a Self-Supporting Wing Bean Plant.—Southampton University.
Residual Effects of Phosphate Fertilisers.—University of Reading.
Evaluation of Eradication as a Disease Control Measure with Particular Reference to Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus.—Institute of Horticultural Research (East Malling).
Characterisation of Resistance and Tolerance Mechanisms against the Parasitic Angiosperm Striga Hermonthica.—University College, London.
Responses of Tea to Irrigation and Fertilizer.—Silsoe College (Cranfield Institute of Technology).
Biochemical Identification of Important Meloidogyne Species. R.E.S. and Southampton University.—Rothamsted Experimental Station-Southampton University.
Specific Formulation of Herbicides for Tropical Grass Control.—Imperial College of Science and Technology (Silwood Park).
Fastidious Pathogens.—Rothamsted Experimental Station.
Drought Tolerance of Barley Genotypes.—Plant Breeding Institute.
Statistical Methods for Intercropping.—Rothamsted Experimental Station.
Nitrate Mobility of Acid Soils of the Humid Tropics.—University of Reading Department of Soils Sciences.
Control of Plant Parasitic Nematodes with Pasteuria Penetrans.—University of Reading.
Resistance of Cowpea to Striga Gesnerioides.—University College and Birbeck College, London.
Taxonomy of South Pacific Scale Insects.—Commonwealth Institute of Entomology.
Control of Rottboellia Exaltata with Microbial Pesticides.—Long Ashton Research Station.
Resistance of Cowpea to Striga Gesnerioides and Alectra Vogelii.—Long Ashton Research Station (LARS).
Nitrogen Fixation in Phaseolus Vulgaris.—Wye College (University of London).
Methodology for Retrieval of Information and Assessment of Data from Past Research on Cotton in Alglophone Africa.—Liverpool Cotton Research Corporation.
Mycorrhiza-agroforestry in Semi-Arid (50-50 Agriculture-Forestry).—Institute of Terrestrial Ecology.
Genetic Improvement of Tea.—Wye College (University of London).
Smut Infection of Millet.—Wye College (University of London).
Land Information Management.—Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy.
Performance and Stability of Variety Mixtures.—Plant Breeding Institute, Cambridge.
Development of Evaluation Techniques for R & D Management in the Carribean.—Commonwealth Secretariat (Commonwealth Science Council).
Phenotypic Variation and Cytological Delimitation in Azolla Lam.—Portsmouth Polytechnic.
Assessment and Improvement of Cotton Fibre Quality.—International Institute for Cotton (I.I.C.).
Population Ecology of Helothis Armigera in Smallholder Crops, with Emphasis on its Natural Enemies.—C.A.B.I. Institute of Biological Control.
Biological Control of Mikania Micrantha in SW Pacific Countries.—C.A.B.I. Institute of Biological Control.
Strategies for Control of S. Littoralis.—Imperial College London.
Post Harvest Changes in Tropical Fruits.—University of Nottingham.
Nutritional Value of Cassava.—University of Nottingham.
Thearubigen produced in Tea Fermentations.—University of Reading.
Fungi in Rice and Cereal Grains.—University of Oxford.
Evaluation of Storage Life of Cassava.—Wye College.
Post Harvest Losses in Maize.—Rural Investment Overseas, London.
Distribution of Aflatoxin in Groundnut Cake.—Portsmouth Polytechnic.
Oviposition Behaviour in Adults of Helothis.—University of London.
Post Harvest Ripening, Bananas and Plantains.—University of Reading.
Susceptibility of Helothis to Insecticides.—University of Reading.
Phytoalexon Production and its effect on Aflatoxin Production.—University College London.
Mycotoxins of Fungi which Colonise Sorghum.—University College London.
Helothine Pests of Millet.—British Museum (Natural History).
Brown Planthopper-Rice.—Kings College, London.
Brown Planthopper Outbreaks Forecasting.—Imperial College, Silwood Park.
Degradability of Straw.—Wye College.
A. niger in Stored Onions.—National Vegetable Research Association.
Rural Rapeseed Processing.—University of Reading.
Anthracnose caused by Colletstrichen sp.—University of Kent.
ELISA techniques for Alternaria Mycotoxins.—Portsmouth Polytechnic.
Aflatoxin in Spices.—Portsmouth Polytechnic.
Pesticides on Terrestrial Invertebrates.—Wye College.
Aflatoxin content of Cottonseed Products.—Wye College.
Identification of Sumulium Species.—University of Southampton.
Development of Brown Planthopper Model.—Queen Mary College London.
Lactic Fermentation: Cassava.—University of Nottingham.
Tropical Fruit Storage and Ripening.—University of Nottingham.
Evaluation of Taro and Cassava Starch.—University of Nottingham.
Quality Storage during Storage and Processing.—University of Nottingham.
Research into Marketing of Fruit and Vegetable in UK.—University of Reading.
A. niger on Stored Onions (extention).—National Vegetable Research Association.
Analysis of National Food Security requirements.—Wye College.
Resistance to Bruchnids in P. vulgaris.—University of Durham.
Quality evaluation of Processed Tropical Crops.—South Bank Polytechnic.
Agricultural Marketing Systems.—Wye College.
Genetics of Phosphine Resistance.—University of Reading.
Heat Species Identification, Asian Livestock.—Food Research Institute, Bristol.
Control of Anthracnose Infection.—University of Kent.
Yeast Bioassay for Analysis of Mycotoxins.—Thames Polytechnic.

(b) Scotland

Hard Setting and Crusting Behaviour of Alfisols Aberdeen University ITTA.—Aberdeen University.
Evaluation of Mycorrhizal Inocula in Crops Growing in Semi-Arid Areas.—University of Dundee.
Groundnut Rosette Disease.—Scottish Crop Research Institute, Dundee.
Field Survey and Structure Physiology Study of Tree Legume Modulation (50-50 Agriculture Forestry).—University of Dundee.
Whitefly Transmitted Viruses Affecting Tropical Crops.—Scotish Crop Research Institute (Dundee).

Impact of Pesticides in the Tropics. University of Aberdeen.
Palatability of pea forage. Royal Veterinary College.

(c) Wales

Salt Tolerance in Wheat and Other Associated Abiotic Stresses. University College of North Wales.
Study of Resistance to Thermal Stress in Tropical Cereals. Welsh Plant Breeding Station (WPBS).
Control of Heliothis. University College Cardiff.
Biosystematics of Heliothis. University College Cardiff.
Impact of Natural Enemies of Brown Planthopper. University College Cardiff.
Migratory ability Moth Pests. University College North Wales.
Migration of African Armyworm. University College North Wales.

TRANSPORT

Waterloo Station (Channel Tunnel)

5. **Mr. Holland** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what are the estimates respectively of (*a*) British Rail and (*b*) Eurotunnel of the additional number of passengers in the peak summer period who will be using Waterloo station as a terminus for Channel fixed link traffic in 1993 and 2003.

Mr. David Mitchell: Eurotunnel's estimates of Channel tunnel through rail passenger traffic do not distinguish between Waterloo and other United Kingdom locations. British Rail's consultants, who concluded that the road and underground systems would be able to accommodate the Channel tunnel traffic at Waterloo, based their assessment on 50,000 extra day time passengers in 1993 rising to 59,000 in 2003.

British Rail (Fares Policy)

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he is satisfied that British Rail's fares policy is consistent with the objectives set for the board by the Government.

Mr. Channon: Yes.

15. **Mr. Murphy** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he intends to issue new objectives to British Rail concerning fares policy.

Mr. David Mitchell: No.

50. **Mr. Boyes** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he is satisfied with the British Railways Board's implementation of Government objectives on fares as explained in the letter of the Secretary of State, on 21 October 1986, to the chairman of the board; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: In general, yes.

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is his policy on the use of higher fares to limit demand for rail services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: It is for the board to set fares taking account of its costs and the fares charged by its competitors.

Drink-Driving

16. **Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to seek to reduce the permitted blood-alcohol level for driving at which prosecution is triggered; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Channon: With more than half of all drinking and driving offenders convicted at around twice the existing limit our key objective must be to secure increasing compliance with the law as it stands.

British Airports Authority

17. **Mr. Watts** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the privatisation of British Airports Authority plc.

Mr. Channon: The sale of shares in BAA plc has been a resounding success. 2·47 million applications have been received for the fixed price offer, for a total of 2,135 million fixed price shares. Applications for up to and including 1,000 shares will be allocated 100 shares at £2·45 each. No allocation is being made in respect of applications in excess of 1,000 shares. Eighty-seven per cent. of applicants will receive some shares.

The tender offer has been about six times subscribed. I shall announce further details of the tender offer on Wednesday 22 July.

Lorry Ban (London)

18. **Mr. Bidwell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has recently met members of the London borough transport committee on lorry bans; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No. We are aware of their views. General discussions might be seen as prejudicing the Secretary of State's particular decisions in settling disputes between boroughs on the lorry ban.

London Underground

19. **Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will meet the chairman of London Regional Transport to discuss current problems on the London Underground.

Mr. David Mitchell: My right hon. Friend meets the chairman of London Regional Transport at regular intervals, most recently on 15 July, and is kept fully informed of developments. The Underground is carrying record numbers of passengers. The board recognises that this success is creating its own problems. LRT plans to invest £280 million this year, of which the majority is designed to improve conditions on the Underground.

British Rail (Procurement Policy)

20. **Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he next intends to meet the chairman of British Rail to discuss procurement policy.

Mr. David Mitchell: As the hon. Gentleman is aware, the British Railways Board's chosen policy is for competitive procurement. This has been accepted by Ministers. The implementation of this is a matter for the board.

Ardley (Motorway Services Area)

21 **Mr. Baldry** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the present position with regard to proposals to construct a motorway service area at Ardley; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Following objections by the district council, our proposal has been referred to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. He also has before him appeals by private developers for two other sites. It is now for him to decide what arrangements to make for hearing representations on these proposals.

London Boroughs (TSG)

22. **Mr. Gerald Bowden** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many London boroughs currently receive transport supplementary grant for major road building.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Twenty-three London boroughs are currently receiving TSG support for expenditure on 30 major schemes. All boroughs are receiving grant for minor works.

West Yorkshire PTA

23. **Mrs. Mahon** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will allocate an additional £2·4 million to the West Yorkshire passenger transport authority for the provision of transport; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: I hope to announce 1988-89 expenditure levels for all six passenger transport authorities before the House rises for the summer recess.

Dornoch Firth (Rail Crossing)

24. **Mr. Maclennan** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will meet a deputation of hon. Members from the Highland region to discuss a railway crossing of the Dornoch Firth.

Mr. David Mitchell: I see no point in doing so now.

25. **Mrs. Margaret Ewing** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many representations he has received from *(a)* individuals and *(b)* recognised organisations expressing concern that the Dornoch rail bridge project is not to proceed.

Mr. David Mitchell: My Department has received 38 representations from individuals and 18 from organisations specifically about the Dornoch rail bridge project.

Air Transport (Europe)

26. **Mr. Steen** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will urgently meet his Spanish counterpart to discuss the Spanish Government's veto on the Community proposals for the further deregulation of air transport routes in Europe; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State met his Spanish counterpart during the course of the Transport Council on 30 June and made it clear that he and his right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary were ready for urgent bilateral talks at any time. Officials have already held a first meeting, and further meetings are planned.

Lighthouse Services (United Kingdom)

27. **Mr. Wallace** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received regarding the future of the lighthouse services in the United Kingdom.

Mr. David Mitchell: My right hon. Friend's predecessor received representations from the Lights Advisory Committee, which represents the shipping and port industries, about the need to contain the costs of the general lighthouse authorities and thus keep down the level of light dues. More recently the committee has proposed a review of the navigational aids provided by the authorities.

Road Casualties (London)

29. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how road casualty trends in London compare with national figures.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The following is the information:

Casualties: by road user type and severity: London and Great Britain, 1977 to 1986

Great Britain *Number of casualties*

	1977	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*[1]
Pedestrians:	71,276	70,295	66,714	63,299	60,750	61,419	61,674	63,474	61,390	60,795
Annual change per cent.		−1·4	−5·1	−5·1	−4·0	1·1	0·4	2·9	−3·3	−1·0
Pedal cyclists:	23,453	22,201	23,645	24,788	25,306	28,137	30,576	30,939	26,998	26,071
Annual change per cent.		−5·3	6·5	4·8	2·1	11·2	8·7	1·2	−12·7	−3·4
Motor-cyclists:	71,689	69,733	67,155	70,838	69,129	71,920	64,494	63,821	56,591	52,085
Annual change per cent.		−2·7	−3·7	5·5	−2·4	4·0	−10·3	−1·0	−11·3	−8·0
Car occupants:	151,510	157,875	149,511	143,517	146,317	149,888	130,425	143,624	149,452	158,897
Annual change per cent.		4·2	−5·3	−4·0	2·0	2·4	−13·0	10·1	4·1	6·3
Other road user:	30,133	29,691	27,488	26,158	23,338	22,932	21,415	22,456	23,093	22,745
Annual change per cent.		−1·5	−7·4	−4·8	−10·8	−1·7	−6·6	4·9	2·8	−1·5
All road users:	348,061	349,795	334,513	328,600	324,840	334,296	308,584	324,314	317,524	320,593
Annual change per cent.		0·5	−4·4	−1·8	−1·1	2·9	−7·7	5·1	−2·1	1·0

[1] provisional.

London

Number of casualties

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Pedestrians:	16,232	15,845	14,668	13,675	12,827	13,090	12,708	13,151	12,650	12,498
Annual change per cent.		−2·4	−7·4	−6·8	−6·2	2·1	−2·9	3·5	−3·8	−1·2
Pedal cyclists:	3,940	3,790	3,987	4,236	4,241	5,249	5,124	4,734	4,188	4,037
Annual change per cent.		−3·8	5·2	6·2	0·1	23·8	−2·4	−7·6	−11·5	−3·6
Motor-cyclists:	12,547	11,660	10,277	10,438	10,011	10,988	10,086	9,600	8,512	7,894
Annual change per cent.		−7·1	−11·9	1·6	−4·1	9·8	−8·2	−4·8	−11·3	−7·3
Car occupants:	25,019	25,453	23,670	22,017	22,097	23,082	19,961	21,069	21,167	22,021
Annual change per cent.		1·7	−7·0	−7·0	0·4	4·5	−13·5	5·6	0·5	4·0
Other road user:	6,453	6,002	5,444	5,038	4,708	4,657	4,446	4,761	4,860	4,876
Annual change per cent.		−7·0	−9·3	−7·5	−6·6	−1·1	−4·5	7·1	2·1	0·3
All road users:	64,191	62,750	58,046	55,404	53,884	57,066	52,325	53,315	51,377	51,326
Annual change per cent.		−2·2	−7·5	−4·6	−2·7	5·9	−8·3	1·9	−3·6	−0·1

Bradford-Leeds (Electrification)

30. **Mr. Madden** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received concerning the electrification of the Bradford to Leeds railway.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have received one representation since I last replied to the hon. Member on this subject on Monday 23 February 1987.

A1 (Doncaster-Scotch Corner)

31. **Mr. Fallon** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to improve the existing roadway of the A1 between Doncaster and Scotch Corner.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: A new interchange at Baldersby, near Ripon, has just been completed. A new bypass at Wetherby is being built.

The national programme includes schemes to upgrade the remainder of the A1 between Bramham, near Leeds, to Scotch corner. Dual three-lane carriageways are proposed.

The section of the A1 south of Bramham to Doncaster is included in a study of traffic problems to the east of Leeds. I hope to make an announcement about this during the autumn.

Taxi and Private-hire Drivers (Safety)

32. **Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his policy towards the safety of taxi and private-hire drivers from attack by passengers; and what measures are planned to increase their safety.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have no reason to believe that this is a serious problem but if my hon. Friend has any evidence to the contrary I shall be glad to hear from him.

Traffic Congestion (London)

33. **Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals he has to deal with traffic congestion in London; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Parts of London suffer from heavy traffic congestion. The White Paper "Safety for Roads in England 1987" (CM. 125) sets out trunk road improvements worth nearly £1 billion in London, as well as studies of areas with severe problems, traffic management schemes and other measures designed to relieve congestion. Major local road schemes costing over £300 million are currently being supported by transport supplementary grant. The Government are supporting investment in efficient and attractive public transport services which carry a large proportion of travellers in London.

Bypasses

34. **Mr. Rowe** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of the total mileage of roads built since 1979 forms part of bypasses.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Bypasses and relief roads accounted for nearly 40 per cent. of the total mileage of national roads built between 1 April 1979 and 1 July 1987.

Other road improvements which are not primarily bypasses also relieve communities of traffic.

Air Fares Policy (Europe)

35. **Mr. Favell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his recent discussions with fellow European Economic Community Ministers on a European air fare policy.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given earlier today by my right hon. Friend to my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson).

BR (Electrification)

36. **Mr. Gregory** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will advise how many electrification projects by British Rail have been approved since 1983; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: Since 1983 the Government have approved six railway electrification schemes. A further eight schemes have been approved by BR.

Air Fares (Deregulation)

37. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects next to meet European Economic Community Transport Ministers to discuss the deregulation of air fares.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The next meetings of the Transport Council will be on 26 October and 7 December. Details of the agenda are not yet available. We hope it will be possible for the air transport liberalisation package blocked by Spain on 30 June to be adopted at one of those meetings.

New Road Schemes

Mr. Neale asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the number of new road schemes accepted for support in the 1987-88 transport supplementary grant settlement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Seventy major schemes costing £1 million or more were accepted for support through transport supplementary grant in 1987-88.

British Rail (Trackside Environment)

39. **Mr. Eastham** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received concerning British Rail's management of the trackside environment, with particular regard to accumulations of rubbish; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: None. These are management matters for the British Railways Board. I understand that British Rail takes steps to clear accumulations of rubbish.

Light Dues

Mr. Beith asked the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has held with fishermen's organisations about his proposals on light dues.

43. **Mr. Macdonald** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received about the impact of the extension of light dues on fishing vessels.

Mr. David Mitchell: Some 57 representative bodies were consulted about our proposals. Written and oral representations were made by 30 bodies, and my noble Friend, the Minister for Aviation and Shipping, received a delegation from the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations, the Scottish Fishermen's Federation and the Cornish Inshore Fishermen's Federation.

Settle-Carlisle Railway

41. **Mr. Waller** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has received about the future of the Settle to Carlisle railway.

Mr. David Mitchell: I continue to receive correspondence from hon. Members and the public. I am carefully considering all the points which have been put to me by them and the case for closure put to my right hon. Friend by British Rail.

42. **Mr. Cryer** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if, pursuant to the answer of 30 June, *Official Report*, column *53*, he will specify the complications delaying a decision on the Settle-Carlisle railway; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: I am keen to end the uncertainty about this line's future quickly, but I am obliged to weigh not only British Rail's financial case and the TUCC's report on hardship, but also all other relevant issues. These include, for example, the heritage, social and economic implications of closure and require careful analysis, quantification so far as possible and consideration.

Air Traffic Controllers (Staffing Levels)

44. **Mr. Bruce** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has received from the Union of Air Traffic Controllers concerning staffing levels.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: None.

Channel Tunnel

45. **Mr. Allan Stewart** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to how many orders for equipment and materials related to the construction of the Channel tunnel have been placed in Scotland and the north of England.

Mr. David Mitchell: I understand from Eurotunnel that orders for equipment and materials related to the construction of the Channel tunnel placed with firms based in Scotland and the north of England so far total over £23 million.

53. **Mr. Brazier** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had with the promoters of the Channel tunnel project about the security of passengers using the tunnel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: Under the terms of both the Channel tunnel treaty and the concession agreement, the promoters are required to submit for approval of the two Governments any proposed designs, plans or arrangements affecting the security of the fixed link (which, of course, includes that of the passengers). As a preliminary to such submissions, officials of both Governments have held discussions with Eurotunnel; these are, of course, continuing, but I am sure that my hon. Friend will recognise that it would not be wise to make details public.

DVLC

46. **Mr. McCrindle** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to visit the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre at Swansea.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Yes.

Passenger Services (Privatisation)

47. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government on the privatisation of individual passenger services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: The Government's policy towards the railway was set out in the letter on objectives sent to Sir Robert Reid last October.

Pensioners' Travel Passes (London)

48. **Mr. Cox** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to ensure that when deregulation of bus services in London is extended the present pensioners' travel passes will continue to be accepted by new bus operators.

Mr. David Mitchell: In drawing up arrangements for the extension of bus de-regulation to London, we shall be giving close attention to the arrangements for concessionary travel.

Concessionary Bus Travel

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Transport if concessionary fare and travel card passengers are taken into account when deciding if bus routes are economic.

Mr. David Mitchell: Decisions on whether bus services can be run commercially, without subsidy, are for bus operators, who will no doubt take into account any reimbursement to which they may be entitled in respect of concessionary fare and travel card passengers, as well as their eligibility for fuel duty rebate and, where applicable, rural bus grant. Local authorities have duties under the Transport Act 1985 to formulate general policies in respect of other services they wish to secure, and in performing those duties they must have regard to the needs of members of the public who are elderly or disabled.

Maritime Safety

52. **Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many officers in his Department are currently engaged in duties relating to maritime safety; and how this figure compares with 1983.

Mr. David Mitchell: My Department's marine directorate contains 1,023 full-time staff at present, excluding staff concerned with marine pollution, ship registration and ports matters. The corresponding figure on 1 July 1983 was 1,157.

BR (Policy Directives)

54. **Mrs. Dunwoody** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he intends to update the letter of his predecessor to the chairman of British Railways Board, of 21 October 1986 concerning policy directives; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: No. That letter remains the current statement of the objectives the Government wish the board to pursue over the next three years.

Eurotunnel

55. **Mr. David Shaw** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy that no public money will be used for subsidy to, or for lending to, or for investment in any form of share capital in Eurotunnel or any successor company prior to, during or after the construction period of the Channel tunnel.

Mr. David Mitchell: It is already Government policy, as set out in article 1 of the Anglo-French treaty on the Channel fixed link, that the link shall be financed without recourse to Government funds or to Government guarantees of a financial or commercial nature. That commitment is reinforced by clause 2 of the Channel Tunnel Bill which, likewise, forbids the provision of Government funds or guarantees (which would include both loans and the subscription of share capital) to the concessionaires other than funds available equally to others (for example, through the use of suppliers who are in receipt of regional aid).

British Rail

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish the *a* gross and *b* net proceeds of sale of vacant and under-utilised land owned by British Rail sold between the end of 1979 and 31 March 1987.

Mr. David Mitchell: I understand from the British Rail Property Board that gross and net proceeds for total sales of properties in the ownership of British Rail were £523·4 million and £454·4 million, respectively. The board does not keep separate records of the aggregate value of sales of vacant and under-utilised land.

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will identify and publish the exact locations of the vacant and under-utilised land still owned by British Rail as of 31 July.

Mr. David Mitchell: There are currently 1,235 sites covering 9,339 acres owned by British Rail on the registers of unused and underused land maintained under part X of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980. The registers showing the exact location of each site are available for inspection at the principal office of the appropriate local authority. They are also available at DOE headquarters at 2 Marsham street, for all districts in England and at the Department's regional offices for the regions concerned.

Orange Badge Scheme

Mr. Hannam asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has completed his review of the orange badge scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We hope to make an announcement shortly on the outcome of the consultation exercise.

Vehicles (Window Signs)

Sir Anthony Grant asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any proposals to restrict signs affixed to vehicle windows.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Our regulations already require windows to be kept in a condition such that the driver's vision is not obscured and for the driver to have a full view of the road and traffic ahead. There are no plans to change these requirements.

Pavement Parking

Mr. Hannam asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the organisations which responded to his Department's consultation paper on pavement parking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Two hundred and thirty-four organisations and local authorities responded to the Department's discussion paper on pavement parking. I am sending a list to my hon. Friend.

In addition, there were 220 responses from individuals. We are currently examining all the suggestions and contributions we have received.

Traffic Projections

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Transport what estimates are available to him of the projected levels of traffic in south-east Essex during the next five years.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: There are many sources and influencing factors. Essex county council also produces data on the far more extensive network of non-trunk roads. Based on population growth to 1991, traffic in Essex as a whole is expected to increase about 2 per cent. faster than the national average for that period. If my hon. Friend has a specific issue in mind, perhaps he would write to me.

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Transport what estimates are available to him of the projected levels of traffic in London during the next five years.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Department's road traffic forecasts provide estimates of traffic in London. Forecasts are based on projected changes in demography and income. They indicate that demand could rise between 7 and 15 per cent. above present traffic levels during the next five years. Actual growth in traffic will be limited by the available road capacity.

Transport Expertise

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the export of transport expertise, particularly with regard to railways, during the past year.

Mr. David Mitchell: United Kingdom firms have continued to be active in this field. The export of expertise includes not only consultancy services but also the transfer of technology and the training of overseas staff which often form part of railway equipment export orders. The normal range of Government support for exports is of course available to companies in the railway sector, and the Government continue to assist industry in this field wherever possible.

Driving Tests

Sir Anthony Grant asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he is satisfied with the standard of the motor vehicle driving tests currently in effect; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Yes. The 50 per cent. who fail have not yet adequately demonstrated or acquired the competence to drive safely and with proper consideration for other road users necessary to qualify for a full licence. All successful condidates are encouraged to develop their driving skills further and to consider taking an advanced driving test in due course.

Motorists (Eyesight Requirement)

Sir Anthony Grant asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he is satisfied with the current eyesight requirement for driving a motor vehicle; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Yes. Evidence derived from ophthalmic research and accident studies suggests convincingly that the present requirement—that drivers must be able to read a number plate from a distance of 75 ft. for charactrers 3½ in. high, or 67 ft. for characters 3⅛ in. high—constitutes a satisfactory standard of eyesight for safe driving.

Motor Cyclists (Leg Injuries)

Mr. Speed asked the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to secure a better standard of leg protection for motor cyclists.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Better leg protection could save many thousands of disabling leg injuries suffered by motor cyclists each year. The Department is circulating for comment a draft specification for leg protectors, based on research at the Transport and Road Research Laboratory. It covers dimensions, crush resistance and energy absorption characteristics of protectors which could be fitted to all types of motor cycle and moped. The intention is, after discussion with manufacturers and users, to produce a standard which could form the basis of a regulatory requirement for new machines.

Mr. Speed asked the Secretary of State for Transport what information is available on the numbers of leg injuries to motor cyclists.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: In 1985, the latest year for which complete data are available, there were 57,000 reported injuries of all types to motor cyclists, including 800 deaths and 18,000 serious injuries. Although these figures show a decline over the last few years the reduction in injuries has been broadly in line with the reduction in motor cycle traffic. Half the fatal or serious casualties in 1985 were aged 19 or under.

Leg injuries are a particular problem for motor cyclists. Examination of records for hospital in-patients in Scotland shows that lower limb injuries are involved in 30 per cent. of single-vehicle accidents and 50 per cent. of two-vehicle accidents. Unit costs for leg injuries are higher than for average serious casualties, perhaps by 50 per cent.

Motor cyclists tend to stay longer in hospital, partly as a consequence of leg injuries: 26 per cent. stay over 10 nights, compared with only 17 per cent. of car occupants.

Car Registrations

Mr. Oppenheim asked the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to the number of cars registered in *(a)* Amber Valley and *(b)* Derbyshire.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: There were 227,000 cars registered in Derbyshire at the end of December 1986. The number of cars registered in Amber Valley could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

CAA (Occurrence Report)

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) whether he is satisfied with the Civil Aviation Authority's discharge of its functions in relation to the mandatory occurrence reporting scheme in the light of the representations to his Department made by Mr. Allan Pring of Shetland; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what representations his Department has received since November 1986 from Mr. Allan Pring of Shetland regarding helicopter safety and the requirement to file mandatory occurrence reports;

(3) in the light of recent representations made to him by Mr. Allan Pring, what steps were taken to improve the safety of helicopter operations at Sumburgh airport, Shetland, following the filing of a mandatory occurrence report at that airport in March 1982.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Mr. Allan Pring has written several times to the Department since November 1986. He has also had a meeting with one of the Department's officials. The points Mr. Pring has made about helicopter safety and the requirement to file mandatory occurrence reports have been brought to the attention of the Civil Aviation Authority which is wholly responsible for aviation safety. We understand from the authority that, following analysis of the mandatory occurrence report submitted at Sumburgh in March 1982, revised emergency reporting procedures for helicopters were introduced at Aberdeen and Sumburgh airports. Further consideration was given to these procedures in the light of experience gained with them and as a result improved instructions for all aircraft were introduced in May 1987. In December 1986, the authority issued a revised edition of Civil Aviation Publication No. 382, which gives information and guidance on the mandatory occurrence reporting scheme.

Railway Line Management

Mr. Matthew Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he proposes to respond to the proposal in the third report from the Transport Committee on financing of rail services H.C. 383, Session 1986-87, that British Rail should consider individual line management for the Cornish lines; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: We will be making a full response to this report in due course.

Mr. Matthew Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Transport if, when the Minister next meets the senior management of British Rail, he will raise the possibility of individual line management and promotion for areas such as Cornwall, as suggested in the third report of the Transport Committee on financing of rail services, H.C.383, Session 1986-87; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: The hon. Member must await our formal response to the Select Committee's report.

Light Aircraft Crash (Inquest)

Mr. Barry Field asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make representations to the Belgian civil aviation authorities about the findings of the recent inquest at Gosport into the deaths of Robert Windship and Leonard Tebbutt when a light aircraft flown by an unlicensed Belgian pilot crashed into their boat on 30 April; and what action he proposes to urge upon the Belgian authorities;

(2) if he will take steps to bring to the attention of the Civil Aviation Authority the findings of the recent inquest at Gosport into the deaths on 30 April of persons killed when a light aircraft flown by an unqualified pilot crashed into their boat; and what steps will be taken to ensure that in future only properly qualified pilots are permitted to enter United Kingdom air space.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Chief Inspector of Accidents has ordered an inspector's investigation to be carried out into this accident. The Belgian accident investigation authorities are involved in the investigation and an accidents investigation branch (AIB) report will be published once the investigation is complete. Additionally an AIB bulletin giving a summary of the circumstances of the accident will be published at the end of August. I will send a copy to my hon. Friend then.

The Civil Aviation Authority is being kept fully informed.

Civil Aviation Regulations

Mr. Allen Adams asked the Secretary of State for Transport what machinery exists and what resources are available for enforcing United Kingdom civil aviation regulations upon foreign owners and operators of aircraft using United Kingdom facilities.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Under article 33 of the Chicago convention, contracting states are required to accept certificates of airworthiness and competence which are issued by a foreign state or its regulatory authority, in compliance with minimum standards laid down by the convention. However, under the Air Navigation Order 1985 the Civil Aviation Authority has powers to prevent any aircraft, including those on foreign registries, from flying in the United Kingdom when in an unfit condition or if to do so would be in contravention of applicable parts of the order.

Ormskirk-Southport Road (Bypass)

Mr. Fearn asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to create a bypass around the bottleneck on the Ormskirk-Southport road to allow greater access to Southport.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: A recent study into long-distance traffic needs in the Preston area and west of the M6 points to a need for bypasses of Ormskirk and of Scarisbrick-Pinfold. Consideration is being given to the study's conclusions.

Mersey Barrage

Mr. Woodcock asked the Secretary of State for Transport what study his Department has made of whether proposals for a Mersey barrage would endanger the future of the Manchester ship canal as a commercial waterway.

Mr. David Mitchell: My Department is in touch with the feasibility study for a barrage through the acting conservator of the River Mersey, who is a member of the technical steering committee. The study will, among other things, make a preliminary assessment of the effects of the proposed barrage on shipping and ports in the estuary.

A30

Mr. Matthew Taylor asked the Secretaty of State for Transport when he expects the conversion to dual carriageway of the A30 through Devon and Cornwall to be completed.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We plan the construction of 65 miles of dual carriageways and just under two miles of single carriageway in Devon and Cornwall. Five and a half miles of dual carriageway have recently been completed and another eight miles are under construction. A further 21¼ miles is expected to start construction within the next three years. We aim to complete the remainder by the mid-1990s.

Contaminated Soil (Storage)

Mr. Temple-Morris asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to reply to the urgent letter from the hon. Member for Leominster of 25 June relating to the storage of contaminated soil at the RAOC regional depot at Moreton-on-Lugg, Hereford.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have now replied to this letter, and explained the delay.

Casualty Costs

Mr. Sheerman asked the Secretary of State for Transport when, in the light of the submissions he has received form transport appraisal experts in support of higher casualty costs, he expects to conduct a further review of the casualty cost question.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We announced in May, following consultation with transport appraisal experts and others, that we were increasing the values of both time and accident costs. The Department is always ready to consider fresh expert evidence that would help us develop our appraisal techniques.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Arts

Mr. Kilfedder asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent on the arts per capita in Northern Ireland for the last full financial year.

Dr. Mawhinney: Central Government expenditure per capita of the population in 1986-87 was £2·17.

Details of local authority expenditure on the arts in Northern Ireland is not available.

Devolution

Sir John Biggs-Davison asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what meetings are to be held with representatives of Northern Ireland political parties; and if he will discuss with them the conduct of Northern Ireland parliamentary business and the prospects for administrative devolution.

Mr. Tom King: I hope that talks can be held with the constitutional political parties about the future of government of Northen Ireland. I am ready to discuss any proposals which the parties may wish to put forward in that context. Exploratory discussions have begun between unionist leaders and senior officials of my Department.

Maghaberry Prison (Strip Searches)

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many strip searches were made of female prisoners in Her Majesty's prison, Maghaberry, in April, May and June of 1987; if he will give the number of persons involved and the number of times each person was searched; whether any prison contraband, smuggled item or illegal correspondence was discovered in any search, indicating which items; in how many cases prisoners refused to be searched and had to be restrained while the search was being conducted; and if he will indicate the reasons for the search under each of the following headings: making a remand appearance at court; attending trial; inter-prison visit; or other reasons.

Mr. Stanley: The information requested is as follows:

	April	*May*	*June*
Total number of searches carried out	49	34	22
Total number of inmates searched	27	22	14
Number of prisoners searched once	9	13	5
Number of prisoners searched twice	15	7	8
Number of prisoners searched 3 times	2	1	
Number of prisoners searched 4 times	1	1	1
Reason for Search:			
First admission on remand awaiting trial	8	11	2
First admission on sentence final discharge	25	13	14
Attending Remand Court	4		
Attending Trial		1	
Attending Appeal	1	1	
Bail Court appearances	7	4	
Going on or returning from home leave	2	4	6
Inter prison visits	2		

No prohibited article was found during these searches and no prisoner refused to be searched.

Security Statistics

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the security statistics for the first half of 1987 are now available, together with details of persons charged with terrorist-type offences and convictions for scheduled offences for the year.

Mr. Stanley: I shall reply to the hon. Member shortly.

Emergency Legislation

Mr. Page asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what arrangements he has made for an annual review of emergency legislation in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Tom King: I am pleased to be able to announce that Viscount Colville of Culross has accepted my invitation to prepare an annual report on the operation of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Acts 1978 and 1987. The intention is that these reports should enable both Houses of Parliament to discharge more effectively their responsibility to scrutinise the operation of the emergency provisions legislation in Northern Ireland on the occasion of the annual debates on the continuance orders, and to determine whether any of the temporary provisions of the two Acts could be allowed to lapse.

As the temporary provisions of both Acts will lapse on 21 March 1988 unless continued in force by order, I have asked Viscount Colville to submit his first report by 31 January 1988.

Private Security Business

Mr. Malins asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he intends to bring into force the provisions of part III of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1987, concerning the regulation of private security businesses in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Tom King: I have made an order bringing part III into force on 1 August 1987, except for sections 17 and 21 which will come into force on 1 January 1988. From the latter date it will be an offence to offer, provide or advertise security guard services without a certificate, or to pay money for security guard services to a person who does not possess a certificate.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Peter Wright

59. **Mr. Cryer** asked the Attorney-General if he is to undertake any further legal actions designed to suppress Mr. Peter Wright's book on MI5; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: To enforce the duty of confidentiality owed to the Crown by Mr. Wright I shall on behalf of Ministers collectively take such steps by way of civil proceedings as appear to the Government to be appropriate.

To protect the public interest in the due administration of justice I shall in my capacity as a law enforcement officer take such proceedings of a criminal nature as appear to me personally to be appropriate.

Judges

Mr. Alton asked the Attorney-General (1) how many retired Court of Appeal, High Court and circuit judges have returned in the last three years for which figures are available to sit as deputies or as ad hoc deputies;

(2) how many times those retired Court of Appeal, High Court and circuit judges who return as deputies or ad hoc deputies have sat in the last three years for which figures are available, and if he will break these figures down on a geographical basis.

The Attorney-General: For 1985, comprehensive information is not available in the form requested. Seven retired Lords Justices sat during the year. Their sitting days, and those of retired High Court judges, were not separately recorded. 1,349 days were sat by deputy [illegible] that is, retired [illegible] circuit judges. In 1986 eight retired Lords Justices sat a total of 386 days, six retired High Court judges sat a total of 334 days, and 23 deputy circuit judges sat a total of 1,400 days. In all, these sittings represent 1·8 per cent. of all days sat by judges. In the first quarter of 1987, seven retired Lords Justices sat a total of 108 days; five retired High Court judges sat a total of 68 days, and 23 deputy circuit judges sat a total of 498 days. A breakdown of the available figures by circuits is given in the attached table.

	Retired Lords Justices		*Retired High Court judges*		*Deputy circuit judges*		
Circuit	*1986*	*[1]1987*	*1986*	*[1]1987*	*1985*	*1986*	*[1]1987*
Midland and Oxford	0	0	30	0	21	11	26
North Eastern	1	19	28	1	193	101	11
Northern	0	0	23	0	292	222	74
South Eastern:							
London	385	89	190	51	56	117	81
Provinces	0	0	0	0	665	809	282
Wales and Chester	0	0	0	0	51	0	0
Western	0	0	63	16	71	140	24
Total	386	108	334	68	1,349	1,400	498

[1]1st quarter.

Mr. Alton asked the Attorney-General what scales of remuneration apply to retired Court of Appeal, High Court and circuit judges who return to sit as deputies or as ad hoc deputies.

The Attorney-General: Retired judges who return to sit as deputies are remunerated on a fixed daily fee-paid basis, as follows:

	£ per day
Deputy Lord Justice of Appeal	324
Deputy High Court judge	294
Deputy circuit judge	151

Polling Registers

Mr. Allen asked the Attorney-General, pursuant to his answer of 14 July, why the Lord Chancellor will not make it his policy to make available free on request to any right hon. or hon. Member one copy of the marked polling register for his or her constituency.

The Attorney-General: Marked copies of polling registers are delivered to the Clerk of the Crown to ensure their safe keeping in case, within a year of the election, a question is raised as to its propriety. While the registers are available during this time for public inspection without charge, for over a century fees have been chargeable for the supplying of a copy. There appear to be no grounds for a change. The cost of supplying a copy of the register to every right hon. and hon. Member would exceed £120,000.

Publicity (Departmental Expenditure)

Mr. Dobson asked the Attorney-General what was the total spending by the Lord Chancellor's Department on press and public relations in 1986-87; and what is the estimated expenditure for the current year.

The Attorney-General: The total spending by the Lord Chancellor's Department on press and public relations in 1986-87 was £23,282. The estimated spending for 1987-88 is £29,735.

Mr. Dobson asked the Attorney-General what was the total spending by the Lord Chancellor's Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising and other promotional literature in 1986-87, and what is the estimated expenditure for the current year.

The Attorney-General: The total spending by the Lord Chancellor's Department on promotional literature etc. for 1986-87 including staff costs was £148,020. The estimated spending for 1987-88 is £140,040.

Crown Prosecution Service

60. **Mr. Nicholas Brown** asked the Attorney-General what representation he has received on staffing levels and rates of pay in the Crown Prosecution Service.

The Attorney-General: I understand that the Director of Public Prosecutions has received a number of representations about staffing levels and also about certain matters concerning pay. Many of the matters raised have now been satisfactorily dealt with; others are being actively pursued.

Mr. Bermingham asked the Attorney-General whether he proposes to take any steps to bring into line the pay of those who transferred into the Crown Prosecution Service from the County Prosecution Service, as senior crown prosecutors and those recruited as senior crown prosecutor or promoted to senior crown prosecutor from within the service.

The Attorney-General [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 July, c. *6*]: After many months of discussion an agreement was reached between the Crown Prosecution Service and two of the three trade unions with which it had been negotiating on the subject of the relative pay of those who transferred to the service and those who were subsequently recruited or promoted. Although the third trade union, the Association of First Division Civil Servants, was not a party to the agreement, it did not oppose its implementation. To date, 88 senior crown prosecutors have benefited financially under the terms of the agreement. Consideration of further cases continues.

Mr. Bermingham asked the Attorney-General how many persons have been seconded to other areas to meet or assist in the shortfall of staff in London and elsewhere in the month of May 1987; and what has been the average cost of secondment per person in the payment of expenses.

The Attorney-General [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 July, c. *6*]: 54 persons were seconded in the month of May 1987, all volunteers. The average cost of secondment per person in the payment of expenses is £329 per week in London and £256 per week elsewhere.

Mr. Bermingham asked the Attorney-General how many staff who resigned from the Crown Prosecution Service are *(a)* chief crown prosecutors, *(b)* branch prosecutors, *(c)* senior crown prosecutors and *(d)* crown prosecutors, between 1 April 1986 and 30 March 1987.

The Attorney-General [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 July, c. *6*]: The figures are as follows:

a) none
b) none
c) 28
d) 35

Mr. Bermingham asked the Attorney-General what representations he has received from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis and chief constables elsewhere with regard to the performance of the Crown Prosecution Service; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 July, c. *6*]: I have received no such representations.

Mr. Bermingham asked the Attorney-General what steps he intends to take to attract further recruits into the Crown Prosecution Service in order to fill the vacant posts, particularly in London and the home counties.

The Attorney-General [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 July 1987, c. *6*]: The Crown Prosecution Service is actively seeking recruits. Each month the Civil Service Commission conducts recruitment interviews on behalf of the Crown Prosecution Service for crown prosecutor posts throughout England and Wales and senior crown prosecutor posts in London. In addition, two national recruitment agencies have been approached to identify eligible staff as potential recruits to the service. The opportunity of careers within the CPS is also being brought to the attention of students and legally qualified persons by publicising the service in university journals and legal magazines. The service will also be featured in "Graduate Opportunities", an annual careers publication.

A further measure to alleviate the shortage of lawyers in London is the offer of an allowance which would be payable to crown prosecutors, senior crown prosecutors and grade 6 officers in the area. The possibility of an extension of that allowance to certain areas around London is now being actively considered.

Mr. Bermingham asked the Attorney-General (1) how many posts there were for each of the Crown Prosecution Service areas in the London areas and throughout England and Wales as at 30 May 1987 for *(a)* professional and *(b)* non-professional personnel;

(2) how many persons were in post in each Crown Prosecution Service area as at 30 May 1987 in *(a)* professional and *(b)* non-professional posts.

The Attorney-General [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 July 1987, c. *5*]: The required information is given in the following table which shows the number of posts and the numbers of staff in post as at 30 May 1987. "Professional" has been interpreted as meaning a barrister or a solicitor. The Crown Prosecution Service also employs members of other professions such as accountants.

Crown Prosecution Service Staff: End May 1987

	Number of posts as at 30 May 1987		*Staff-in-post as at 30 May 1987*	
	Prof	*Non-Prof*	*Prof*	*Non-Prof*
London South East Region				
Inner London	130	278	81·0	189·5
London North	96	167	51·0	143·5
London South	87	129	47·0	117·5
Beds Herts	47	60	25·0	49·5
Essex	32	49	26·0	39·0

	Number of posts as at 30 May 1987		Staff-in-post as at 30 May 1987	
	Prof	Non-Prof	Prof	Non-Prof
Kent	44	61	31·0	49·0
Regional total	436	744	261·0	588·0
South West Region				
Avon Somerset	42	62	29·0	43·0
Devon Cornwall	37	43	29·0	38·0
Dorset Hants	66	84	52·0	73·0
Gloucester Wilts	27	41	20·0	32·0
Gwent South Wales	76	103	61·5	74·0
Sussex	41	52	32·0	42·0
Thames Valley	53	74	34·5	60·0
West Mercia	32	38	18·5	35·0
Regional total	374	497	276·5	397·0
Midlands Region				
Cambridge Lincs	34	48	26·0	38·0
Derbyshire	28	41	19·0	33·0
Humberside	25	42	19·0	36·0
Leicester Northants	38	57	21·0	44·0
Norfolk Suffolk	34	45	25·0	38·0
Nottinghamshire	39	54	35·5	44·0
Staffs Warwick	41	58	27·0	57·0
West Midlands	91	124	61·0	100·0
Regional total	330	469	233·5	390·0
Northern Region				
Cheshire	31	40	26·0	36·0
Cleveland North Yorks	46	64	37·0	56·0
Cumbria Lancs	66	76	54·0	66·0
Durham Northumbria	70	103	52·0	71·0
North Wales	40	54	33·0	45·5
Greater Manchester	122	129	83·0	100·0
Merseyside	74	107	56·0	105·0
South Yorkshire	43	60	33·0	51·0
West Yorkshire	74	106	60·0	91·0
Regional total	566	739	434·0	622·0

Mr. Bermingham asked the Attorney-General (1) how many posts there were for the Crown Prosecution Service areas in the London area and throughout England and Wales as at 30 May 1986 for *(a)* professional and *(b)* non-professional personnel;

(2) how many persons were in post in each Crown Prosecution Service as at 30 May 1986 in *(a)* professional and *(b)* non-professional posts.

The Attorney-General [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 July, c. *5-6*]: The required information is given in the following table which shows the number of posts and the number of staff in post as at the end of May 1986 for those Crown Prosecution Service areas which were fully operational at that date. During the early months of the Crown Prosecution Service operation, there was considerable movement of staff between areas. As a result, staff in post records at area level on a specific date may not be completely reliable.

"Professional" has been interpreted as meaning a barrister or a solicitor. The Crown Prosecution Service also employs members of other professions, such as accountants.

Crown Prosecution Service staff: end May 1986

	Number of posts		Staff in post	
	Professional	Non-professional	Professional	Non-professional
Greater Manchester	93	102	78	93·0
Merseyside	72	89	56	97·0
Northumbria Durham	56	75	46	61·0
South Yorkshire	39	43	38	43·0
West Midlands	84	101	68	105·5
West Yorkshire	70	86	64	81·0

Mr. Bermingham asked the Attorney-General how many persons are in post as *(a)* chief crown prosecutors, *(b)* branch prosecutors, *(c)* senior crown prosecutors and *(d)* crown prosecutors, indicating how many are male and female.

The Attorney-General [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 July, c. *6*]: The numbers are as follows:

(*a*) 31
(*b*) 89
(*c*) 436
(*d*) 626

Figures as to how many of these post holders are male and how many are female are not kept and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bermingham asked the Attorney-General (1) whether he proposes to set up specialised training courses for solicitors employed by the Crown Prosecution Service in juvenile cases;

(2) whether he proposes to continue the policy of having specialist lawyers to deal with juvenile prosecutions in England and Wales;

(3) how many Crown Prosecution Service areas have specialist lawyers or departments to deal with juvenile prosecutions; and how many people are so employed in each area in England and Wales.

The Attorney-General [*pursuant to his reply*, 7 July, c. *85*]: Specialised training courses for CPS lawyers, whether solicitors or barristers, engaged in juvenile cases were set up last year. Since then seven courses have been held centrally and 161 CPS lawyers, from all 31 Areas of the CPS, have attended. In addition, some areas have conducted training courses on a local basis in order to increase the number of specialist lawyers available. Such courses have aimed to replicate the objectives of the centrally-held courses. Future training needs are being reviewed.

The CPS continues to recognise the special considerations affecting juvenile cases, and the need to ensure that laywers responsible for them are fully aware of such considerations.

All 31 areas of the the CPS have in post a specialised lawyer or lawyers. The number of lawyers so designated in each Area is as follows:

	Number
Avon and Somerset	6
Cambridgeshire Lincolnshire	3
Cheshire	8
Cleveland North Yorkshire	9
Derbyshire	2
Devon and Cornwall	6
Dorset Hampshire	7
Essex	5
Gloucestershire Wiltshire	2
Greater Manchester	6
Hertfordshire Bedfordshire	3
Humberside	2
Kent	9
Lancashire Cumbria	3
Leicestershire Northamptonshire	3
London (Inner)	10
London (North)	9
London (South and Surrey)	6
Merseyside	16
Norfolk Suffolk	1
North Wales Dyfed Powys	5
Northumbria Durham	7
Nottinghamshire	5
South Wales Gwent	8
South Yorkshire	3
Staffordshire Warwickshire	1
Sussex	4
Thames Valley	8
West Mercia	2
West Midlands	8
West Yorkshire	11

The number of specialist lawyers in an area and the extent to which specialisation is reflected in the internal arrangements for handling juvenile cases is determined by a variety of local factors.

Solicitors and Barristers (Training Courses)

Mr. Bermingham asked the Attorney-General what training courses he proposes to introduce in advocacy for inservice training for (*a*) solicitors who have just been admitted, (*b*) barristers who have completed no pupilage and (*c*) barristers who have completed no more than six months training.

The Attorney-General [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 July, c. 6]: An intensive, in-service, two weeks' course, which includes a significant element of practical training in advocacy skills, was introduced into the Crown Prosecution Service last year. The course is intended for all lawyers new to the service, whether solicitors or barristers. Six courses have been held and 138 lawyers have attended so far. Future courses have been planned up until next summer and will continue to be run at regular intervals to meet the needs of new staff.

Committal Papers

Mr. Bermingham asked the Attorney-General what qualifications will be required of those persons not professionally qualified in law whom he proposes to employ to prepare and vet committal papers.

The Attorney-General [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 July, c. *6*]: In cases which are committed for trial all decisions regarding the sufficiency of evidence or otherwise requiring legal expertise are taken by a Crown prosecutor. Administrative staff work closely with lawyers in the preparation of such cases, and are responsible for the actual physical compilation of the committal papers; they follow clearly laid down routines and are at all times subject to the ultimate direction of a Crown prosecutor.

Administrative members of staff who are involved in such work range in grade from administrative assistant to senior executive officer. They have the normal range of qualifications required for employment as civil servants.

Magistrates' Courts (Agents)

Mr. Bermingham asked the Attorney-General what is the average weekly cost of appointment of agents in the magistrates' courts in each of the London areas and throughout England and Wales.

The Attorney-General [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 July, c. *6*]: The average weekly cost during the period 1 April 1987 to 30 June 1987 was as follows:

	£
Inner London	32,085
Outer London North	20,258
Outer London South and Surrey	10,119
Remainder of England and Wales	209,354
Total England and Wales	271,816

Case Papers

Mr. Bermingham asked the Attorney-General what steps he proposes to take to ensure that case papers for agents, solicitors or barristers are provided, at the latest, the night before the hearings.

The Attorney-General [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 July, c. 7]: I am acutely conscious of the need to supply case papers to agents as early as possible. The matter is kept under constant review and all appropriate methods of modern communication are utilised in the endeavour to ensure that this is achieved.

Land Registry

Mr. Boateng asked the Attorney-General whether he has any plans to open the Land Registry to public inspection.

The Attorney-General: The Government will make a decision on the proposals contained in the Law Commission's report No. 148 on opening the land register when it has completed its consideration of the representations received.

Mr. David Walker

Mr. Foulkes asked the Attorney-General if he will draw to the attention of the Director of Public Prosecutions the evidence given under oath by Colonel Oliver North that a British subject, David Walker, carried out attacks on military aircraft in Nicaragua.

The Attorney-General: The Director of Public Prosecutions is already aware of newspaper reports published in this country of Colonel North's evidence.

Family Law Reform Act 1987

Mr. Ashley asked the Attorney-General when he expects the necessary resources to become available to bring into force the Family Law Reform Act 1987.

The Attorney-General: Bringing part II of the Family Law Reform Act 1987 into force will require considerable expenditure in terms of staff costs and legal aid, for which resources will not be available until after 1988. Other plans and priorities will determine when resources can be made available thereafter, but the Lord Chancellor will keep the matter under close review.

The Lord Chancellor hopes to bring the rest of the Act —which does not involve the expenditure of significant resources— into force by early 1988.

Offences against the Person Act 1861

Mr. Foulkes asked the Attorney-General how many prosecutions there have been since 1957 under section 9 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861; and, in each case, what was the name of the defendant or defendants and the outcome of the prosecution.

The Attorney-General: Section 9 of the Offences against the Person Act 1861 gives British courts jurisdiction to try the offences of murder and manslaughter where those offences have been committed on land outside the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom. Persons brought to justice in this country by virtue of this section are charged with murder or manslaughter under Common Law. The Director of Public Prosecutions does not compile records of those cases in which offences of murder or manslaughter committed abroad have been tried in this country, and figures cannot be ascertained without incurring disproportionate cost. However, I have been informed that it is not uncommon for such cases to come before the courts.

Foreign Enlistment Act 1870

Mr. Foulkes asked the Attorney-General how many prosecutions there have been since 1957 under the Foreign Enlistment Act 1870; and, in each case, what was the name of the defendant of defendants and the outcome of the prosecution.

The Attorney-General: No prosecutions under the Foreign Enlistment Act 1870 have been brought by the Director of Public Prosecutions since 1957.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Extradition

84. **Mr. Stanbrook** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will propose that a simple backing-of-warrants system should apply for the purposes of extradition between member states of the European Community.

Mr. John Patten: If enacted, the Criminal Justice Bill would allow the United Kingdom to accede to the Council of Europe convention on extradition. This is a well-established and effective instrument which enables extradition requests to be made on the basis of relatively simple documentation. We therefore see no need for any special and different arrangements within the European Community.

Official Secrets Act

85. **Mr. Winnick** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if the Government will seek to amend section 2 of the Official Secrets Act.

Mr. Hurd: We have no such proposals at present.

Electoral Registration

Mr. Allen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps were taken between 1979 and 1987 to increase the level of electoral registration; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We are fully committed to improving the accuracy of the electoral register and to ensuring that all those eligible to vote are able to do so. Proposals for improving the accuracy of the register were discussed in chapter 1 of the Government reply (Cmnd. 9140) to the Home Affairs Select Committee's report on the Representation of the People Act (HC32). Since that reply was published in January 1984, the Home Office has taken a number of steps to give effect to these objectives. Six seminars have been held with groups of registration officers from different regions of England and Wales; these seminars were widely welcomed and produced a valuable interchange of ideas. A code of best practice has been issued to registration officers and subsequently revised in the light of comments received to encourage

them to re-examine and improve their methods of compiling the register. The electoral registration form, form A, has been redesigned to make it more attractive, and easier to understand and complete. A video aimed at teenagers has been produced explaining the registration and voting procedures in a simple and entertaining way; and it has been distributed to all registration officers and local education authorities for use in schools, colleges and youth clubs. In addition, notices have been produced in Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Greek and Turkish, which explain the importance of filling in form A and checking the draft register to ensure one's name is included. More recently the Department commissioned a survey into the effectiveness of electoral registration procedures; it has now been published and we are looking carefully at its findings and recommendations; copies have been sent to each electoral registration officer in England and Wales.

In addition to these specific measures, the Home Office runs an annual publicity campaign aimed at encouraging all eligible people to register as electors.

Economic League

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the report of his inquiry into contacts between the police and the Economic League will be available to right hon. and hon. Members.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The findings of the police inquiry were summarised in the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown) on 30 June. It is not the practice to make available reports of inquiries of this nature.

Prevention of Terrorism

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals excluded under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Acts 1974, 1976 or 1984 and who attended an interview with the Metropolitan police as part of the representations in the review of their order subsequently had a new exclusion order made against them.

Mr. Hurd: Fifty people are recorded in Home Office records as having had interviews with the Metropolitan police as part of a review of an exclusion order made in Great Britain under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Acts 1974 or 1976. In 16 of these cases a fresh exclusion order was made or the existing one was not revoked.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether a person, examined under article 4 of the Prevention of Terrorism (Supplemental Temporary Provisions) Order 1984 and subsequently held beyond the 12-hour initial period on grounds of reasonable suspicion, is subject to the same rights and safeguards awarded to an individual detained under section 12 of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984.

Mr. Hurd: Yes.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what opportunity will be available to an excluded individual to make representations to the Home Office if the police apply for a new exclusion order under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 to be issued against the person when the previous order expires.

Mr. Hurd: When someone is excluded for the first time, or a fresh exclusion order is made against them, under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984, he or she will be told how their order will be reviewed, and how, at the time of the review, they may make representations. People excluded under that Act will also be contacted near the time the order against them is due to expire, and invited to make representations to the Home Office.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department *(a)* how many persons making representations following their exclusion under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Acts 1974, 1976 or 1984 were offered an interview with a Home Office adviser at a venue other than at Castlereagh holding centre, *(b)* where those venues were and *(c)* how many of those declined to attend.

Mr. Hurd: Only under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 have people who make representations against an exclusion order following their removal from Great Britain or the United Kingdom had the right to an interview with a Home Office adviser.

(a) In 14 of the 21 cases in which such interviews have taken place or been arranged following representations against exclusion orders made in Great Britain under that Act, the person excluded has been offered an interview at Castlereagh RUC station (which is a separate building from Castlereagh holding centre); in the remaining seven cases interviews were offered at other places.

(b) These other places were Commonwealth house, Belfast; Her Majesty's prison Maze; British embassy, Dublin; and Dungannon RUC station.

(c) None.

Durham Prison

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give details on a monthly basis of the number of body searches, cell searches and cell changes and strip searches carried out on each of the category A prisoners being held at Her Majesty's prison, Durham, for May and June of 1987.

Mr. John Patten: Records are not kept of the occasions when rub-down searching or "frisking" is carried out in prisons. Such searching is a routine security measure in prison establishments as it is in other circumstances – for example, at airports.

For reasons which the hon. Member will understand, it is not the practice to disclose detailed information about security arrangements such as that requested about the frequency of cell searches and cell changes.

Comprehensive records of strip searches are available only in respect of category A women prisoners, of whom there were three in Durham prison during May and June. One of these prisoners was subject to a strip search on three occasions, and another on five occasions, in each month; and the third on seven occasions in May and on two occasions in June.

Passports

Mr. Onslow asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements he is making, during the current go slow by passport office staff, to provide for the addition of children's names to their parent's passports where there is an urgent need for this.

Mr. Renton: Every effort is being made to give all applications for passport services the appropriate priority. If an application for the addition of children's names to an existing passport is delayed and the applicant is unable to contact or call at the passport office, a British Visitor's Passport (BVP), including the children's names, can be obtained from a post office if the planned journey will be covered by a BVP. In these circumstances post offices have authority to issue BVPs valid for a limited period without production of all the documentary evidence normally required. Those who obtain BVPs in these circumstances may also qualify for a refund of the BVP fee under the special measures announced in my right hon. Friend's reply of 2 July, at columns *126-27*, to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin).

Further to that reply, the following additional countries have agreed to accept until 29 September 1987 travellers using uncancelled United Kingdom passports which expired within the last five years:

Column A	*Column B*
Barbados	Greece
Yugoslavia	Italy
	Spain

The countries in column A have also agreed exceptionally and for the same period to accept travellers with BVPs; the countries in column B already accept BVPs.

Prisoners (Police Cells)

Mr. Cox asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide a breakdown by age of the numbers of *(a)* men and *(b)* women held in police cells on 3 July; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: On 3 July there were 511 male and 109 female prisoners held in police cells in England and Wales. Information on their ages is not available centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate expense.

Mr. Loyden asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Merseyside as to what steps he intends to take to deal with overcrowding in detention cells in the Bridewells police station and as to the latest information for the extent of the overcrowding;

(2) what has been the effect of limiting the number of detained prisoners at Risley remand centre on the overcrowding of detention cells in the Bridewells police station, Merseyside.

Mr. John Patten: I am informed that on 16 July 37 prisoners were held in the Bridewells police station. Merseyside police provide temporary accommodation for prisoners already in their charge when Risley remand centre cannot accept them due to overcrowding. Risley is currently holding over 800 male and 130 female prisoners.

The police provide the best conditions that they can under these circumstances but we are well aware that facilities may leave much to be desired. The measures which my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary announced on 16 July are designed to alleviate the present situation nationally. In the particular case of Merseyside, measures in hand to provide facilities for remand prisoners at Liverpool and Preson prisons should provide the necessary relief in the medium and longer term.

Terrorism

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to ensure protection of British subjects involved in terrorist activities in other countries.

Mr. Hurd: It is for our police to ensure that terrorists are apprehended and brought to justice whenever and wherever they commit a terrorist act. At the Venice economic summit in June, Heads of State or Government reaffirmed the principle established by relevant international conventions of trying or extraditing according to national laws and those international conventions, those who have perpetrated acts of terrorism.

South African Embassy

Mr. John Carlisle asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the weekly cost to public funds of the continued presence of police outside the South African embassy.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to a question from the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 9 July 1987 at column *213*.

Mr. John Carlisle asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrests since March 1986 have taken place outside the South African embassy; and what charges have been brought.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand that since the beginning of the demonstration outside South Africa house, in April 1986, there have been a total of 337 arrests. The charges have included criminal damage, assaults on the police (including one occasioning actual bodily harm), threatening behaviour, obstructing the police and obstruction of the highway.

Prisons (Pregnant Women)

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what is his Department's policy towards dealing with pregnant women in Her Majesty's prisons with particular reference to the birth of their children; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will make a statement on the facilities for pregnant women at Risley remand centre and Askham Grange open prison.

Mr. John Patten: Prison standing orders require a pregnant woman to be accorded a regime which allows her to associate with other prisoners by night and day; to work normally as long as she is fit to do so; to be accommodated in a prison hospital ward or in a room with at least two other prisoners; and to be provided with special means of calling staff in case of need. Medical and other pre-natal care is provided by or under the supervision of the medical officer and the local consultant obstetrician. The medical officer is also responsible for arranging for the

confinement to take place in a suitable National Health Service hospital where the period of confinement begins during sentence. These arrangements operate at all establishments in which women are held including Her Majesty's remand centre Risley and Her Majesty's prison Askham Grange.

Animal Welfare

Sir Bernard Braine asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in the light of the reaction of the animal welfare community to the White Paper, Cmnd. 9571, what progress has been made in regard to further regulation of licensing procedures affecting animals other than farm livestock and wildlife, with particular reference to breeding and boarding establishments and pet shops.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: A number of animal welfare Acts were reviewed as part of the Government's deregulation exercise, reported in Cmnd. 9591 of July 1986 "Lifting the Burden". We have found no basis for any change which would lead to a lessening of the protection afforded to animals by the legislation. During the course of the review a number of suggestions were made for strengthening the legislation and its enforcement. We pay very serious regard to these measures for protecting animal welfare and we are therefore in the process of giving close and careful scrutiny to the suggestions.

Police Stations (Leicestershire)

Mr. Vaz asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many sub-police stations have been opened in Leicestershire over the last 10 years; how many have closed; and whether he will consider allocating sufficient additional funds to the Leicestershire constabulary to enable it to open the Uppingham road police station for 24 hours a day.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Operational decisions, which include the location of stations and sub-stations, and their opening hours, are matters for the chief constable. I understand from him that three sub-police stations were closed and replaced, and a further one opened, during this period. I also understand that the opening hours—8 am to 12 midnight—of Uppingham road police station are based on his assessment of the public need.

Police Forces (Exchange of Information)

Mr. Gorst asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if, as a matter of urgency, he will review and, if necessary, suspend the arrangements for the exchange of information in force between police forces in the United Kingdom and Sweden, in the light of the Swedish authorities having declined to give assurances that information exchanged on a police-to-police basis, the subject of a specific request from official British sources that it be not used as evidence in court proceedings, will not be so used.

Mr. Hurd: The police in this country decide what, if any, information to give to the police in other countries, including Sweden, to assist them in criminal investigations. It is in the public interest that such exchanges should take place, but I have asked Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary to consider whether general guidance to chief officers is needed.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Cold Water Fibrosis

Mr. Charles Morrison asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what consideration he is giving to the threat from the disease cold water fibrosis in the light of substantial fatalities caused to the salmon stocks of Norway.

Mr. Gummer: I am aware that this disease, also known as hitra disease, has affected some salmon farms in Norway, with high mortalities in certain cases, particularly where there has been poor husbandry or adverse conditions. However, there is no immediate cause for concern for either farmed or wild salmon stocks in Great Britain. The Diseases of Fish Act 1937 prohibits the import of live salmon and trout to Great Britain, safeguarding against the most obvious risk of introducing diseases of salmonids. Scientists of the Fisheries Departments are in close touch with scientists in Norway about this disease and the matter is being kept under review.

Seagoing Commercial Fishing Vessels

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list, by port, the number of seagoing commercial fishing vessels in the United Kingdom at 1 January 1973, 1 January 1983 and at the latest available date.

Mr. Gummer: The number of fishing vessels 40 ft in length and over based at main ports in the United Kingdom (districts in Scotland) for the dates specified are given in the following table:

Number of United Kingdom vessels 40 ft and over by main port (district in Scotland) as at 1 January for each year

	1973	*1983*	*1986*
England and Wales			
Fleetwood	90	71	51
Grimsby	242	216	149
Hull	102	36	13
Lowestoft	108	69	49
Milford Haven	20	26	28
North Shields	55	43	39
Other Ports	514	641	560
Total	1,131	1,102	899
Scotland (by district)			
Aberdeen	4	45	38
Peterhead	62	105	106
Shetland and Orkney	80	75	70
Ullapool	17	24	12
Mallaig	32	26	27
Other Districts	805	769	729
Total	1,130	1,044	982
Northern Ireland			
Total	106	166	171
United Kingdom Total	2,367	2,312	2,052

Agricultural Policy

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish a White Paper setting out his strategic objectives for agriculture in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 2 July, at column *154*, to the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson).

Shellfish

Dame Peggy Fenner asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will expedite progress on determining a food standard requirement for ice glaze thickness on shellfish.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Earlier this year the Food Advisory Committee recommended in its report on coated and ice-glazed fish products, that all glazed fish products should bear an indication of net weight of fish core prior to glazing. An announcement on the Government's reaction to this and the other recommendations in the report will be made once consideration of comments received during the period of public consultation has been completed.

EC Food Statistics

Mr. Boateng asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) whether he is satisfied with the arrangements for the distribution of European Economic Community food supplies;

(2) whether he has received any representations from *(a)* voluntary organisations and *(b)* local authorities about the arrangements for the distribution of European Economic Community food surpluses;

(3) whether he has any plans to change the arrangements for the distribution of European Economic Community food surpluses.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Short-term arrangements for the distribution of certain free foods to the most needy ended on 31 March. I have received a number of comments on the subject from voluntary organisations, local authorities and others, and I will bear these in mind should the Commission make a proposal for similar arrangements in future. There is currently no such proposal.

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will state the total value of agricultural production *(a)* for the European Economic Community and *(b)* for each European Economic Community country, at the latest date for which information is available.

Mr. MacGregor: The information is show in the table:

Total final agricultural production: 1985 (provisional)

	[1]*Million ecu*
Belgium	5,302
Denmark	6,659
Germany	26,904
Greece	7,842
France	41,062
Ireland	3,809
Italy	33,024
Luxembourg	163
Netherlands	13,636
United Kingdom	19,429
Total EC10	157,829
Spain	20,215
Portugal	[2]n/a

Source: Eurostat

[1] At 1985 prices and exchange rates

[2] The latest figure available for Portugal relates to 1981 when recorded final agricultural output was some 2,188 million ecu

Food Labelling

Mr. Cryer asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if, in order to ensure full protection for allergic people, he will introduce legislation to ensure that food labelling requires all ingredients to be shown, including flavouring being less than 25 per cent. of the finished product; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The Food Labelling Regulations 1984 already require that prepacked foods should carry a full list of ingredients, including additives, which perform a technological function in the final food. At present, flavourings have to be shown only by their category name. Non-prepacked foods are required to declare on a label or notice the main categories of additives present.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Divorce

83. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has about the number of legal proceedings for divorce involving dependent children in the last year for which information is available.

Mrs. Currie: The most recent calendar year for which figures are available is 1985. The number of decrees absolute granted in England and Wales to couples with at least one child aged under 16 in their family was 88,955.

Health Authorities

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is the number of *(a)* women members, *(b)* men members, *(c)* women chairpersons and *(d)* men chairpersons on each regional health authority;

(2) what is the number of *(a)* women members, *(b)* men members, *(c)* women chairpersons and *(d)* men chairpersons on each district health authority;

(3) what is the number of *(a)* women members, *(b)* men members, *(c)* women chairpersons and *(d)* men chairpersons on each special health authority.

Mrs. Currie: The information available centrally is as follows:

Regional Health Authorities—Members

	Men	*Women*
Northern	11	5
Yorkshire	13	4
Trent	14	3
East Anglian	12	4
North West Thames	13	4
North East Thames	12	4
South East Thames	11	5
South West Thames	12	4
Wessex	12	4
Oxford	12	3
South Western	10	6
Mersey	11	3
North Western	11	5
West Midlands	13	4
Totals	167	58

All 14 regional chairmen are male at present.

Special health authorities—members

	Men	*Women*
The Hospitals for Sick Children	14	5
National Hospital for Nervous Diseases	16	3
Moorfields Eye Hospital	15	4
Bethlem and Maudsley	11	6
Royal Marsden	14	4
National Heart and Chest Hospital	13	5
Hammersmith and Queen Charlottes	10	6
Eastman Dental	11	2
Rampton Board	3	3
Broadmoor Board	6	3
Moss Side and Park Lane Board	8	1
Mental Health Act Commission	68	24
Central Blood Products Laboratory	8	—
Prescription Pricing Authority	11	3
NHS Training Authority	17	6
Health Education Authority	8	6
Disablement Services Authority	7	1
Rural Dispensing Committee	8	1
Totals	248	83

The chairman of the special health authority for The Hospitals for Sick Children is a woman, the remainder are men.

District health authorities

Members of District Health Authorities are appointed by the relevant regional health authority and appropriate local authorities.

The information requested about them is therefore not available centrally but the hon. Member could obtain it from the chairmen of the regional health authorities. There are currently 32 women chairmen of district health authorities and 155 men.

Multiple Sclerosis (Exhibition)

Mr. Hayward asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to multiple sclerosis sufferers and self-help to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Scott: I understand that, under procedures agreed by the Services Committee, arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from 23 to 27 November.

Mr. Ben Rose

Mr. Fraser asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when the hon. Member for Norwood will receive a reply to his letter addressed to the Department of Health and Social Security at 6 Camberwell New road concerning Mr. Ben Rose of Millbrook Road, London S.W.9.

Mr. Portillo: I understand that the manager of the office at 6 Camberwell New road replied to the hon. Member on 15 July.

Data Network (Departmental Integration)

Mr. Michael Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what preparations have been made to date, and what actions are planned in the next six months, to facilitate the integration of his Department's data systems and databases into a wider network of the type envisaged by the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency's Government data network service requirement.

Mr. Portillo: The Department has no current plans to integrate its systems and databases into a wider network. The suitability of a Government data network for internal departmental use is currently being assessed. Should this option be chosen, it is expected that the facility will be used, with appropriate safeguards to protect confidentiality, to transfer information relating to income tax deductions and taxable national insurance benefits, currently exchanged on magnetic tape, to the Board of the Inland Revenue.

Government Data Network

Mr. Michael Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what conclusions were drawn in the course of preparatory studies undertaken in relation to the proposed Government data network, about the potential cost savings that might be made by allowing suitable data to be transferred between his Department and Her Majesty's Customs and Excise;

(2) what conclusions were drawn in the course of preparatory studies undertaken in relation to the proposed Government data network, about the potential cost savings that might be made by allowing certain data other than that concerning income tax deductions and taxable national insurance benefits, to be transferred between his Department and the Inland Revenue.

Mr. Portillo: Detailed costings have not been undertaken as there are no proposals for the exchange of such information.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Leighton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the turnover of staff in Department of Health and Social Security benefit offices *(a)* in inner London and *(b)* nationally in the last 12 months for which figures are available.

Mr. Portillo: The following figures give the total number of local office staff leaving the Department, for all reasons, nationally and in inner London, during the period 1 September 1986 to 31 March 1987. These numbers are then expressed as a percentage of the total local office staff in post at 1 September 1986.

I regret that the information requested is not available for a twelve month period.

	Total Staff in post	*Total leavers*	*Half year per cent.*
National	64,291	3,354·0	5·22
Inner London (offices where inner London weighting is in payment)	6,284	545·5	8·68

Terrence Higgins Trust

Mr. Allen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received regarding the funding of the Terrence Higgins Trust; and what action he proposes to take on the matter.

Mr. Newton: We have received an application for funding for 1987-88 from the Terrence Higgins Trust which we are now considering. We have made interim payments of £50,000 to the trust and expect to be in a position to decide its final allocation very soon.

Repetitive Strain Injury

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what research is being funded by his Department into the nature and treatment of repetitive strain injury and tenosynovitis.

Mrs. Currie: The Department looks to the Medical Research Council, which is funded by the Department of Education and Science, to meet its biomedical research needs. The MRC is not currently supporting research into these conditions nor has it been asked by the Department to do so.

The Health and Safety Executive, which is funded by the Department of Employment, is supporting a study at the Institute of Occupational Medicine, Edinburgh, into occupational factors associated with upper limb repetitive strain injuries.

The University of Surrey is carrying out a study into the use of nuclear magnetic resonance imaging as a diagnostic tool for muscular skeletal disorders, which is relevant to tenosynovitis.

AIDS

Mr. Butler asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what estimates his Department has made of the number of persons likely to be infected with AIDS in the United Kingdom in 1992 on the basis of *(a)* current plans and policies and *(b)* a policy of compulsory confinement of infected individuals.

Mr. Newton: It is not possible, with our current knowledge, to make reliable estimates of the likely numbers of AIDS cases in 1992.

Fraudulent Claims

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his latest estimate of the total cost of fraudulent claims for (i) retirement pensions, (ii) child benefit, (iii) supplementary benefit and (iv) unemployment benefit.

Mr. Portillo: No reliable estimate is available of the total cost of fraudulent claims for social security benefits.

In-patients (Treatment Waiting Time)

Mr. Galbraith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table showing the total average waiting time for National Health Service in-patient treatment in each surgical specialty in each hospital in England and Wales.

Mr. Newton: I am sorry, I cannot give the hon. Member the information he seeks. The sample numbers held centrally are too small for reliable estimates to be made of average waiting time for admission to individual hospitals.

Medical Laboratory Scientific Officers

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information is available to his Department on *(a)* vacancy rates for medical laboratory scientific officers and *(b)* how National Health Service pay and benefit levels for medical laboratory scientific officers compare with those available for similar positions in the private sector.

Mr. Newton: Firstly, information on vacancies for medical laboratory scientific officers is not collected centrally. Secondly, a direct comparison of the rates of pay and benefit levels of medical laboratory scientific officers employed in the NHS with those available in the private sector is not possible since the requirements and responsibilities of posts will differ widely.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the percentage change in *(a)* the basic pay and *(b)* the take-home pay of medical laboratory scientific officers since 1979 (i) in money terms, (ii) deflated by the retail price index and (iii) in relation to national income levels.

Mr. Newton: Information in the form requested is not available. The increase in basic pay of a basic grade medical laboratory scientific officer since 1979 is as follows:

	1 April 1979	*1 April 1986*	*per cent increase cash*	*per cent increase in real terms*[1]
	£	£		
Minimum of Scale	3,606	6,368	76·6	+5·2
Maximum of Scale	5,157	8,986	74·2	+3·8

[1]Based on July Retail Price Index.

In addition to basic pay, many medical laboratory scientific officers receive additional payments for being on-call or standby, and for calls to the laboratory. Present average earnings of full-time staff are estimated to be about 23 per cent greater than basic pay.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what grounds medical laboratory scientific officers are categorised as ancillary staff.

Mr. Newton: I am not aware of any such categorisation. Medical laboratory scientific officers remain part of the professional and technical staffs group.

Edinburgh Social Security Appeals Tribunal

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the maximum time between hearings by the Edinburgh social security appeal tribunal and the dispatch of that tribunal's written decisions; if he will make a statement on the employment of temporary and permanent staff at that office; if he is satisfied with the performance of the Edinburgh office; and if he intends to take any action to ensure that claimants' cases are resolved more quickly.

Mr. Portillo: The administration of social security appeal tribunals is the responsibility of the President of Social Security and Medical Appeal Tribunals, His Honour Judge Byrt, QC. The hon. Member should write to him about the staffing and performance at the Edinburgh Social Security Appeal Tribunal Clerk's office.

Mixed Sex Wards

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information is available to his Department on the number of mixed sex wards; and how this has changed since 1979 *(a)* in relation to geriatric wards in mental hospitals, and *(b)* in general.

Mrs. Currie: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Bow and Poplar (Mrs. Gordon) on 16 July.

Invalid Care Allowance

Mr. Walters asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will consider reviewing the treatment of invalid care allowance in the supplementary benefit scheme, in order to allow a payment for the services provided by carers rather than an income maintenance benefit.

Mr. Scott: Invalid care allowance is an income replacement benefit designed to help replace the income of people who have given up the opportunity of full-time paid employment to look after a severely disabled person. Supplementary benefit is also an income replacement benefit, and is intended to bring up to a prescribed level any other income a person might have. In such a scheme regard must be paid to any income that is intended for everyday maintenance, and invalid care allowance is intended for this purpose. To ignore invalid care allowance in assessing entitlement to supplementary benefit, therefore, would be to make double provision from public funds.

Clinical Waste

Mr. Raison asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he requires that a private contractor burning clinical waste at a National Health Service hospital and acting under control of the hospital staff should have a licence under the Control of Pollution Act 1974.

Mrs. Currie: Health authorities are expected to establish working practices in accordance with the requirements of the Control of Pollution Act 1974. They should consider taking legal advice before entering into agreements with private contractors. The nature of these agreements will determine the need for a licence.

Overseas Pensioners

Sir John Farr asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the cost of paying the latest increase in United Kingdom pensions in a full year to British pensioners in Canada.

Mr. Scott: The latest annual figures available are based on November 1985 rates. The increases in pensions paid in July 1986 and April 1987 are not based on a full year and are therefore unrepresentative.

Nevertheless, we are hoping to carry out an exercise in the next few months to estimate the cost of paying the April 1987 increase to pensioners in Canada and I shall let my hon. Friend have a further reply as soon as the figures are available.

Consultant Contracts

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to transfer consultant contracts from regional health authorities to district health authorities.

Mr. Newton: We have no plans to transfer consultants' contracts to district health authorities.

Liverpool Royal Infirmary

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if the site of the former Liverpool royal infirmary has been cleared of asbestos; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Benefits

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is the number of *(a)* claimants and *(b)* dependants who are unemployed and drawing supplementary benefit in the Birkenhead constituency;

(2) what is the number of *(a)* claimants and *(b)* dependants who are unemployed and drawing supplementary benefit in the Wirral, West constituency;

(3) what is the number of *(a)* claimants and *(b)* dependants who are unemployed and drawing supplementary benefit in the Wirral, South constituency.

Mr. Portillo: Information is not available in the precise form requsted. The constituencies of Birkenhead, Wirral, South and Wirral, West are each served by Birkenhead, North and Birkenhead, South local offices but the boundaries are not conterminous.

The number of unemployed people claiming supplementary benefit at these offices on 5 May 1987, the latest available figures, is as follows:

	Number
Birkenhead, North	7,223
Birkenhead, South	4,478

Information is not kept locally about the numbers of claimants' dependants.

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will continue to allow young people of 16 to 18 years old who choose a 21-hour course of further education as an alternative to the YTS to qualify for supplementary benefit.

Mr. Scott: The Government intend to implement the manifesto commitment to withdraw benefit entitlement from people in this age group who choose to remain unemployed and we shall be bringing forward legislation in due course to achieve this. The detail of the change is still being considered and it would be inappropriate at this stage to comment on this particular aspect.

Derriford Hospital, Plymouth

Miss Fookes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if there has been any change in the timetable for the planned expansion of Derriford hospital, Plymouth, announced by his Department in February, especially with regard to the start date;

(2) if he will make a statement about the prospects for a maternity unit at Derriford hospital.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Pathologists, Torbay

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will agree to meet representatives of the

department of pathology at Torbay hospital, together with Dr. Laurence Hayek, consultant at the Torbay hospital, and Tony Boyce, chairman of the Torbay health authority, and the hon. Member for South Hams, to discuss the current situation among pathologists, as requested in the hon. Member for South Hams' letter of 7 July.

Mr. Newton: I am considering my hon. Friend's request and will be replying to him shortly.

Single Payments

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what consideration he has given to the effects on disabled and mature students dependent on single benefits of changes to the single payment regime; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: The changes made to the Single Payments Regulations in August 1986 have not affected the ability of disabled students to qualify for single payments. Like any other claimants, they can be considered for help if they are entitled to weekly supplementary benefit. The regulations – particularly in relation to furniture, bedclothes, and clothing—provide specifically for those claimants who are chronically sick or disabled. Mature students, who can generally claim benefit only during the long vacation, have to qualify then for single payments on the same basis as other fit claimants under pension age.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many disabled and mature students are dependent on single benefits for bedding and heating; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: I regret that I am unable to supply the information required, as the existing statistics on the number of single payment claims for bedding and heating do not identify students as a separate claimant group.

Transplant Surgery

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what recent representations on transplant his Department has received from the National Society for Transplant Surgery; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Four letters were received in the Department from the chairman during April giving information about the society, and a further letter was received in May asking for an assurance that the Department would recognise the legal validity of the society's donor cards. The legality of the document would be a matter for the courts and the chairman was informed that such an assurance could not therefore be given.

Hospitals (Manchester)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what will be the effect of the outcome of the South Manchester health authority's meeting on 16 July relating to cuts in spending on staffing levels at the Christie, Wythenshawe and Withington hospitals; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will make a statement on the future of hospital services in south Manchester for lung cancer, cardiothoracic and vascular patients in the light of the South Manchester health authority's meeting on 16 July relating to cuts in spending in the years 1987-88 and 1988-89;

(3) in how many recent cases patient care has suffered in south Manchester's hospitals in consequence of inadequate staffing levels; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Responsibility for managing health services within South Manchester is the responsibility of South Manchester health authority which has enjoyed substantial real growth in resources in recent years. The right hon. Member may therefore wish to address his enquiries to the chairman of that authority.

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will visit south Manchester to discuss with the district health authority and representatives of hospital staffs there the impending cuts in expenditure of £5·9 million in the period up to 31 March 1989.

Mrs. Currie: South Manchester health authority has enjoyed 7 per cent. real growth in revenue expenditure since 1982-83. My hon. Friend and I have visited Manchester often to see examples of how health services in the city have benefitted. Planning the use of these resources in South Manchester up to 1989 and beyond is the responsibility of the district health authority in conjunction with the regional health authority. These two bodies are in routine regular contact on these matters.

Elderly People (London)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the total number of elderly people in London who were in receipt of supplementary pension for 1986; and what was the figure for 1983.

Mr. Portillo: The Greater London area is served for supplementary pension purposes by 66 local offices of the Department, but their boundaries are not conterminous.

The number of people in receipt of supplementary pension at those offices at May 1986 and May 1983 was:

	Number
7 May 1986	239,403
10 May 1983	235,713

Source: 100 per cent. count of cases in action.

London

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people in London are currently in receipt of *(a)* supplementary benefit, *(b)* family income supplement and *(c)* housing benefit.

Mr. Portillo: This information is not available in the precise form requested.

The Greater London area is served for supplementary benefits purposes by 66 of the Department's offices but their boundaries are not conterminous. The total number of people claiming benefit from those offices, as at 5 May 1987, the latest available information, was 764,206. Source: 100 per cent. count of cases in action.

Information about people claiming family income supplement in the London area is not available.

The total number of people in receipt of rate rebates in the London area—comprising Inner, Outer and the City of London — as at 3 July 1987, the latest available information was 861,086. Source: Sum report of Local Authority returns for 1987-88.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the infant mortality rate in London for 1986; and what was the comparable figure in 1983.

Mrs. Currie: The provisional infant mortality rate—deaths under one year of age per 1,000 live births—for the Greater London council area for the year 1986 is 9·1. The corresponding figure for 1983 is 9·4.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the total number of bed losses in National Health Service hospitals in London for each of the past five years; and, of these, how many were acute beds.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Motor Cyclists (Injuries)

Mr. Sheerman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide details of *(a)* the annual cost to the National Health Service, *(b)* the percentage of emergency orthopaedic admissions and *(c)* the average length of stay in hospital for the treatment of (i) serious injuries suffered by pedestrians and (ii) serious injuries suffered by motor cyclists.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Child Benefit

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy to uprate the amount of child benefit fully to compensate for the change in the retail price index since the date of the last increase; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: We have no plans to depart from the policy of successive Governments which has been to determine the rate of child benefit as a part of the annual social security uprating exercise. The universal nature of child benefit places a substantial burden on all taxpayers and the rate at which it is paid must be assessed in the light of total expenditure on social security and the specific need for a balanced programme of financial support for families.

NATIONAL FINANCE

VAT

77. **Mr. Morley** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had in the European Economic Community Council of Ministers concerning the imposition of value added tax on public transport fares.

78. **Mr. Wilson** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his policy towards proposals for the harmonisation of value added tax across the European Economic Community by 1992, as it affects transport matters; and if he will make a statement.

79. **Mr. Dunnachie** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had concerning the harmonisation of value added tax in the European Economic Community by 1992 and its implications for public transport fares; and if he will make a statement.

80. **Mr. George Howarth** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his policy on the charging of value added tax on transport fares.

81. **Mr. Dixon** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had concerning the imposition of value added tax on bus and rail fares.

Mr. Brooke: The Economic and Finance Council has not yet had an opportunity to discuss the Commission's proposals for the approximation of value added tax. The Prime Minister has made it clear that the United Kingdom could not accept proposals that threaten to change our capacity to zero rate what we want to zero rate.

82. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what consultations he has had on the case to be presented by Her Majesty's Government at the European Court of Justice on 15 September in response to the case initiated by the European Economic Community Commission on the levying of value added tax on new housebuilding, electricity, gas and protective clothing.

Mr. Brooke: The Government have received representations from a large number of interested parties; full weight has been given to the views expressed in preparing the United Kingdom's defence to the European Commission's case.

Small Businesses

Mr. David Shaw asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department in helping small businesses over the last three years; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

Mr. Major: The Government's economic policy is designed to maintain a vigorous economy in which business and enterprise can flourish. Specific measures helpful to small businesses have been introduced in each of the last three Budgets. These include:

1985 Budget

self employed benefit from continuing reduction in Class 2 NIC and tax relief on half Class 4 NIC;
NIC restructuring;
extension of business expansion scheme (BES);
reform of capital gains retirement relief, extension of indexation, relief for long term holdings;
VAT threshold increase in line with inflation, extension of bad debt relief;
abolition of development land tax;
unincorporated businesses share benefit of real increase in income tax thresholds.

1986 Budget

small companies' corporation tax (CT) rate reduced to 29 per cent.;
unincorporated businesses benefit from basic rate cut to 29 per cent. and indexation of tax thresholds;
BES extended and targeting improved;
Inheritance tax exemption for lifetime gifts;
VAT registration and deregistration thresholds increased broadly in line with inflation;
Enterprise allowance scheme expanded;
Employee share schemes: improved access for unquoted family companies, employee controlled companies, worker co-operatives;
Loan guarantee scheme extended and premium halved.

1987 Budget

Small companies' CT rate reduced to 27 per cent.;
unincorporated businesses benefit from income tax basic rate cut to 27 per cent. and indexation of the tax threshold;
package of measures to lighten VAT burden on small businesses including: cash and annual accounting for businesses with turnover up to £250,000; registration threshold increased to £21,300 and period in which

businesses obliged to register extended to 30 days, simpler schemes to be more widely available for small and medium sized retailers;
standstill in fuel duties and most vehicle excise duty rates;
BES changes to reduce effect of investment bunching in last quarter of tax year;
small companies' capital gains charge reduced to 27 per cent. with advance corporation tax offset against liability on gains;
ceiling for capital gains retirement relief increased to £125,000;
Inheritance tax (IHT) business relief increased from 30 per cent. to 50 per cent. for minority holdings over 25 per cent. in unquoted companies; IHT threshold increased;
new simplified occupational pension schemes will help small employers set up own schemes.

The success of the Government's policies to improve the climate for small businesses is indicated by the rate of net business startups which, on the basis of VAT registration, averaged around 500 per week between 1980 and 1985.

Intestacy

Mr. Gerald Howarth asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give for each of the past five years the value of estates of those dying intestate and the number of such estates.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I regret that the information requested is not available centrally. Information recorded in connection with inheritance tax does not distinguish the estates of those dying intestate. However, the numbers of grants of letters of adminstration issued in each of the last five years in England and Wales to the estates of intestates are shown below. The drop in the numbers in recent years probably reflects the increase in 1984 from £1,500 to £5,000 of the limit below which assets may be dealt with without the production of a grant.

	Numbers
1982	90,320
1983	90,173
1984	83,492
1985	72,922
1986	64,458

No figures are available to indicate the size of these estates, nor the number of intestate estates for which there are no applications for letters of administration.

Civil Servants (Hours of Work)

Mr. Grocott asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the average weekly hours worked by civil servants *(a)* in 1964, *(b)* in 1974 and *(c)* in the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Brooke: Information is available only in respect of conditioned hours worked by the majority of full-time civil servants. These are as follows:

	Gross weekly hours (including meal breaks) worked by Non Industrial staff		*Net weekly hours (excluding meal breaks) worked by Industrial staff*
Year	*London*	*Elsewhere*	
1964[1]	42	43	42
1974	41	42	40
1987	41	42	39

[1] From 1 October.

Average weekly net conditioned hours for part-time staff are estimated at 22 in 1975 and 1987. Earlier figures are not available.

Economic and Finance Council Meeting

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the outcome of the Economic and Finance Council meeting on 13 July.

Mr. Brooke: This meeting was held in Brussels. I represented the United Kingdom.

The Council carried out its second quarterly review of the economic situation in the Community. It was agreed that there was no need to change the economic policy guidelines contained in the annual economic report adopted last December.

Spain and Portugal reiterated their concern about the impact on them on the Council's decision to delay reimbursement to member states of losses incurred on the disposal of butter stocks. The Council took note of their views.

The Council agreed to a United Kingdom request for a derogation from the sixth VAT directive relating to cash accounting for small businesses. The derogation will apply for a transitional period until the Council adopts a Community wide scheme. The Council will review the position after three years.

Child Minding (Tax Relief)

Mr. Shersby asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the cost to the Exchequer of introducing tax relief for working mothers for the cost of child minding; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend, the Member for Kensington (Sir Brandon Rhys Williams) on 13 July 1987, at column *351-2*.

Members' Income

Mr. Grylls asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will introduce legislation to enable Members of Parliament, with various interests outside Parliament from which they earn income, to elect to be self-employed as regards the whole of their income including parliamentary salary; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Income Tax

Mr. Frank Field asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a distributional analysis of all income tax reductions since 1979 *(a)* taking the gains to the top 1 per cent., top 2 to 5 per cent., top 6 to 10 per cent., top 11 to 20 per cent., top 21 to 30 per cent., top 31 to 50 per cent., bottom 50 per cent., points in the income distribution, giving the number of tax units for each group, the reduction in income tax for each group compared with 1978-79, and the average per tax unit, and *(b)* taking the gains to those with total income under £5,000, £5,000 to £10,000, £10,000 to £15,000, £15,000 to £20,000, £20,000 to £30,000, £30,000 to £40,000, £40,000 to £50,000, over £50,000, giving the number of units

paying tax and the reduction in income tax compared with 1978-79, giving both the amount for each income group and the average per tax unit.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Coinage

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will ensure that a panel of registered blind people and the Royal National Institute for the Blind are consulted about any proposed change in the design of United Kingdom coins and that the polygon shape of the 50p piece will be retained to distinguish it by touch from any other coin.

Mr. Brooke: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will take careful note of the views of the blind before decisions are taken about the future of the coinage. The Royal Mint's recently published pamphlet on the future of the coinage will shortly be available in braille. While the replacement of the existing 50p coin cannot be ruled out at this stage, a survey conducted by Nottingham university suggests that most people would like to see it retained.

Unemployment (Cost)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the annual cost, in taxes forgone and national insurance, and in extra social security payments, of the number of unemployed people in London for the latest date available.

Mr. Major: I regret that regional figures for benefit expenditure on the unemployed are not available. It is not possible to estimate the revenue forgone.

European Commission Budget

Mr. Wheeler asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the European Commission's latest cash position and the implications for the United Kingdom.

Mr. Brooke: The European Commission estimated that its spending obligations in July would again exceed available revenues under the budget for 1987.

The Commission has therefore requested member states to advance from August into July the payment of own resources other than VAT in accordance with article 10(2) of Council Regulation 2891/77; a similar advance was made last month. The Government are satisfied that this request is within the vires of Article 10(2) and accordingly made an advance payment today, 20 July, of £147 million from the Consolidated Fund under section 2(3) of the European Communities Act 1972. The payment of levies and duties on 20 August will be reduced by the amount of the advance.

The Commission has also informed us that it has had to overdraw its accounts with member states in July in accordance with article 12(2) of Council Regulation 2891/77.

The amount involved for the United Kingdom is expected to be of the order of £206 million. The Government are meeting this obligation from the Consolidated Fund in accordance with section 2(3) of the European Communities Act 1972. Repayment of drawings made under this facility will be made by deduction from subsequent own resources payments. Neither of these facilities involves increasing the total amounts which the Community is authorised to spend during 1987. There is therefore no net addition to public expenditure.

SCOTLAND

War Criminals (Extradition)

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many requests have been received by the Lord Advocate since 1957 for assistance in procuring the extradition from Scotland of suspected war criminals; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: None, so far as can be ascertained. Any such request would be treated on its merits in accordance with extradition law.

Caterpillar Tractor Company Ltd.

Dr. Reid asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what meetings he intends to have with the management of Caterpillar Tractor Company Limited about the disposal of financial and other assets.

Mr. Lang: The disposal of the assets of the Caterpillar plant at Uddingston is a matter for the company. My Department is in touch with the company about its liability for the repayment of grant paid in respect of particular equipment.

Pension Fund Assets

Dr. Reid asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has received any representations about calling for amendment of Scottish law governing the disposal of surplus pension fund assets in major Scottish companies.

Mr. Lang: No.

Museums and Galleries

Mr. Buchan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list *(a)* his Department's total expenditure on museums and galleries in Scotland in every year since 1976-77, *(b)* expenditure on the national galleries of Scotland, the national museum of antiquities, the royal Scottish museum and the national library, apportioned as between capital costs, current costs and purchase grants, *(c)* expenditure on the Scottish museums council, and *(d)* any other expenditure on museums in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information is set out in the table below.

Scottish Education Department: Direct expenditure on museums and galleries

£000

Financial year	*1976-77*	*1977-78*	*1978-79*	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Royal Scottish Museum[1]											
Current	859	921	972	1,215	1,619	1,764	1,857	1,951	2,125	3,100	3,808
Purchase Grant	100	100	142	185	240	254	330	347	349	591	623
National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland[1]											
Current	252	280	328	428	545	600	605	626	747		
Purchase Grant	50	50	71	92	120	128	165	173	175		
Scottish Heritage Fund[2]				390	507	424					
Local Museums Purchase Fund	45	45	64	83	108	114	167	175	184	210	220
National Galleries of Scotland											
Current	533	547	625	805	1,172	1,322	1,415	1,444	1,535	1,604	1,682
Purchase Grant	290	298	527	684	891	941	1,211	1,265	1,274	1,439	1,517
National Library of Scotland											
Current	809	852	988	1,090	2,119	2,286	2,203	2,273	2,611	2,779	3,177
Purchase Grant	167	167	237	308	400	424	546	573	578	665	730
SED Funds to Property Services Agency for new build and maintenance of the above national institutions' buildings											
Capital[3]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,724	1,932	4,061	5,516	5,074
Current	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,094	1,290	1,377	2,117	2,056
Scottish Museums Council	60	100	125	145	165	200	253	268	286	408	440
TOTAL[4]	3,165	3,360	4,079	5,425	7,886	8,457	11,570	12,317	15,302	18,429	19,327

[1] The Royal Scottish Museum and the National Museum of Antiquities amalgamated to become the National Museums of Scotland on 1 October 1985.
[2] The Scottish Heritage Fund was included in individual purchase grants from 1 April 1982.
[3] The Property Services Agency figures are not available for the early years.
[4] This total does not take account of over £8 million given as direct grant to Glasgow district council to assist building the Burrell gallery; payments started in 1979.

Forfar Bypass

Mr. Bill Walker asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what measures have been introduced to monitor accidents at the junctions on the new Forfar bypass; if he has received a report on the serious accident which took place there on Wednesday 15 July; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Accident levels on Scottish trunk roads are regularly monitored, and the Forfar bypass will automatically be included. A safety audit of the road was carried out before the opening of the bypass. This involved representatives from the Scottish Development Department's Road Safety Advisory Unit, the police and engineers connected with the project. All were satisfied with the standard of the road. I have asked for a report on the circumstances which gave rise to the accidents. It is, however, for the police to investigate individual accidents and to take appropriate action.

Local Authority Housebuilding

Mr. Holland asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the share respectively of *(a)* public direct labour schemes and *(b)* private contractors' schemes in local authority housebuilding in Scotland for the years 1985 and 1986.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply by my predecessor on 20 March, at column *654*.

Nursery Education

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the proportion of children aged three and four who in 1986-87 were in receipt of nursery education in *(a)* each local education authority area and *(b)* Scotland as a whole.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Western Islands Council

Mr. Macdonald asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make additional resources available to the Western Islands Council to enable it to mitigate the effects of the anticipated staff shortage in 1987-88 at the Nicolson Institute; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: It is up to local authorities to choose their own expenditure priorities within the resources available. Western Isles Islands Council's current expenditure guideline for 1987-88 is 1·7 per cent. above its assessed need, 6·3 per cent. above its budget in 1986-87 and 7·8 per cent. above its guideline in that year.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ILEA (Resignations and Retirements)

Mr. John Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many head teachers have resigned or taken premature retirement from the Inner London education authority since 1981.

Mrs. Rumbold: Information in the form requested is not available. Between March 1981 and March 1985, 137 head teachers aged under 60 left full-time teaching service in the Inner London education authority without transferring to another teaching post in the public sector in England and Wales.

Research

Mr. Wilkinson asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proportion of University Grants Committee funding is spent on science undergraduate teaching and on scientific research.

Mr. Jackson: Disaggregated information on science undergraduate teaching is not available. Universities' total expenditure on scientific research and development is estimated to have been £563·5 million in 1984-85.

Four-term School Year

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he intends to hold discussions with representatives of the Council of Local Education Authorities regarding the introduction of a four-term school year; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend has no plans to hold discussions with the Council of Local Education Authorities on the topic. The Government are aware of the interest currently being shown in the four-term year, but have noted that the need for change does not command universal support within the education service. Such a change would be a major one, with implications well beyond education.

League for the Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to the work of the League for the Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I understand that, under procedures agreed by the Services Committee, arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from Monday 9 November to Friday 13 November, 1987.

Teachers

Mr. Harry Greenway asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if teachers appointed to a scale II post from 1 January 1988 could be appointed at the same level as at 1 October 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The intention is that scale 2 will not exist as from 1 October 1987. From that date all teachers will be appointed to the main scale for teachers in accordance with the provisions then in force.

Head Teachers (Wythenshawe)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he will be replying to the letter sent to him on 18 June by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe, enclosing a report from infant and junior school head teachers in Wythenshawe.

Mr Dunn: Inquiries are being made of the local education authority and my right hon. Friend expects to reply shortly.

Marine Technology Research Unit, Bangor

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the future of the marine technology research unit at University College of North Wales, Bangor, and on its future level of funding.

Mr. Jackson: I am not aware of any distinct marine technology research unit at the University College of North Wales, Bangor, or of any uncertainty about the future of research in marine science there, but if the hon. Member would care to write to me with more information, I should be glad to look into the matter.

Children (Special Education Needs)

Mr. Hannam asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to increase parental choice of schools for parents of children with special educational needs.

Mr. Dunn: Parents of all children attending maintained primary and secondary schools, including children with special educational needs, will be able to benefit from our plans for increasing parental choice.

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has for extending and improving the quality of teacher training for those who teach children with special educational needs.

Mr. Dunn: The Government are committed to providing the highest quality of training for specialist teachers of children with special educational needs. The change to an entirely in-service specialist training should improve the education of children with special educational needs by ensuring that newly-qualified specialist teachers have received a high level of both general and specialist teacher training. On 1 April my right hon. Friend introduced a new scheme to support expenditure by local education authorities on training teachers and other related professionals. The scheme helps authorities to organise in-service training more systematically so as to meet both national and local training needs and priorities. The national priority areas for 1987-88 and 1988-89 include training to meet the special educational needs of pupils with learning difficulties in schools.

Expenditure incurred by local authorities in this area will be supported by grant at a rate of 70 per cent. up to limits set by my right hon. Friend, and expenditure beyond that is eligible for further grant at a rate of 50 per cent.

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what plans he has to ensure that funding arrangements for schools which receive grant aid from central Government will not result in discrimination against those children whose special educational provision may require more space or equipment or more intensive teacher involvement;

(2) what plans he has for ensuring the continuation of provision for children with disabilities in those schools which opt out of local education authority control.

Mr. Dunn: It is proposed that a grant maintained school would receive the same level of funding from the Secretary of State as it would have done from the local education authority had it not opted out. The Government intend to issue shortly a consultative document which will give details of the possible shape and nature of the scheme.

Disabled Persons (Higher Education)

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what guidance his Department has given to local education authorities regarding guaranteeing places in higher education to disabled persons.

Mr. Jackson: It is for higher education institutions, which are responsible for their own academic affairs, including the selection of students, to keep their practice in providing for students with disabilities under review. The Department has issued no guidance. The report "Catching-Up?", published by the National Bureau for

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Handicapped Students this year, following a DES-sponsored survey of public sector provision for special educational needs, gives useful information on current practice.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what financial assistance has been extended to universities and other institutions of higher education to ensure improved facilities for disabled students; and which universities and institutions have benefited from such assistance.

Mr. Jackson: The University Grants Committee allocates resources between universities in the form of block grants and does not earmark moneys for particular services such as those to students with special educational needs. Other institutions receive their funds from their maintaining authority. Information on the extent to which UGC or local authority funding may provide for improvements in facilities for students with special needs is not available centrally. It is for institutions themselves to determine what facilities are needed to meet the special needs of those students which they propose to admit.

Curriculum

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will set out in the *Official Report* the criteria he has laid down for the working parties on different curriculum areas.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend announced the setting up of the science and mathematics working groups on Friday 10 July, at columns 283 and 284, and copies of the groups' terms of reference and membership have been placed in the Library. Similar arrangements will be made for the setting up of subsequent working groups.

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what consideration is being given to the needs of gifted children in preparing the new national curriculum.

Mrs. Rumbold: The working groups being established for each foundation subject will be asked to recommend attainment targets and programmes of study which are challenging and appropriate for the whole ability range. Our proposals are designed to help all pupils including the most able to progress as far and as fast as is right for them.

Schools (London)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many schools in the *(a)* Inner London education area and *(b)* London area were built before 1914; and what percentage of the total number of schools in each group this represents.

Mr. Dunn: The Department does not hold this information.

Education Bill (Consultation Papers)

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he plans to publish further consultation papers in relation to the proposed Education Bill; what subjects will be covered; and what will be the periods for consultation.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Government have published consultation papers on the arrangements for collective worship and on our proposals for more open enrolment. We are today publishing a consultation paper on financial delegation to schools, to be followed by others on charges for school activities, grant-maintained schools, the national curriculum, the Government's proposals to allow inner London boroughs to take on the responsibilities of local education authorities; and in due course probably certain other issues. Like those already published, these further papers will seek comments by the early autumn.

School Meals (London)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many children in London are in receipt of free school meals; and what percentage of the total number of London children in schools this represents.

Mr. Dunn: The total number of free school meals taken in Greater London on the day of the school meals census in October 1986 was 159,224, or 19·9 per cent. of the total number of pupils present. Information about individual local education authorities is contained in the report on the census, copies of which are available in the Library.

Research Councils

Mr. Harry Greenway asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will publish the Advisory Board for the Research Councils' strategic advice on the science base; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The Advisory Board for the Research Councils' discussion document, "A Strategy for the Science Base", is being published today. It is an important contribution to the development of policy in this area, and I am grateful to Sir David Phillips and the members of the board for their valuable advice.

As announced in Cmnd. 9849 last year, the Government's policy is to maintain and enhance the strength and quality of the science base. We seek to increase the returns to the nation from the public investment in scientific research, through greater concentration and selectivity, better targeting, closer links with industry, and more purposive management of research effort in the Research Councils and higher education. Many of the ABRC's recommendations are designed to meet these objectives.

Copies of the discussion document are being distributed widely to the higher education and scientific communities and other interested bodies. I am inviting their views and comments on the Board's recommendations by 31 October. In the light of these consultations the Government will announce its own conclusions on future policies for the science base and how these will be given effect.

School Budgets

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about the Government's plans to delegate to schools control over their budgets.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I intend to bring forward legislation:

(a) to ensure that parents and the community know on what basis the resources available to schools are distributed in their area and how much is being spent on each school;

(b) to give the governors of all county and voluntary secondary schools, and of larger primary schools, freedom to take expenditure decisions which match their own priorities, and the guarantee that their own school will benefit if they achieve efficiency savings.

I am today publishing a consultation paper which explains the Government's proposals in detail. I should be glad to receive comments on it by 16 September 1987. Copies of the paper have been placed in the Library.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Jaguar Cars

Mr. John Marshall asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has about the level of investment, the trend in the value of exports and the trend in the number of people employed by Jaguar plc since it was privatised.

Mr. Atkins: Information from Jaguar plc shows the following picture since privatisation of the company in 1984:

	1984	*1985*	*1986*
Capital investment (£m)	38·1	57·2	93·9
Export sales (£m)	408	503	619
End-year employment	9,700	10,800	12,000

As regards future trends, the company has announced its intention to invest a further £1,000 million over the next six years; plans to continue to increase its export sales; and forecast that employment will reach around 13,000 by the end of this year.

Consumer Protection Act 1987

Mr. Fraser asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when part 1 of the Consumer Protection Act 1987 will come into force; and when consultation on the code of practice and proposed regulations under part III of the Act will be resumed.

Mr. Maude: I expect to be able to announce the implementation dates for those sections of the Act dealing with safety issues very soon. I hope that a revised draft of the code of practice on price indications and any draft regulations under part III of the Act will be available for public consultation in the autumn.

Furniture (Code of Practice)

Mr. Holt asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what consultations were held within the European Economic Community before the issuing of the new code of practice to the domestic furniture industry.

Mr. Maude: No consultations were held within the European Economic Community before the issue of a consultation document on the code of practice approach on extension of regulations. Within the United Kingdom the document was circulated widely to fire prevention authorities, consumer organisations, enforcement authorities and others as well as to the furniture manufacturers and their suppliers of component materials.

If and when this code of practice is built into draft regulations we shall notify the EC Commission as required by directive No. 189/83 on the provision of information on technical standards and regulations.

Mr. Holt asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what criteria were used to establish the new code of practice for the furniture industry.

Mr. Maude: As my predecessor informed the House on 1 July 1986, at columns 467-68, the terms of reference of the working party asked to prepare a code of practice were "to develop a standard or code of practice which would give worthwhile progress in fire resistance qualities in upholstered furniture and could be called up in enforceable regulations".

Mr. Holt asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what arrangements are being made to monitor the effects of the new code of practice for the furniture industry.

Mr. Maude: The draft code of practice has only recently been issued for consultation, and is not yet in force. The Government accept the importation of monitoring the effect of safety regulations. Thus reports on the effects of the Upholstered Furniture (Safety) Regulations 1980, made under the Consumer Safety Act, were provided by the enforcement authorities.

I shall give careful consideration in due course to how the effects of new safety regulations for upholstered furniture can best be monitored.

Mr. Holt asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) how many meetings were held between furniture manufacturers and Ministers prior to the issuing of the new codes of practice; and how many meetings have been arranged for the next six months;

(2) what plans he has to discuss the problem of fires involving furniture ignited by cigarettes, cigars, pipes, matches and electricity with the furniture industry.

Mr. Maude: My predecessor, my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard), held one meeting with the British Furniture Manufacturers Federation on 22 January 1986. There have been no meetings with Ministers since and none is yet planned for the next six months. Officials of the Department have frequent meetings with furniture manufacturers, and I am always prepared to meet representatives of that (or any other) sector of industry when matters of importance concerning consumer safety legislation are under review.

Furniture (Imports)

Mr. Holt asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the total value of furniture imports at 1986 equivalent prices in *(a)* 1970, *(b)* 1979, *(c)* 1983, *(d)* 1984, *(e)* 1985 and *(f)* 1986; and what were the equivalent figures for production of United Kingdom manufactured furniture.

Mr. Alan Clark: Information at 1986 equivalent prices for previous years is not available. United Kingdom furniture production figures for 1970 are not available. Imports of furniture, as defined by the standard international trade classification, division 82; and, United Kingdom furniture production figures, as defined by the standard industrial classification, activity headings 3166, 4671 and 4836 for the years *(a)* to *(f)* are shown in the following table: (1986 import figures are provisional)

£ million

Year	Imports	United Kingdom production
1970	15·6	n.a.
1979	253·8	2,180
1983	490·4	2,470
1984	591·6	2,710
1985	662·8	2,960
1986	776·0	3,210

Source: Imports — Overseas Trade Statistics United Kingdom production—DTI.
n.a. not available.

Mr. Holt asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much furniture by value at 1986 prices has been imported from Third world and far east countries in each of the years 1974, 1979, 1983, 1984, 1985, and 1986.

Mr. Alan Clark: Information by value at 1986 prices is not available for previous years. There is no recognised country grouping designated "Third World". Imports of furniture, as defined in the standard international trade classification, division 82, from the "Other Developing Countries" group, Japan and China for the years requested was as follows:

	£ million
1974	7·0
1979	16·1
1983	35·1
1984	35·0
1985	28·8
1986	37·8

Note: 1986 figures provisional.
Source: Overseas Trade Statistics.

Postal Conventions (Soviet Violations)

Mr. John Marshall asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations the Government have made to the Russian postal authorities about their frequent violations of international postal conventions.

Mr. Butcher: The Post Office and my officials take every opportunity to express concern to Soviet postal authorities in international postal fora about the non-delivery of mail addressed to Soviet citizens, and the Post Office continues to pursue with them all individual cases brought to its attention.

Research and Development (Funding)

Mr. Amess asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the current level of funding for research and development in co-operation with other European Community countries.

Mr. Butcher: A framework programme for research and development in the European Community over the period 1984 to 1987 provides funding of 3·75 billion ecu (about £2·6 billion). The 1987 Community budget includes 1·040 billion ecu (about £0·7 billion) for research and development.

Negotiations for a further framework programme for the years 1987-1991 are nearing completion. This is expected to include provision of 5·2 billion ecu (about £3·6 billion) which includes 1·08 billion ecu (about £0·8 billion) for programmes already decided. A further 0·4 billion ecu (about £0·3 billion) will be subject to satisfactory agreements on the funding of the overall Community budget.

Printing and Publishing (Exports)

Mr. Amess asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the amount of exports by printing and publishing companies in the past five years.

Mr. Alan Clark: Information on individual companies is not available. United Kingdom exports of printed matter, as defined in the standard international trade classification revision 2 (SITC R(2)), item 892.0 for the past five years was as follows:

	£ million
1982	538·5
1983	594·3
1984	726·7
1985	785·7
1986[1]	797·1

[1] Provisional.

Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America

Mr. Amess asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he will make a statement on the level of trade with sub-Saharan Africa in *(a)* raw materials, *(b)* manufactured goods, *(c)* foods and *(d)* high technology;

(2) if he will make a statement on the level of trade with Latin America in *(a)* raw materials, *(b)* manufactured goods, *(c)* food and *(d)* high technology.

Mr. Alan Clark: Information on trade levels in high technology is not available within cost limits.

United Kingdom trade with sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America for the first four months of 1987 in categories *(a)* to *(c)* is as follows:

£ million

	Sub-Saharan Africa		Latin America	
	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports
Raw materials (Section 2)	145·4	16·3	79·2	3·1
Manufactured goods (Sections 5-8)	135.4	713·4	130·6	313·8
Food (Section 0)	274·7	19·9	103·0	17·5

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics.

Pharmaceuticals

Mr. Amess asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the level of pharmaceutical exports to Third world countries in each of the past five years.

Mr. Alan Clark: There is no recognised country grouping designated "Third World". Trade with the "Other Developing Countries" group in each of the past five years was as follows:

United Kingdom exports of pharmaceutical products to "Other Developing Countries"

	£ million
1982	157·0
1983	153·1
1984	146·0
1985	174·4
1986	163·4

Notes: (1) Pharmaceutical products defined as SITC Division 54.
(2) 1986 figures provision.
Source: Overseas Trade Statistics.

Japanese Investment

Sir Anthony Grant asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what steps he is taking to encourage investment in the United Kingdom by Japanese industry and commerce; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: The Invest in Britain Bureau in my Department is responsible for encouraging Japanese investment into all parts of the United Kingdom. The bureau undertakes a programme of seminars in Japan, inward missions and other promotional work backed up by the production of brochures and magazines. In addition, the five English regional development organisations receive grant-in-aid from my Department for programmes of inward investment promotion on behalf of the north-east, north-west, Yorkshire and Humberside, west midlands and Devon and Cornwall. These programmes, together with those of bodies in other parts of the United Kingdom, have helped maintain the United Kingdom as the preferred location for Japanese inward investment into Europe.

Textile and Clothing Imports

Mr. Anthony Coombs asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what recent representations he has made to the United States' Government and Congress concerning the effect on the EEC of the Textile and Apparel Trade Bill which proposes global quotas on all textile and clothing imports.

Mr. Alan Clark: When he was in Washington in March, the previous Secretary of State made clear to the Administration and to members of Congress the United Kingdom Government's strong opposition to the Textile and Apparel Trade Bill.

Trade Names

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether it remains his policy to provide without charge the name and address of the owner of a particular trade name in a given class of trade mark to inquirers by telephone or letter.

Mr. Butcher: This information is currently provided without charge. If demand were to increase to the point when it made a significant demand on resources, I should have to consider the imposition of a charge to cover costs.

Regional Selective Assistance (South-West)

Mr. Matthew Taylor asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the number and value of regional selective assistance applications processed, respectively, at Plymouth for the south-west assisted area, and at Bristol for the Forest of Dean, in each of the last three years.

Mr. Atkins: The number of regional selective assistance cases appraised by the Department's offices in Bristol and Plymouth over the past three years is as follows:

	1985	*1986*	*1987 (to date)*
Bristol	18	17	9
Plymouth	21	21	16

The value of grant offered over the same period is as follows:

£000

	1985	*1986*	*1987 (to date)*
Bristol	1,366	3,175	1,129
Plymouth	1,614	1,709	721

Note: The figures for Bristol include Devon and Cornwall cases appraised by Bristol-based staff.

Semiconductors

Sir Ian Lloyd asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has on the number of companies or other organisations in the United Kingdom which are currently capable of producing direct random access memory semiconductor devices in the 256K, 1 megabit, 4 megabit and 16 megabit categories, respectively.

Mr. Butcher: I am aware of one company that is establishing manufacture of 256 kilobit dynamic random access memories (DRAM) in the United Kingdom and which has plans to produce 1 megabit DRAMs.

Higher density devices of 4 megabit and 16 megabit capacity are not yet in volume production anywhere in the world.

Sir Ian Lloyd asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what are the current levels and expected trends of imports of direct random access memory semiconductor devices in the 256K, 1 megabit, 4 megabit and 16 megabit categories, respectively.

Mr. Butcher: These devices are not separately identified in the trade statistics and it is not our practice to make projections of future levels of trade in particular commodities.

Sir Ian Lloyd asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many new semiconductor fabrication plants have been built within the United Kingdom in the years 1984, 1985 and 1986, respectively; and what total level of investment has been involved.

Mr. Butcher: I am informed that new semiconductor plants completed in recent years within the United Kingdom were as follows:

	Number
1984	2
1985	1
1986	3

In addition, two other facilities were under construction in 1986 for completion in 1987. The total level of investment in these eight facilities is approximately £230 million.

Sir Ian Lloyd asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many synchrotran orbital radiation devices are now being employed in semiconductor fabrication plants within the United Kingdom; and what circuit widths have been attained.

Mr. Butcher: None.

Sir Ian Lloyd asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether his Department has carried out an analysis of the implications for the United Kingdom of the findings of the United States Congressional defence science board task force on semiconductor dependency, with particular reference to the second phase of the Alvey programme.

Mr. Butcher: No, although the paper will contribute to the Department's views on semiconductor activity in the United Kingdom.

Newspaper Distribution

Mr. Holland asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will refer to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission the issue of the impending wholesaler concentration of newspaper distribution.

Mr. Maude: No. The Director General of Fair Trading is aware of certain proposals to rationalise the wholesale distribution of newspapers in London and is considering whether action is appropriate under the competition legislation for which he is responsible.

British Airways (Share Dealings)

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will institute inquiries into dealings in the shares of British Airways between 1 July and 12 July.

Mr. Maude: The stock exchange insider dealing group looks at all unusual share price movements, and refers appropriate cases to my Department for consideration whether further investigation should be made. It is not the normal practice to reveal which cases are under such consideration by my Department.

Telecommunications Projects (Pacific Basin)

Mr. Michael Marshall asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether any communication has been received from the United States Government or others regarding the possible effects on other planned international telecommunications projects in the Pacific region of the procrastination of the Japanese Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications over the licensing arrangements for its new KDD network.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Cable and Wireless has expressed to Her Majesty's Government its concern over the delay in the licensing of competitive services to KDD, the existing operator. This delay is holding up the planned construction of the north Pacific cable. We certainly hope that an early and satisfactory outcome is reached and we are continuing to monitor the position closely.

British Airways and British Caledonian

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on what date and at what time his Department was first informed of the proposed merger between British Airways and British Caledonian.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: My Department became aware of the possibility of a merger between British Airways and British Caledonian about a week before the proposal was made public. The proposed merger is being considered by the Director General of Fair Trading, who has a duty to advise the Secretary of State whether the matter should be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. For reasons of commercial confidentiality and in order to maintain the independence of the Director General of Fair Trading, we do not disclose the details of contacts which we or the Office of Fair Trading may have had with other parties.

Joint Textile Committee

Mr. Madden asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received on the proposed abolition of the joint textile committee run by the National Economic Development Council; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: None.

Press and Public Relations (Expenditure)

Mr. Dobson asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the total spending by the Department of Trade and Industry on press and public relations in 1986-87; and what is the estimated expenditure for the current year.

Mr. Butcher [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 July 1987]: The total spending on the running costs of the Department's information division and BOTB's publicity unit for 1986-87 was £1·7 million. Provision has been made for estimated expenditure of £1·9 million in the current year.

DEFENCE

Defence Exports Services Organisation

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give details of the Defence Exports Services Organisation operations for each of the years 1979 to 1986 including *(a)* the total number of staff of the Defence Exports Services Organisation and their gradings, *(b)* the countries visited by Defence Exports Services Organisation staff and the dates of the visits, *(c)* the equipment exports agreed and *(d)* the value of exports to each country expressed in constant 1986-87 prices.

Mr. Sainsbury: It is not the practice to give details of countries visited by Defence Export Services Organisation staff or of individual exports to particular countries. Statistics of United Kingdom defence sales by broad geographic regions are set out in volume 2 of the

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"Statement on the Defence Estimates". Detailed figures of Defence Export Services Organisation staff are not available from 1979 and could be provided only at disproportionate time and effort. The total numbers at 1 April 1983 and 1 April 1987 were 353 and 251, respectively.

Official Visits Abroad

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing countries visited by the Secretary of State for Defence since May 1979 with the dates and the visits and daily lists of engagements.

Mr. Younger: Since May 1979, Defence Secretaries have made official visits abroad as follows:

	Countries visited
1979	
22 to 22 July	Germany
15 to 18 July	United States of America
15 to 16 October	Germany
13 to 14 November	The Netherlands
10 to 12 December	Belgium
1980	
25 to 27 February	Germany
22 to 31 March	China and Hong Kong
11 to 13 May	Belgium
4 to 6 June	Norway
18 to 19 September	Germany
23 to 24 October	Belgium
8 to 10 December	Belgium
1981	
26 February	Germany
10 to 13 March	United States of America
23 March to 1 April	Saudi Arabia, Oman, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar and Bahrain
6 to 8 April	Germany
11 to 13 May	Belgium
20 to 21 June	United States of America
23 June	Belgium
30 November	The Netherlands
14 to 16 December	Belgium
1982	
1 to 2 February	Italy
22 to 25 March	United States of America
26 April	Germany
5 to 7 May	Belgium
16 to 29 September	Indonesia, India, Diego Garcia, Brunei and Singapore
29 November to 1 December	Belgium
1983	
22 to 23 February	Germany
21 to 23 March	Portugal
31 March to 1 April	Germany
31 May	Belgium
2 to 3 June	Belgium
14 June	Belgium
21 July	France
2 September	Greece
12 to 14 September	United States of America
21 September	France
17 to 18 October	Turkey
26 to 30 October	Canada
8 to 9 November	Germany
5 to 7 December	Belgium
1984	
26 to 27 January	Italy
29 January to 2 February	Saudi Arabia and Kuwait
13 to 16 February	Sweden and Norway
2 to 4 April	Turkey
10 April	Germany
10 to 11 May	Sweden
15 to 17 May	Belgium
6 June	France
20 June	France
9 July	Spain
14 September	Belgium
21 September	Holland
11 to 13 October	Italy
23 to 25 October	Jordan and Egypt
26 to 27 October	Italy
2 November	Germany
22 to 23 November	The Netherlands
29 to 30 November	France
3 December	Belgium
1985	
18 January	Germany
19 to 23 February	United States of America
25 to 27 March	Luxembourg
2 April	France
22 to 23 April	Germany
7 May	Belgium
11 to 15 May	Falkland Islands
16 to 17 May	Italy
21 to 23 May	Belgium
4 to 5 June	Denmark
16 July	Germany
21 to 23 July	United States of America
27 September to 2 October	Oman
28 to 30 October	Belgium
5 to 13 November	Burma, Malaysia and Singapore
13 to 14 November	Italy
2 to 3 December	Belgium
1986	
5 to 6 March	Norway
12 March	Italy
19 to 21 March	Germany
27 to 28 April	Spain
5 to 7 May	Saudi Arabia
21 to 22 May	Belgium
9 to 10 June	Greece
23 to 28 June	United States of America
1 July	France
31 July to 3 August	United States of America
16 to 17 September	Germany
13 to 14 November	Luxembourg
21 November	France
22 to 27 November	Jordan and Oman
5 to 6 December	Belgium
1987	
10 to 17 January	Falkland Islands
30 to 31 January	Germany
7 to 10 February	Cyprus and Saudi Arabia
16 to 18 February	United States of America
9 to 10 March	France
22 March to 2 April	Thailand, Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore
22 to 27 April	Cyprus and Turkey
13 to 14 May	Norway
17 June	France
21 to 22 June	Spain
30 June	Germany

More detailed information can be supplied only at disproportionate cost.

Procurement Division

Dame Peggy Fenner asked the Secretary of State for Defence if any inquiry has been carried out into the efficiency of the procurement division of his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The efficiency of the Procurement Executive is kept under continual review not least by the Public Accounts and Defence Committees on behalf of the House of Commons. I refer my hon. Friend also to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Hastings and Rye (Mr. Warren) by my predecessor on 24 February at column *216*. The study mentioned in that reply has just been completed and is being submitted to Ministers.

Army Cataloguing Authority

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has yet reached a decision about the possible re-location of the Army cataloguing authority from Woolwich to Glasgow; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Army cataloguing authority moved from Woolwich to St. Mary Cray, Orpington, Kent, earlier this month. There is no intention at present, therefore, of moving it to Glasgow.

Security Forces (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence if, pursuant to the statement of 7 July, *Official Report*, column 258, by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Peterborough (Dr. Mawhinney), he will specify the nature, scope and dates of the investigations carried out since 1979 into allegations by Mr. Colin Wallace and Mr. Fred Holroyd concerning the conduct of the security forces in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Freeman: The allegations made by Mr. Holroyd in 1983-84 about alleged criminal activities by the security forces in Northern Ireland have been investigated by the RUC. In December 1984 the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland concluded that the evidence did not warrant the initiation of criminal proceedings against any person, nor did he feel that any further investigation was necessary. There has also been an investigation and committee of inquiry—the former led by Sir George Terry in 1982 and the latter by Judge William Hughes in 1984—into various aspects of events at the Kincora boys' home about which statements were made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on 4 February 1986, *Official Report*, columns 98-99, and by the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on 18 January 1984, *Official Report*, column 319. Mr. Wallace was given every opportunity, which he failed to take, to attend both the investigation and the committee of inquiry.

In addition to these formal investigations, a number of hon. Members have raised matters concerning Mr. Holroyd and Mr. Wallace with Ministers. These have also been fully investigated. I have, therefore, nothing further to add to the reply which I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor), on 3 March 1987, at column *577*.

RAF Boulmer

Mr. Beith asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has any plans to remove the search and rescue service from RAF Boulmer.

Mr. Freeman: There are no current plans to remove the search and rescue service from RAF Boulmer.

Exercises

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list those exercises which have taken place during the past five years at *(a)* RAF Stafford, *(b)* RAF Swynnerton, and *(c)* Ministry of Defence property at Royal Cottage outside Longnor, Staffordshire.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The information requested is not held centrally, and could not be provided except at disproportionate cost, particularly in view of the extensive use of the Swynnerton training area by the armed forces generally.

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Defence, further to the statement by the hon. Member for Kettering on 15 July (Mr. Freeman), whether he will list the officials of *(a)* Staffordshire county council or *(b)* Staffordshire Moorlands district council who were informed by his Department about the exercises involving radioactive contaminants; and on what dates such discussions took place.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It is our practice, followed in all cases, to inform officials of external authorities as appropriate before each exercise involving the use of radioactive materials. It is not our practice to comment on specific details of such exercises, since such details are classified.

Armed Forces Training (Radioactivity)

Mr. Chapman asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give comparative examples to underline the level of radioactivity in materials used in armed forces training, pursuant to the reply of the hon. Member for Kettering (Mr. Freeman) to the supplementary question asked by the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet following the private notice question on 15 July.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The very low level of radioactivity of the materials used, and the stringent protective measures we take, are such that the radiation dose experienced by any individual involved in such a nuclear accident exercise will be less than one twentieth of the dose from a routine chest X-ray; or less than one two thousandth of the normal, annual unavoidable dose from background radiation in the natural environment.

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the circumstances in which his Department uses radioactive dust for training purposes; what safeguards exist to ensure that personnel do not receive dangerous dosages; and whether these methods are still employed in training.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I have nothing to add to the statement made by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces on 15 July at columns 1129 to 1135. I also refer the hon. Member to the answer given today to my hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman).

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many service men have taken part in exercises involving the use of radioactive dust; and at what locations;

(2) what exercises are currently taking place in relation to nuclear weapons accident training.

Mr. Ian Stewart: A very small proportion of our extensive programme of exercises to ensure the

effectiveness of the MOD nuclear accident response organisation involves the use of the very low level radioactive materials mentioned by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces on 15 July, at column 1129. This programme of exercises includes small-scale unit level exercises, command post exercises to test call-out procedures, and full-scale accident exercises, and involves a range of MOD units and establishments and, where appropriate, external authorities. It is not our practice to give details of such exercises, the numbers of personnel involved nor locations.

Mrs. Golding asked the Secretary of State for Defence if there was any consultation with the National Radiological Protection Board or any other monitoring authority before his Department's use of radioactive material for armed forces training; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: My Department has always liaised with the appropriate Departments with environmental and radiological responsibilities in the use of radioactive material in the training and exercising of MOD personnel, including with the National Radiological Protection Board since its inception in the early 1970s.

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether a maximum number of training exercises involving exposure to radioactivity has been set for members of Her Majesty's forces;

(2) whether continuing medical checks are carried out on the service personnel who participated in Exercise Senator in 1981; and if he will make a statement;

(3) whether regular medical checks have been carried out on service personnel who have been involved in training exercises at RAF St. Athan, involving exposure to radioactivity; and if he will make a statement;

(4) whether any estimate has been made of the cumulative dosage of radioactivity received by service personnel engaged in training at RAF St. Athan between 1970 and 1985.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Radioactive material is used only in the training and exercising of members of units and establishments involved in the MOD nuclear accident response organisation where there is compelling training advantage to be gained. The material involved is of very low levels of radioactivity, and its use is subject to stringent safety controls. There is therefore no hazard to the individuals involved or to the general public. This, and the fact the exercises using such materials take place at infrequent intervals, means that there is no requirement to conduct a long-term monitoring programme, nor to set a limit on the number of such exercises in which MOD service and civilian personnel may participate.

Service men are, of course, subject to regular, routine medical checks throughout their period of service. However, any individual who may have participated in such exercises in the past who is concerned about his or her health may contact the Ministry of Defence, and we will arrange for another medical check to be made.

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions since 1 August 1986 radioactivity has been released into the atmosphere in the course of training exercises.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It is not our practice to comment on the use of such materials in specific exercises or over specific periods.

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Defence if, pursuant to the statement of 15 July by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Kettering (Mr. Freeman), he will list in the *Official Report* the cost to date of the nuclear weapons accident training manoeuvres in each year to the latest date.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Costs of nuclear accident training exercises are borne by the units and establishments involved, and are not normally identified separately from other related expenditure.

Nuclear Accident Response Organisation

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will make a statement on the objectives, operation and staffing of his Department's nuclear accident response organisation;

(2) what liaison exists between his Department and *(a)* the United States of America and *(b)* other North Atlantic Treaty Organisation countries in the organisation of nuclear weapons accident training.

Mr. Cryer asked the Secretary of State for Defence what are the precise objectives of the nuclear accident response organisation, the number of people employed, the qualifications of the managers, the links with similar United States organisations and the date when it was established.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The aim of the MOD nuclear accident response organisation is to ensure, in conjunction with appropriate civil agencies, an effective response to safeguard the general public and MOD personnel in the unlikely event of an emergency involving defence nuclear materials. As well as staff in MOD headquarters, it draws upon a range of skills from units and establishments across the armed forces and Ministry of Defence in order to meet the particular circumstances of an accident. It maintains close links with other interested agencies, including those in the United States and other NATO countries, involving joint training and exercises where appropriate. Safety arrangements to deal with a range of accidents have existed for as long as the MOD has used nuclear material.

Mr. Cryer asked the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions the nuclear accident response organisation has simulated accidents to American nuclear weapons in Britain; what reports have been made; if the reports will be placed in the Library; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It is our practice not reveal specific details of exercises involving the nuclear accident response organisation. Reports on nuclear weapon accident exercises are classified and cannot be made public. There is, however, good liaison between the United Kingdom and United States nuclear accident response staffs, including joint training and exercises.

Uranium

Mr. Boateng asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether there has been any change in the source of supply of uranium for *(a)* Polaris since 1979 and *(b)* Trident; and if he will make a statement.

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Mr. Sainsbury: It would not be in the national interest to give these details.

Mr. Boateng asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will now make it his practice to answer parliamentary questions relating to the adequacy of the uranium in the United Kingdom nuclear stockpile to fulfil all defence needs over the next decade; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: No. It has been the longstanding practice of successive Governments not to disclose information of this nature

Nuclear Emergency Team, St. Athan

Mr. Alan Williams asked the Secretary of State for Defence if the basing of the Royal Air Force's nuclear emergency team at St. Athan involves the storage of nuclear waste or radioactive material to be used in the training of this team.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It has been the practice of successive Governments not to comment specifically on the storage of defence nuclear material.

Exercise Senator

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether monitoring for the presence of radioactivity took place on the land adjacent to the area owned by his Department on which Exercise Senator took place in 1981; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Appropriate monitoring is carried out during and after exercises involving the use of radioactive material by the MOD nuclear accident response organisation, to ensure that there is no possibility of hazard to the general public.

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many service personnel were involved in Exercise Senator in 1981.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It is not the practice to discuss details of particular exercises.

Warrant Officer Ross

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the answer of 13 July, *Official Report*, column 298, on what date in 1984 Warrant Officer Ross commenced his terminal leave; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Warrant Officer Ross commenced his terminal leave on 11 September 1984 and retired from the Royal Marines on 9 October 1984.

RAF Bases (Fire Service)

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list all Royal Air Force bases in the United Kingdom which operate a 24-hour-a-day fire service.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The total number of RAF bases in the United Kingdom which operate a 24-hour-a-day fire service, either for flying operations or for domestic purposes or both, is 65. The bases are:

Abingdon
Aldergrove
Ash
Barkston Heath
Bawdsey
Benson
Binbrook
Boulmer
Brawdy
Brize Norton
Buchan
Carlisle
Chilmark
Chivenor
Church Fenton
Coltishall
Coningsby
Cosford
Cottesmore
Cranwell
Finningley
Fylingdales
Halton
Henlow
High Wycombe
Honington
Hullavington
Kemble
Kinloss
Leeming
Leuchars
Linton on Ouse
Lossiemouth
Lyneham
Machrihanish
Manston
Marham
Neatishead
Newton
Northolt
North Coates
North Luffenham
Oakhanger
Odiham
Pitreavie
Quedgeley
Rudloe Manor
Saxa Vord
Scampton
Sealand
Shawbury
Spadeadam
Stafford
Staxton Wold
Swinderby
St. Athan
St. Mawgan
Upavon
Valley
Waddington
Wattisham
West Drayton
West Raynham
Wittering
Wyton

Exercise Purple Warrior

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the proposed locations of the amphibious landings and parachute assault landings in Galloway, Arran and Kintyre during Exercise Purple Warrior in November in the current year; how many troops will be involved in each of these landings; what type of aircraft will be involved in Exercise Purple Warrior, listing the numbers of each type; whether there will be any United States military participation in Exercise Purple Warrior; if he will provide details of the facilities being made available to Warsaw treaty organisation observers at Exercise Purple Warrior; what is the estimated cost of Exercise Purple Warrior; if he will list the names of all properties on and over which Exercise Purple Warrior will be conducted, indicating the owner of the land in each case; and if he will list the nature, location and extent of any planned live firing during Exercise Purple Warrior.

Mr. Ian Stewart [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 July 1987]: I refer the hon. Member to the text of an MOD press release, a copy of which I am placing in the Library. There is nothing to add to that press release at present, but details of all exercises are subject to adjustment as preparations continue and I shall let the hon. Member know in due course if there are material changes.

ENVIRONMENT

Small Businesses

Mr. David Shaw asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department in helping small businesses over the last three years; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

Mr. Trippier: The Department has introduced a number of measures, many of which are part of the deregulation initiative described in Cmnds. 9571, 9794 and "Encouraging Enterprise". In particular we have:

allowed for the introduction of simplified planning zones in the Housing and Planning Act 1986;

modernised the use classes order to allow a wider range of changes of use of buildings to take placde without planning permission;

enabled time limits to be set for planning appeals determined by the written representations procedure and to disregard representations made after a date specified for each appeal and published details of steps to be taken to speed up planning appeals involving inquiries;

brought back into use or disposed of unused public land on the land registers—the amount has increased from 6,700 acres in 1984 and 10,700 acres in 1985 to 12,000 acres in 1986.

set up and funded two pilot "one stop shops" in partnership with Nottingham city and Blackburn district councils, providing a single advice point within each local authority, to help small firm inquiries;

provided that specific planning permission is no longer needed for certain extensions to industrial and warehouse buildings except in environmentally sensitive areas;

published "A Step by Step Guide to Planning Permission for Small Businesses";

published circular 2/86 "Development by Small Businesses" urging local planning authorities to be helpful in dealing with small firms' planning applications and adopt a common-sense approach to enforcement;

introduced simpler and more flexible building regulations covering England and Wales including inner London.

the Development Commission spending increased from £22·1 million in 1984-85 to £27·5 million in 1986-87. Over the last three years the commission has provided 1,176,668 sq ft of advance factory space, over 1,000 redundant building grants and 160 factories in partnership with local authorities. COSIRA has advised 27,413 separate rural firms and arranged through the private sector and its own funds nearly £38 million worth of loans;

provided £35·4 million over the last three years through the urban programme (UP) for starter, enterprise or other small units;

this expenditure led to the creation of about 10,300 jobs over the last two years. In addition to this, direct grants and loans to firms by local authorities receive support under the UP: in 1986-87 £9·8 million was provided.

provided various forms of indirect support for firms through the UP:

highway access works to assist development: £6·2 million in 1986-87;

site preparation works to assist development: £6·6 million in 1986-87;

general environmental works to assist development: £14·4 million in 1986-87;

support for general advisory services, for example, local enterprise agencies, business advice centres: £5·1 million in 1986-87; and

business promotion, for example, trade fairs, tourism: £5 million in 1986-87.

The effect of these measures and programmes on small firms cannot always be separately identified. However, a study in June 1985 into the economic component of the UP found that the great majority of the firms affected by and benefiting from UP supported projects are small manufacturing firms either indigenous to the inner city area or starter firms. Ninety two per cent. of those firms occupying UP funded units employ fewer than 10 people as do 64 per cent. of those using advisory services and 66 per cent. of those firms receiving direct support.

Home Insulation

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes to make a statement extending the 90 per cent. home insulation grant to all householders in receipt of supplementary or housing benefit following his announcement on 19 December 1986, *Official Report*, column *757*.

Mr. Waldegrave: A further announcement will be made in due course.

National Mobility Scheme

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he takes to monitor the progress of the national mobility scheme; and if he will list the powers available to him to ensure that all local authorities use their best endeavours to ensure that the scheme operates to maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

Mr. Waldegrave: The progress of the national mobility scheme, the performances of local authorities and other bodies participating in it, and the efficiency and effectiveness of the national mobility office which monitors and promotes it are matters for the National Mobility Steering Committee in which my Department plays a full part together with representatives of the local authority associations, and of other participating bodies. The scheme is voluntary, and my right hon. Friend has no powers over the activities of the participating authorities and bodies in this respect. However, since authorities have reported for 1986-87 the highest ever number of moves under the scheme, 9,058, my right hon. Friend is satisfied that the current arrangements, together with the wholehearted support which the local authority associations give to the scheme, provide the appropriate framework for ensuring authorities' effective and efficient participation.

Private Rented Sector

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the current state of the private rented sector.

Mr. Waldegrave: The current state of the private rented sector is unsatisfactory. The sector has an important role in increasing choice and job mobility, yet it has declined from 57 per cent. of the housing stock before the war to only 8 per cent. today. We intend to introduce legislation to deregulate new private lettings, building on the existing assured tenancy and shorthold letting schemes. This will stimulate new investment by combining reasonable returns for landlords with statutory protection for tenants. These changes will not affect existing tenants.

Water Authorities

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to issue advice to water authorities concerning the practice of enclosing advertising copy from private health insurance groups with their employees' wage packets; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The matter referred to by the hon. Member is a matter for individual water authorities. My right hon. Friend has no plans to issue any advice.

Nugee Report

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on progress regarding his consideration of matters raised in the Nugee report.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Landlord and Tenant Act 1987 implements the main findings of the Nugee report. I hope to bring it into effect during the autumn.

Rating Reform

Mr. Raison asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of local government spending in England is at present provided by the domestic rate; and what proportion he anticipates will be provided by the proposed community charge.

Mr. Howard: Net domestic rate income accounts for about a quarter of local authority total expenditure in England. The Green Paper "Paying for Local Government", Cmnd. 9714, assumed that the community charge would raise a similar proportion. The precise proportion will be a matter to be determined nearer the time.

Housing Statistics

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what proportion of new housing starts by local authorities in England in each of the last eight years has been *(a)* wheelchair housing and *(b)* mobility housing;

(2) what proportion of new housing starts by housing associations in England in each of the last eight years has been *(a)* wheelchair housing and *(b)* mobility housing.

Mr. Waldegrave: The information reported is as follows:

Dwellings for the chronically sick and disabled, England
Percentages of all dwellings started for:

	Local authorities and new towns		*Housing associations*	
	Wheelchair per cent.	*Mobility per cent.*	*Wheelchair per cent.*	*Mobility per cent.*
1979-80	1·2	11·5	1·0	13·5
1980-81	1·3	13·3	0·4	1·3
1981-82	1·3	8·2	0·2	0·9
1982-83	1·0	9·5	0·3	0·5
1983-84	1·3	8·1	0·3	1·0
1984-85	1·6	5·8	0·8	1·8
1985-86	1·2	7·2	0·3	1·6
[1]1986-87	1·2	6·3	0·4	1·5

[1] Provisional.

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many *(a)* improvement grants and *(b)* intermediate grants have been given by local authorities in England in each of the last eight financial years towards the cost of house adaptations required by disabled people;

(2) what proportion of *(a)* improvement grants and *(b)* intermediate grants given by local authorities in England in each of the last eight financial years have been for house adaptations required by disabled people.

Mr. Waldegrave: The numbers reported are as follows:

Grants paid to private owners and tenants for disabled person's dwellings, England

	Improvement		*Intermediate*	
	Number	*Percentage of all improvement grants*	*Number*	*Percentage of all intermediate grants*
1979-80	1,262	2	704	9
1980-81	1,810	3	858	10
1981-82	2,857	6	977	6
1982-83	6,276	10	1,494	7
1983-84	11,638	13	2,177	8
1984-85	12,399	17	2,714	10
1985-86	14,288	29	2,309	9
[1]1986-87	16,617	36	1,978	10

[1] Provisional.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many of the houses designated as unfit in Wales, Scotland, England and each of the English regions are lived in by pensioner households; and what proportion of those living in such housing pensioners represent;

(2) how may pensioners in Scotland, Wales, England and each of the English regions live in housing which has been designated as unfit; and, in each case, what proportion of the total number of pensioners in each area that number represents.

Mr. Waldegrave: I will answer this question shortly.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total number of households in London who do not live in self-contained accommodation.

Mr. Waldegrave: In the 1981 census, 126,000 of the 2,657,000 households usually resident in Greater London were in accommodation which was not self-contained.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total number of houses in need of substantial repairs in *(a)* the private sector and *(b)* the public sector in London, at the latest date for which figures are available.

Mr. Waldegrave: Information is not available in the form requested. The number of dwellings which are unfit, fit but lacking basic amenities, and others needing major renovation are provided by local authorities in their annual housing investment programme returns. Figures as at 1 April 1986 for London, including estimates for any missing or incomplete returns, are as follows:

Thousands

	Private sector	*Public sector*
Unfit dwellings	163·0	46·8

	Private sector	Public sector
Dwellings fit but lacking basic amenities	55·6	28·9
Non-Substandard dwellings in need of repairs of over £4,200	235·7	218·3

Note: "Public sector" includes housing association dwellings.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the number of households currently living in overcrowded accommodation in London, for the latest date available.

Mr. Waldegrave: Information on the number of households living at densities of more than one person per room is provided by authorities in their housing investment programme returns. Latest available figures for London are for 1 April 1986 and show 99,000 households at densities up to 1·5 persons per room and 40,000 at higher densities.

Homelessness

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total number of homeless persons in London, as accepted by local authorities; and what is the total number of people currently living in bed-and-breakfast accommodation in London.

Mr. Waldegrave: "Local authorities' action under the homelessness provisions of the 1985 Housing Act: England. Results for first quarter 1987. Supplementary tables", which is available in the Library, contains the numbers of households accepted under these provisions by the London boroughs and the numbers in bed and breakfast accommodation at the end of March.

Smith Houses

Mr. Vaz asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to provide funds to Leicester city council to repair and, if necessary, repurchase Smith homes in Leicester; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Leicester city council was notified last December of its housing investment programme allocation for 1987-88; local authorities are normally expected to be able to meet expenditure on housing defects grants or repurchase from within their normal housing programme resources. £14 million extra HIP resources were set aside nationally for authorities facing particularly high HDA obligations in relation to the rest of their capital programmes. We considered Leicester's application carefully but concluded that no further allocation was justified, given stronger competing claims by other authorities.

Bathing Areas

Mr. Win Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made of the possibility of legal proceedings being instituted against the proposed privatised water authorities for failure to comply with directive 76/160/EEC on the water quality standards of designated bathing areas.

Mr. Moynihan: The 'bathing water' directive (76/160/EEC) is addressed to the member states. It would be for Her Majesty's Government to respond to any legal proceedings the Commission might bring concerning the application of the directive in the United Kingdom. Privatisation of the water industry will not change this.

Mr. Win Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received representations from the Commission of the European Communities about a possible European Court of Justice action against the United Kingdom Government or the responsible water authorities for failing to comply with directive 76/160/EEC on the water quality standards of designated bathing areas.

Mr. Moynihan: There have been requests from the Commission for information in respect of individual bathing waters which have been the subject of representations to the Commission. We have responded to these requests.

Panel System Buildings

Mr. Porter asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the progress made by the Building Research Establishment in its study of the structural adequacy and durability of large panel system properties.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Building Research Establishment is today publishing an information paper summarising the findings and recommendations of its forthcoming major report on the structural adequacy and durability of large panel system (LPS) dwellings. The report itself will be published early next month. I am arranging for copies of both documents to be placed in the Library.

The BRE has investigated a wide range of large panel systems, and studied reports prepared by local authorities and consultants. They have concluded that the quality and condition of the precast concrete components are comparable with those used in other buildings of that period; no LPS buildings were found to be structually unsafe. However, BRE recommend that all such buildings should be individually appraised by their owners, especially as there have been variations from original designs. The report explains how this might be approached.

I am sure local authorities, other public bodies and indeed private owners of these properties will find the report's guidance helpful, especially in reaching decisions on future repair and maintenance needs. Lending institutions and their surveyors and valuers should likewise find that the material in the report will be useful to them.

Copies of the information paper are being sent to local authorities in England, their associations and to the professional institutions. The report itself will be distributed early next month. My hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are taking similar action in respect of their areas.

Thamesmead

Mr. Evennett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a further statement regarding the transfer of Thamesmead from the London Residuary Body to Thamesmead Town.

Mr. Waldegrave [*pursuant to his reply* 15 July, c. 534]: I have today directed the London Residuary Body, under section 65 of the Local Government Act 1985, to transfer Thamesmead to Thamesmead Town by 27 July 1987.

The financial terms for the transfer are designed with the twin objectives of enabling the company to remain viable and protecting the interests of London ratepayers.

Because the financial position of the company depends critically on the number of sales to sitting tenants and of vacant dwellings which it can achieve, it will make an initial payment to the LRB of £2·5 million but will pay a proportion of the receipts from sales thereafter. The company will therefore have an incentive to maximise sales and so to maximise the price paid to the LRB.

I have placed a full description of the financial and other terms in the Library of the House.

I should like to congratulate the residents of Thamesmead on choosing to run their own affairs independently of any public sector control. I wish them, the locally elected board members, staff and their chairman Clive Thornton every success in completing and managing their town.

Water Pollution

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes to implement the recommendations made by the Environment Committee in May 1987 that there should be national timetabled water quality objectives in order to bring about a steady rate of improvement in polluted rivers and estuaries.

Mr. Moynihan [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 July 1987]: Forthcoming legislation to establish a national rivers authority will include provision for a comprehensive statutory system of quality objectives in line with the Government's consultation proposals of April 1986. This will take full account of the detailed recommendations of the Environment Committee in its recent report, to which the Government hope to reply shortly after the summer recess.

Canary Wharf

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what reasons have been given to the London Docklands Development Corporation as to why the master building agreement in respect of the Canary Wharf was not signed by Mr. G. Ware-Travelsted on, (a) the original date of 28 February stipulated by the London Docklands Development Corporation, (b) 90 days after the London Docklands Light Railway Bill received Royal Assent, 18 march 1987, as confirmed to the London Docklands Development Corporation by Mr. Ware-Travelsted's chief executive, and (c) on other dates stipulated by the London Docklands Development Corporation since then, and if he will make a statement on the present state of negotiations between the London Docklands Development Corporation and (i) Mr. Ware-Travelsted and (ii) any other party.

Mr. Ridley [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 July 1987]: I can now inform the House that the master building agreement between the London Docklands Development Corporation and the developers of Canary Wharf was signed later that day, together with the agreement with London Regional Transport relating to the extension of the docklands light railway. This development will bring to docklands new investment and jobs on a massive scale, and represents a major success for the London Docklands Development Corporation and our urban development corporation policy.

Furniture, Fittings and Equipment

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether, pursuant to his answer of 8 July, *Official Report*, column *160*, he will list separately the purchases of furniture, fittings and equipment for the year 1986-87.

Mr. Chope: In 1986-87 approximately 1,200 orders were issued for the purchase of one or more items of furniture, fittings or equipment by the Parliamentary Works Office, including The Crown Suppliers. As already stated, expenditure is not recorded separately in the form requested, and I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on Wednesday 8 July, at column 160.

Ealing

Mr. Harry Greenway asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take measures to seek to reduce the spending of Ealing council; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The block grant system provides an incentive for local authorities to keep their spending under restraint. My right hon. Friend may also select the highest spending authorities for rate limitation and he intends to make an announcement on that before the summer recess.

Local Authorities (Tendering)

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received seeking the inclusion of professional services including architectural and engineering services within the ambit of those services for which local authorities will have to seek tenders within the terms of the Local Government Bill.

Mr. Chope: I shall answer this question shortly.

Richmond Terrace

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total available floor space of the rehabilitated and new building works in Richmond Terrace in Whitehall between Richmond Terrace and Derby Gate; when it will be ready for occupation; who will occupy it; and what is the estimated total cost.

Mr. Chope: The total available floor space in the Richmond Yard development is 158,000 sq ft and it will be completed later this year. As I announced on 17 March, the majority of the space will be used as the new headquarters accommodation of the Secretary of State for Social Services. The remainder of the accommodation will be occupied by Cabinet Office, Welsh Office and Inland Revenue. The current estimate of cost of construction and the fitting out is £36 million.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what archaeological work was carried out during the building works in Richmond Terrace and in Whitehall between Richmond Terrace and Derby Gate; and what artefacts were found.

Mr. Chope: The detailed information is not readily available and I shall write to the hon. Member.

DEFECTIVE PRINTING

Direct Labour Organisations

Mr. Holland asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to what share of the work force in direct labour organisations involved in local authority construction was trained; at what cost; and for what average period of time in the United Kingdom for the most recent available year.

Mr. Chope: The Department does not collect this information.

Councils (Freedom of City)

Mr. Speller asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to the reply of 15 July, if he will seek powers to allow councils which do not have the status of a city or royal borough to confer their freedom upon persons or upon units of the armed forces; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: All districts which have been granted by royal charter the status of city, borough or royal borough have the power to confer honorary freedom. The freedom of the borough has traditionally been a right to participate in privileges conferred by royal charter. I see no reason to break this link.

Inner Area Programmes

Ms. Armstrong asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will explain the criteria for selecting those local authorities invited to submit inner area programmes.

Mr. Trippier: In assessing priority areas for the urban programme in 1987-88 the following factors were taken into account:

Unemployment:
The scale, rate and concentration of residential unemployment, including information on long term and youth unemployment at ward level.

Census information:
Selected census indicators of economic, social and housing stress, showing the scale, intensity and concentration of deprivation.

Dereliction:
Information from the 1982 derelict land survey.

Population:
Towns over 30,000.

In addition to these specific factors, account is taken of the local and regional economic context.

Rate Capping

Mr. Summerson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when his Department intends to announce which local authorities have been selected for rate capping.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend intends to make his announcement before the summer recess.

Publicity (Departmental Expenditure)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising and other promotional literature in 1986-87; and what is the estimated expenditure for the current year.

Mr. Ridley [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 July 1987]: During the financial year 1986-87 my Department, including the Property Services Agency, spent £338,000 on newspaper advertisements (other than on recruitment, tendering and statutory notices) and £825,093 on promotional literature. There was no advertising on television and radio.

The estimated figure in 1987-88 on advertising in all media—a breakdown is not possible at this stage—is £117,500 and £1,019,750 for other promotional literature.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total spending by his Department on press and public relations in 1986-87; and what is the estimated expenditure for the current year.

Mr. Ridley [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 July 1987]: During the financial year 1986-87 my Department, including PSA, spent a total of £2,929,174 on press and public relations against an estimated expenditure of £3,601,956. In 1987-88 expenditure is estimated at £3,757,100.

Endangered Species

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will add Bombus Terrestis, Bombus Lapidavius and Apius Mellifera to the list of endangered species; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 July 1987]: No. Bombus Terrestis, Bombus Lapitarius and Apis Mellifera are common bee species and are not threatened with extinction. Accordingly, the Nature Conservancy Council has not recommended further protection for these species under the quinquennial review of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The Government are, however, well aware of the beneficial contribution that bees can make to the environment.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 21 July 1987

PRIME MINISTER

European Commission (VAT Proceedings)

Q18. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Prime Minister if she will raise at the next meeting of the European Council the decision of the European Economic Community Commission on initiating proceedings in the European Court of Justice against the United Kingdom on its zero rating of goods and services in respect of value added tax; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: No. This is a legal dispute between the Commission and the United Kingdom. It is not a matter in which the European Council has any locus. This legal dispute should not be confused with recent tax harmonisation proposals submitted by the Commission to the Council, on which the Government's position is clear.

Kenilworth

Q23. **Mr. Pawsey** asked the Prime Minister if she has any plans to make an official visit to Kenilworth.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Broadwater Farm Estate

Q33. **Mr. Grant** asked the Prime Minister if she has any plans to visit the Broadwater Farm estate.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Leith

Q40. **Mr. Ron Brown** asked the Prime Minister if she will make an official visit to Leith.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Stockport

Q51. **Mr. Favell** asked the Prime Minister if she will pay an official visit to Stockport.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Afghanistan

Q52. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Prime Minister if, pursuant to her answer to the hon. Member for Linlithgow of 2 July, *Official Report*, column 144, she will list the precise objectives of Her Majesty's Government's policy on Afghanistan, the precise methods used to achieve those objectives, the precise nature of the contacts between Her Majesty's Government and the Afghan resistance movement and the view, expressed to Her Majesty's Government by leaders of the resistance since March 1986, about supplies of weapons to them by the United Kingdom; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the Most Gracious Speech from the Throne to both Houses of Parliament on 25 June, at columns 38-40; to the answers that I gave him on 2 July, at column 144; and to the statement adopted by European Community Foreign Ministers on 13 July.

The Wrekin

Q57. **Mr. Grocott** asked the Prime Minister whether she has any plans to visit The Wrekin.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Submarines

Q64. **Dr. Godman** asked the Prime Minister when she now expects Her Majesty's Government to place the order promised to Scott Lithgow at the time an order was awarded to Vickers, Barrow-in-Furness for the construction of conventional submarines; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The position remains as set out in my reply to the hon. Gentleman on 5 May, at column 317. It is the Government's wish to place these orders with Scott Lithgow, provided the company meets the terms outlined by my hon. Friend on 28 January 1986, at column 449. Negotiations are still continuing with the company.

Northern Region

Q85. **Mr. Fallon** asked the Prime Minister when she next expects to visit the northern region.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to visit the northern region.

Engagements

Mr. Harry Greenway asked the Prime Minster if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 21 July.

Mr. Stern asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 21 July.

Mr. Rooker asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 21 July.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Mortgage Interest Tax Relief

Mr. Shersby asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect of the current difference in eligibility for mortgage interest tax relief between *(a)* married and *(b)* cohabiting couples on (i) revenue to the Exchequer, (ii) house prices and (iii) household structure.

Mr. Norman Lamont: A married couple are entitled to mortgage interest relief on up to £30,000 of the loan to buy their main home, whereas single people sharing the purchase are each entitled to relief on up to £30,000. The direct revenue cost in 1987-88 of the additional mortgage interest tax relief which is available to sharers is estimated to be about £25 million.

Many factors affect house prices and household structure and it is not possible to identify separately the effect of the additional mortgage interest relief which is available to sharers.

Mr. Wigley asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the amount spent on mortgage tax relief in Wales, Scotland and each of the English regions in each financial year since 1979 both at outturn and 1987 prices.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Hansard Press

Mr. Leighton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what provisions there are for the retraining of staff at the Hansard Press displaced by direct input from the House.

Mr. Brooke: No specific provisions have been made to date. Retraining options will be discussed with representatives of the trades unions involved in the event of any change which affects jobs.

Mr. Leighton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what commitment about their future the Hansard Press gives to those of its existing staff who are to be affected by technological changes.

Mr. Brooke: No commitment can be given at this stage. If changes were to occur, Her Majesty's Stationery Office would discuss the issues with the trades unions involved and do all it can, within the constraints of good business practice, to mitigate the effect on jobs that any changes might bring.

British Petroleum

Mr. David Nicholson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made on the sale of the Government's residual shareholding in British Petroleum.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The board of BP has today announced its intention, subject to shareholders' approval, to raise approximately £1·5 billion through the issue of new ordinary shares. The shares will be issued in conjunction with the Government's sale of its remaining shareholding in BP, which was announced on 18 March. To facilitate this joint offering, the Government plan to subscribe for the new BP shares on a fully-paid basis and to sell them together with their existing shares. The subscription will take effect when the sale of the new and the old shares is fully underwritten. It is intended that shareholder's pre-emption rights will be protected. The sale is planned to be in the autumn and the proceeds will be payable in instalments. Further details of arrangements for the offering will be announced in due course.

It is intended that the Government's subscription for the new BP ordinary shares will be met from the proceeds of the joint offering. A token Supplementary Estimate for class XIX, vote 16 will be presented to secure parliamentary approval for the expenditure and authority for the appropriation in aid of a corresponding amount of the proceeds. If necessary, pending that approval, the estimated expenditure on the subscription for BP shares of approximately £1·5 billion will be met by a repayble advance from the Contingencies Fund.

Tax Consultative Committee

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer on how many occasions in the past three years officials from his Department have been involved in meetings of the tax consultative committee; which officials were involved; with whom they met; what was the purpose of the meetings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Royal Mint

Mr. Wheeler asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has determined a new financial objective for the Royal Mint.

Mr. Brooke: Yes. In accordance with the Government Trading Funds Act 1973, a new financial objective has been determined for the Royal Mint covering the period 1 April 1987 to 31 March 1990. A Treasury minute stipulating the new objective is being laid today. The objective is to achieve an annual rate of return which, when averaged over the period as a whole, will be equal to not less than 10 per cent. per annum in real terms.

Her Majesty's Stationery Office (Privatisation)

Mr. Speller asked the Chancellor to the Exchequer if he will seek powers to privatise Her Majesty's Stationery Office; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: My Right hon. Friend has no present plans to privatise Her Majesty's Stationery Office

DEFECTIVE PRINTING

Value Added Tax

Mr. Amess asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the categories of organisations qualified for nought per cent. value added tax rating on purchased equipment.

Mr. Brooke: No organisations enjoy blanket VAT zero-rating for purchases of equipment. A limited range of specified types of equipment may be zero-rated when supplied to certain charitable or other organisations; these are covered by groups 4, 10, 14, 15 and 16 to schedule 5 to the VAT Act 1983, as amended.

Mr. Amess asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans to reduce the purchase of equipment for hospital radio stations to nought per cent. value added tax rating; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: No. The Government fully appreciate the valuable work done by the hospital broadcasting associations, but to grant relief here would make it necessary to consider similar treatment for other equally deserving organisations and would in the long run be unacceptably expensive in revenue terms.

Hansard Press

Mr. Leighton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if any of the staff of the Hansard Press are to be made redundant as a result of technological changes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: The Editor of the *Official Report* is contemplating changes in his method of collecting data. If realised these changes may result in debate copy being supplied to Hansard Press in machine-readable form. The possible effects of any changes on the operations at Hansard Press would of course be discussed with representatives of the trades unions involved.

Mr. Leighton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what provisions there are for the retraining of Hansard Press SOGAT staff.

Mr. Brooke: No specific provisions have been made to date. Retraining options will be discussed with representatives of the trades unions involved in the event of any change which affects jobs.

Company Finance

Mr. Nicholas Baker asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his policy on whether the Inland Revenue will use section 38 of the Finance Act 1976 to deny an interest reduction where the debt is created solely as a result of the unwinding of a dual resident company as a result of the provisions of the Finance (No. 2) Bill affecting such companies.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 July 1987]: The rearrangement of financing, to transfer the borrowing of a dual resident investing company (as defined by clause 63 of the Finance Bill) to a company resident only in the United Kingdom, would not by itself lead the Inland Revenue to seek to apply section 38 of the Finance Act 1976. If there were any other tax effects of the rearrangement, these would also be taken into account in determining whether section 38 should be applied.

Privatisation

Mr. Clay asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish for each company privatised since 1979 the number of shareholders holding 500 shares or fewer following privatisation and the latest information available.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 July 1987]: I regret the information requested about the number of shareholders holding 500 shares or fewer in privatised companies immediately following privatisation can be provided only at disproportionate cost. Equivalent numbers for current shareholdings are a matter for the registrars of the companies concerned.

Publicity (Departmental Expenditure)

Mr. Dobson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total spending by his Department on press and public relations in 1986-87; and what is the estimated expenditure for the current year.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 July 1987]: Expenditure on press and public relations totalled £534,600 in 1986-87, and the estimated expenditure for the current year is £605,900.

Mr. Dobson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising and other promotional literature in 1986-87; and what is the estimated expenditure for the current year.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 July 1987]: The expenditure for 1986-87 was £33,000, none of which was on television or radio advertising, and the budget for the current year is £35,000. There will also be advertising and promotional spending in 1987-88 in connection with the forthcoming BP share sale. Token provision for these costs has been taken in class XIX, vote 16. Parliament will be informed of these costs along with the other costs after the sale has been completed.

THE ARTS

Acceptances in Lieu of Tax

Mr. Faulds asked the Minister for the Arts why his answer of 9 July to the hon. Member for Warley, East giving a list of allocations during the half year ended 30 June of works of art accepted in settlement of inheritance tax omitted Constable's painting "Stratford Mill".

Mr. Luce: On 19 March I announced, at column *561*, that Constable's painting "Stratford Mill" had been accepted in principle in lieu of tax. The details are still to be finalised, since personal representatives of the late owner have not been formally constituted; as a result the painting has not yet been permanently allocated. Meanwhile, the painting is, of course, on public view at the National gallery.

CIVIL SERVICE

Inventors (Awards)

Mr. Baldry asked the Minister for the Civil Service what are the arrangements for making awards to inventors who are civil servants or public sector employees; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: These arrangements form part of the model Civil Service suggestions scheme and are set out in detail in the "Civil Service Pay and Conditions of Service Code", a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Awards may be made in recognition of benefits to the Crown, derived either through direct use of an invention by a Department or through the exploitation of the invention outside Government. Three modifications have recently been made:

(a) the commercial exploitation income, by reference to which any award is calculated, will henceforth be assessed in ways that take account both of inflation and of cases in which actual income to the Crown is less than the gross commercial exploitation income;

(b) the number of tranches in the sliding scale on which awards are made has been reduced and the value of tranches will be indexed against inflation, in order to restore them to, and maintain them at, the levels originally intended;

(c) inventors may be paid awards in instalments when exploitation is spread over a number of years.

These modifications will maintain awards made in respect of commercial exploitation of inventions at the levels originally intended and encourage greater awareness of the need for more effective transfer of such inventions into industry.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Mr. Philip Agee

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether Mr. Philip Agee is now free to enter the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: No. Mr. Agee remains the subject of a deportation order.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board

Mr. Holt asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases have been referred to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board in each year since 1980; what is the average length of time between the crime and payment; and how many cases remained to be determined as at 30 June.

Mr. John Patten: Information on the number of applications received by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board from 1980-81 to 1986-87 is given in the table. Information is not available on the length of time between the injury and payment of any compensation awarded by the board. On 30 June 1987 the board had about 68,000 uncompleted cases. These included a number in which the board awaited the result of inquiries and about 10,000 cases in which an offer had been made by the board but a decision on whether to accept the offer, or a hearing by the board, was awaited.

Financial year	*Number of applications*
1980-81	24,700
1981-82	26,500
1982-83	29,400
1983-84	31,900
1984-85	34,900
1985-86	39,700
1986-87	[1]42,300

[1] Provisional.

Race Relations

Mr. George asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has had discussions with the Indian Government over the consequences for United Kingdom race relations of the incidence of communal violence in that country.

Mr. Hurd: No.

Citizenship

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were naturalised as British citizens from the United States of America in the past five years.

Mr. Renton: The number of citizens of the United States of America granted certificates of naturalisation as citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies in 1982 or as British citizens in 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986 were 73, 49, 68, 76 and 77 respectively. The total numbers granted British citizenship, including those entitled to register as such, are published annually in a Home Office statistical bulletin. The edition for 1986 "Citizenship Statistics, United Kingdom 1986" will be published around the end of August.

Drugs

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on progress towards reaching international agreements with other countries to fight the importation of narcotics into the United Kingdom.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: At the international conference held last month in Vienna, Ministers from all regions of the world committed themselves to intensifying their efforts against drug abuse and illicit trafficking. Earlier this month the United Kingdom played an active part in an intergovernmental working group to discuss the first draft of a new United Nations convention to combat illicit drug trafficking. We are in regular discussion with countries which are a source of transit route for drugs coming to the United Kingdom, and have opened negotiations with several countries which have comparable legislation with a view to concluding bilateral agreements under section 26 of the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986.

Prevention of Terrorism

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons excluded under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provision) Acts 1974, 1976 or 1984 and who made representations against their exclusion order as part of the review of the order *(a)* were offered an interview with the Metropolitan police at a venue other than Castlereagh holding centre, *(b)* where those interviews were held and *(c)* how many of those individuals declined to attend.

Mr. Hurd: *(a)* Fifty people are recorded in Home Office records as having had interviews with the Metropolitan police as part of a review of an exclusion order made in Great Britain under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Acts 1974 or 1976. All but one of these interviews took place at Castlereagh RUC

station (which is a separate building from Castlereagh holding centre *(b)* The other location was the British embassy, Dublin. *(c)* None.

Immigration

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement on the adequacy and standards of the facilities for women detainees on board the Earl William at Harwich;

(2) what is the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men presently held on board the Earl William at Harwich.

Mr. Renton: Female detainees are accommodated in twin-bunk cabins, with integral showers, wash basins and toilets. The cabins are in a separate area of the ship from that of the male detainees. The public rooms, which are for the use of all detainees, provide ample space for relaxation and visits by relatives, friends and lawyers. The facilities on board include pay telephones, television and video, other recreational facilities, laundry and drying machines, hot and cold drinks machines and a shop.

As at 16 July there were eight women and 77 men detained on the Earl William.

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons were detained under Immigration Act powers for a period of more than two months on completion of a custodial sentence during 1986.

Mr. Renton: Nineteen persons who completed a custodial sentence in 1986 were so detained under deportation powers. I regret that similar information relating to illegal entrants is not available.

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many passengers were detained in prison department establishments under Immigration Act powers during 1986.

Mr. Renton: Until 1 May 1987 central records of passengers detained were kept only where detention under Immigration Act powers exceeded one month. The number of such cases detained in Prison Department establishments in 1986 was 104.

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide a breakdown by nationality of the number of passengers seeking political asylum who were detained under Immigration Act powers in 1986 *(a)* in prison department establishments and *(b)* in immigration detention accommodation.

Mr. Renton: Until 1 May 1987 central records of passengers detained were kept only where detention under Immigration Act powers exceeded one month. The details of these in 1986 were as follows:

Nationality	*Prison Department Establishments*	*Immigration Service Detention Accommodation*
Afghanistan	2	—
Albania	1	—
Angola	1	—
Chile	1	1
Ghana	1	2
India	3	—
Iran	19	12
Morocco	1	—
Pakistan	4	3
Somalia	1	—
South Africa	1	—
Sri Lanka	45	13
Tanzania	1	—
Turkey	2	2
Uganda	4	1
Nationality Doubtful	3	1

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide, for the latest convenient date, a breakdown by individual place of detention of the number of passengers seeking political asylum who are detained under Immigration Act powers.

Mr. Renton: Records of passengers detained are kept centrally only where detention under Immigration Act powers exceeds 14 days. On 1 July 1987 the total of these seeking political asylum was 147, who were detained at the following places:

Place of detention	*Number detained*
Harmondsworth	36
Latchmere House	26
mv "Earl William"	80
HMP Pentonville	3
HMP Canterbury	1
HMP Winson Green	1

Juvenile Offenders

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many juveniles have been tried for criminal offences other than in juvenile courts in each of the past five years.

Mr. John Patten: In 1985, the latest year for which information is available, there were 63,773 juveniles tried at juvenile courts, 4,708 at magistrates' courts and 1,830 at the Crown court. Corresponding figures for earlier years could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Prisons

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any proposals to investigate the possibility of introducing minimum standards to prisons.

Mr. John Patten: No. We do not consider that a code of minimum standards for prisons would advance the programme the Government have in hand for improving conditions.

Prisoners

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the rules on possession of fountain pens by prisoners are uniform throughout Her Majesty's prisons.

Mr. John Patten: Prison standing order 4 includes pens in the list of items which prisoners may normally retain in their possession. The standing order does not distinguish between different types of pen and the extent to which any local restrictions may need to be imposed in this respect

is a matter for the governor to determine in the light of his responsibilities for the security and good order of his establishment.

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will list all those prisons which provide *(a)* one set of clean clothes per week, *(b)* two sets of clean clothes per week or *(c)* more than two sets of clean clothes per week.

Mr. John Patten: The scales of issue of personal clothing to prisoners provide for at least two sets per week. Some prisons are able to provide for more frequent changes within those scales, and frequency is varied from time to time depending on local circumstances. Full details of the practices in each prison are not kept centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to make all educational correspondence courses free of postal charges for prisoners.

Mr. John Patten: Where approval has been given for a prisoner to follow a correspondence course, it is normal practice for the postal costs to be met from public funds.

Feltham Youth Custody Centre

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will undertake a survey into the difficulties for visitors of travelling to and from Feltham youth custody centre in view of the restricted public transport facilities.

Mr. John Patten: Although we are sympathetic to the needs of visitors, I see no reason to undertake such a survey.

Deportation

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons were recommended for deportation with no custodial sentence during 1986; and in how many cases the courts directed release *(a)* subject to conditions and *(b)* without conditions.

Mr. Renton: In 1986, 338 persons were recommended for deportation by a court with no custodial sentence being imposed. Of these, 92 were released subject to conditions requiring them to report to the police and 103 without such conditions.

Licensees (Assault)

Mr. Colvin asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will seek to amend the law so that any person convicted of acts of violence against licensees and their staff should receive an automatic minimum sentence of one year's imprisonment.

Mr. John Patten: No. Minimum sentences would reduce the court's ability to take account of the widely varying circumstances of different cases. The Court of Appeal has drawn attention to the need, in sentencing, to protect licensees and their staff as well as others whose work makes them vulnerable to assault.

Adoption

Miss Lestor asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will state the number of children from abroad who have been accepted into the United Kingdom for adoption;

(2) if he will list the countries from which children have been admitted into the United Kingdom for adoption during the last 12 months, with the number of children in respect of each country.

Mr. Renton: Information is not available in the form requested, as the statistics collected on passenger admissions do not separately identify those children who come to the United Kingdom for adoption. However, 85 children were recorded as having been granted settlement in the United Kingdom in 1986 on the basis of their adoption by a person already settled here. Their nationalities are shown in the following table:

Acceptances for settlement by reason of adoption

Nationality	*Number of children of each nationality*
Brazil, India	7
Columbia, Pakistan	5
Nigeria, Philippines, Salvador	4
West Germany, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, United States of America	3
Denmark, Ghana, Jamaica, Peru, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania	2
Bangladesh, Bolivia, China, Cyprus, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Greece, Guyana, Indonesia, Israel, Korea, Panama, Portugal, Yemen (Arab Republic), Zimbabwe, British Dependent Territories citizen, British overseas citizen	1
	85

(1) Includes three children whose nationality is not uniquely recorded on the computer system.

Notting Hill Police (Inquiry)

Mr. Vaz asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what stage the Police Complaints Authority inquiry into the policing at Notting Hill has reached; how many officers based there have been suspended; and if police constables David Jud, Andrew Chows and Douglas Brooks are still on duty at the Notting Hill police station.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Police Complaints Authority is supervising the investigation of allegations related to Notting Hill which were raised in television documentaries in April and May 1986. I understand that the investigation is still being pursued and that it is not possible, at this stage, to say when it is likely to be completed. No officers have been suspended from duty as a result of the allegations. The disposition of individual officers within the Metropolitan police district is a matter for the Commissioner; it is not his practice to discuss such issues publicly.

Electoral Registers

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assistance has been given by his Department in the past five years to local authorities in campaigns to increase the numbers of electors on registers.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to a question from the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allan) on 20 July.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if any studies are being undertaken by his Department on the impact on electoral registration of the possible introduction of the poll tax.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what efforts are made by his Department to monitor or assess the accuracy of electoral registers.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In 1981 the Home Office and the Scottish Home and Health Department commissioned a detailed study of electoral registration in Great Britain by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. This was published in December 1982. The Home Office subsequently commissioned a survey by the OPCS of electoral registration in a selection of inner city areas where the problems are known to be greater. This will be published shortly. More recently we commissioned a survey into the effectiveness of electoral registration procedures, the report of which was published on 2 April. This produced practical proposals for improvements which we are looking at very carefully. As a first step we have asked OPCS to conduct an annual exercise to gather systematic information from all electoral registration officers in England and Wales about current methods and their effectiveness. This will provide a further basis for initiatives in this area.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his Department has made any assessment of the number of votes lost in the most recent general election because of (*a*) wrongful inclusion in or (*b*) omission from electoral registers.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to a question from the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) on 10 July, at columns 364-5.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representation he has received from electoral registration officers concerning the accuracy of registers used in the most recent general election.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: None.

Personation

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases of personation in the most recent general election are known to his Department.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: One apparent case of personation has been brought to our attention by my hon. Friend the Member for Meriden (Mr. Mills). Information about the number of persons prosecuted for this offence in 1987 will not be available until the end of next year.

Concessionary Television Licences

Mr. Andrew Bowden asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total number of 5p concessionary television licences issued in the last year for which figures are available; and what proportion of those licences are held by pensioners.

Mr. Renton [*pursuant to his reply, 9 July 1987, c. 212*]: I am afraid that while the figure given in my earlier reply was believed to be correct at the time, a subsequent retotalling of the manually maintained records of licensees by the National TV Licence Records Office—carried out for another purpose—has shown the correct figure for those benefiting from accommodation for residential care licences to the end of May 1987 to be 705,257, rather than the figure of 690,629 given.

SCOTLAND

Rating Reform

Mr. Steel asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received about the lack, under the community charge system provided for in the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987, of precise equivalents of the reliefs available under the domestic rating system.

Mr. Rifkind: I have received 32 representations from church organisations and individual churches and some 50 further representations from other charities about the implications for them of the community charge proposals. I have also received a number of representations from individuals about the position under the proposals of particular groups living in accommodation provided by charities or otherwise benefiting from rating reliefs at present.

Housing Grants (Edinburgh)

Mr. Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give an immediate and favourable response to the request from the City of Edinburgh district council for an increase in the £4,800 eligible grant level for improvement and repairs grants to home owners.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: We are not yet in a position to respond to the council's request, but hope to do so shortly.

Housing Revenue Accounts

Mr. Steel asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing the amount of money held in housing revenue accounts by each local authority in Scotland in each year since 1979 in real terms at 1987-88 prices.

Mr. Rifkind: The information is given in the table.

Housing Revenue Account Income Amounts (£ million) for 1987-88 prices using GDP deflators

Area	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*
Scotland	900·746	899·704	868·919	840·438	795·218	797·565	762·954	761·874	760·819
Berwickshire	3·757	3·813	3·507	3·221	3·035	2·917	2·888	2·417	2·342
Ettrick and Lauderdale	5·343	3·389	4·790	4·252	3·859	3·979	3·953	3·350	3·347

DEFECTIVE PRINTING

Area	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*
Roxburgh	6·611	6·627	6·776	6·336	6·468	6·852	6·824	6·545	6·523
Tweeddale	1·327	1·333	1·337	1·195	1·133	1·194	1·172	0·966	1·222
Clackmannan	8·903	8·262	7·555	7·271	6·890	7·164	7·127	7·077	7·255
Falkirk	30·501	28·791	27·031	26·622	25·656	25·438	23·565	25·308	24·832
Stirling	11·516	12·634	12·505	11·942	11·685	11·330	10·874	11·052	10·525
Annandale and Eskdale	4·864	5·340	5·436	5·526	5·673	5·974	6·056	6·227	6·009
Nithsdale	5·399	5·181	5·197	5·273	5·344	5·485	5·907	6·098	5·989
Stewartry	2·448	2·555	2·584	2·399	2·490	2·787	2·579	2·543	2·602
Wigtown	4·224	4·241	3·945	4·075	3·935	4·161	4·571	4·543	4·474
Dunfermline	20·548	20·419	19·333	18·224	17·257	17·226	16·236	16·324	16·540
Kirkcaldy	23·623	21·796	21·789	19·862	19·263	19·605	19·310	19·963	21·584
North East Fife	6·619	6·819	7·027	6·921	6·629	5·962	5·721	6·358	6·541
Aberdeen	39·887	40·757	39·596	37·191	36·062	36·186	33·617	32·870	31·674
Banff and Buchan	14·447	14·650	13·877	12·810	11·969	11·824	11·593	10·974	10·858
Bardon	8·554	8·379	7·796	7·044	6·614	6·546	7·095	7·564	7·953
Kincardine and Deeside	3·905	3·742	3·452	3·356	3·270	3·529	3·714	3·921	4·131
Moray	13·871	15·463	14·799	13·298	12·505	12·217	12·015	10·211	10·080
Badenoch and Strathspey	1·554	1·558	1·532	1·487	1·469	1·492	1·488	1·489	1·472
Caithness	4·158	4·197	3·889	3·820	3·814	4·010	4·086	4·063	4·187
Inverness	7·906	8·108	7·685	7·665	7·647	7·755	7·434	7·507	7·541
Lochaber	5·266	4·845	4·984	4·936	4·530	4·624	4·578	4·728	4·630
Nairn	1·120	1·098	1·234	1·141	1·135	1·125	1·083	1·152	1·193
Ross and Cromarty	10·974	10·848	9·657	8·783	8·408	8·674	8·820	8·818	9·110
Skye and Lochalsh	1·003	1·113	1·123	1·121	1·153	1·240	1·309	1·409	1·570
Sutherland	2·062	2·052	1·822	1·810	1·749	1·849	1·858	2·169	2·084
East Lothian	15·275	16·048	14·733	13·241	12·264	12·225	12·209	11·981	12·382
Edinburgh	56·026	51·988	51·927	52·536	48·004	51·535	42·969	42·255	44·048
Midlothian	13·227	12·175	11·220	10·722	10·167	9·488	8·999	9·246	9·165
West Lothian	21·108	19·685	18·229	17·028	17·319	17·778	16·250	16·353	16·058
Argyll and Bute	11·537	11·393	10·710	10·953	10·438	10·121	10·179	9·197	9·503
Bearsden and Milngavie	2·112	2·247	1·866	1·872	1·728	1·595	1·547	1·703	1·753
Clydebank	12·324	11·958	11·063	11·442	11·267	11·174	11·085	11·495	11·865
Clydesdale	7·541	7·376	6·799	6·565	6·315	7·111	7·378	7·424	7·362
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	3·871	4·259	3·870	3·876	3·718	4·048	4·126	3·809	3·747
Cumnock and Doon Valley	8·272	8·081	7·539	7·792	7·612	7·634	7·557	7·582	7·590
Cunninghame	21·657	20·548	19·144	18·493	16·419	17·023	18·320	17·050	17·095
Dumbarton	12·566	11·286	11·309	10·598	9·524	10·730	9·506	9·550	10·160
East Kilbride	1·661	1·694	1·618	1·530	1·463	1·541	1·537	1·509	1·460
Eastwood	1·954	1·683	1·561	1·359	1·239	1·276	1·263	1·274	1·332
Glasgow	205·825	219·261	217·234	213·403	191·948	184·776	176·507	176·087	173·247
Hamilton	23·499	22·253	21·851	20·329	20·616	20·413	18·009	19·136	19·167
Inverclyde	20·796	20·262	19·118	18·321	16·895	16·672	16·003	14·930	14·616
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	16·349	15·336	14·697	14·594	14·067	13·287	12·651	13·108	12·816
Kyle and Carrick	15·799	15·012	14·110	14·413	15·072	14·538	14·412	14·198	13·616
Monklands	25·016	25·642	24·292	24·133	23·190	25·125	22·805	24·290	24·071
Motherwell	35·169	35·824	34·750	32·959	32·374	31·985	30·858	30·560	30·219
Renfrew	32·661	30·445	29·470	30·205	29·391	29·560	27·145	28·547	28·055
Strathkelvin	9·935	10·353	10·341	9·956	9·478	9·613	8·741	9·177	8·401
Angus	14·533	14·604	14·134	12·262	10·547	10·474	9·882	10·263	10·328
Dundee	35·611	32·757	31·729	29·692	29·149	30·796	30·127	29·047	30·092
Perth and Kinross	13·589	13·415	12·397	12·018	11·839	11·676	11·857	11·056	11·084
Orkney Islands	3·096	2·824	2·565	2·235	2·161	2·367	2·537	2·217	2·137
Shetland Islands	5·320	6·974	5·841	5·537	5·874	6·714	7·519	8·123	7·921
Western Isles	4·033	4·314	4·544	4·795	5·500	5·149	5·497	5·060	5·273

Notes:
(1) Figures for 1979-80 to 1983-84 are based on audited accounts.
(2) Figures for 1984-85 to 1986-87 are based on authorities' near actual returns.
(3) Figures for 1987-88 are authorities' estimates.

Mr. Steel asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing the amount of money held in housing revenue accounts by each local authority in Scotland since 1979 in cash terms.

Mr. Rifkind: The information is given in the table.

Housing Revenue Account Income Amounts (£ million) [current prices]

Area	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*
Scotland	518·093	613·832	651·037	675·359	667·514	698·197	708·784	729·067	760·819
Berwickshire	2·161	2·601	2·628	2·588	2·548	2·553	2·683	2·313	2·342
Ettrick and Lauderdale	3·073	3·677	3·589	3·417	3·240	3·483	3·673	3·206	3·347
Roxburgh	3·803	4·521	5·077	5·092	5·429	5·999	6·340	6·263	6·523
Tweeddale	0·763	0·909	1·002	0·960	0·951	1·045	1·089	0·9250·9-25	1·222

Area	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88
Clackmannan	5·121	5·637	5·661	5·843	5·783	6·271	6·621	6·772	7·255
Falkirk	17·544	19·643	20·253	21·393	21·536	22·269	21·892	24·218	24·832
Stirling	6·624	8·619	9·370	9·596	9·808	9·919	10·102	10·577	10·525
Annandale and Eskdale	2·798	3·643	4·073	4·440	4·762	5·229	5·626	5·959	6·009
Mithsdale	3·105	3·535	3·894	4·237	4·486	4·802	5·487	5·835	5·989
Stewartry	1·408	1·743	1·936	1·927	2·090	2·440	2·396	2·433	2·602
Wigtown	2·429	2·894	2·956	3·275	3·303	3·643	4·247	4·347	4·474
Dunfermline	11·819	13·931	14·485	14·644	14·485	15·080	15·083	15·621	16·540
Kirkcaldy	13·588	14·870	16·326	15·961	16·170	17·162	17·939	19·104	21·584
North East Fife	3·807	4·652	5·265	5·562	5·565	5·219	5·315	6·084	6·541
Aberdeen	22·942	27·807	29·667	29·886	30·271	31·678	31·230	31·455	31·674
Banff and Buchan	8·310	9·995	10·398	10·294	10·047	10·351	10·770	10·501	10·858
Bordon	4·920	5·717	5·841	5·660	5·552	5·730	6·591	7·239	7·953
Kincardine and Deeside	2·246	2·553	2·586	2·697	2·745	3·089	3·450	3·753	4·131
Moray	7·978	10·549	11·088	10·686	10·497	10·695	11·162	9·771	10·080
Badenoch and Strathspey	0·894	1·063	1·148	1·195	1·233	1·306	1·383	1·425	1·472
Caithness	2·392	2·864	2·914	3·069	3·201	3·511	3·796	3·888	4·187
Inverness	4·547	5·532	5·758	6·160	6·419	6·789	6·907	7·184	7·541
Lochaber	3·029	3·305	3·734	3·966	3·803	4·048	4·253	4·524	4·630
Nairn	0·644	0·749	0·928	0·917	0·953	0·985	1·006	1·102	1·193
Ross and Cromarty	6·312	7·400	7·235	7·058	7·058	7·593	8·194	8·439	9·110
Skye and Lochalsh	0·577	0·760	0·842	0·900	0·967	1·086	1·217	1·348	1·570
Sutherland	1·186	1·400	1·365	1·454	1·468	1·618	1·726	2·076	2·084
East Lothian	8·786	10·949	11·039	10·640	10·294	10·702	11·342	11·465	12·382
Edinburgh	32·225	35·469	38·906	42·217	40·295	45·114	39·918	40·436	44·048
Midlothian	7·608	8·307	8·406	8·616	8·534	8·306	8·360	8·848	9·165
West Lothian	12·141	13·430	13·658	13·684	14·538	15·563	15·097	15·649	16·058
Argyll and Bute	6·636	7·773	8·024	8·802	8·762	8·860	9·457	8·801	9·503
Bearsden and Milngavie	1·215	1·533	1·398	1·504	1·451	1·396	1·437	1·630	1·753
Clydebank	7·088	8·159	8·289	9·194	9·458	9·782	10·298	11·000	11·865
Clydesdale	4·337	5·033	5·094	5·275	5·301	6·225	6·854	7·105	7·362
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	2·227	2·906	2·899	3·114	3·121	3·544	3·833	3·645	3·747
Cumnock and Doon Valley	4·758	5·513	5·649	6·261	6·389	6·683	7·020	7·255	7·590
Cunninghame	12·456	14·019	14·344	14·860	13·782	14·902	17·020	16·316	17·095
Dumbarton	7·228	7·700	8·473	8·516	7·994	9·393	8·832	9·139	10·160
East Kilbride	0·955	1·156	1·212	1·229	1·228	1·349	1·428	1·444	1·460
Eastwood	1·124	1·148	1·170	1·092	1·040	1·117	1·174	1·219	1·332
Glasgow	118·387	149·593	162·762	171·486	161·123	161·754	163·975	168·505	173·247
Hamilton	13·516	15·182	16·372	16·336	17·305	17·870	16·730	18·312	19·167
Inverclyde	11·962	13·824	14·324	14·723	14·182	14·595	14·866	14·287	14·616
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	9·404	10·463	11·012	11·727	11·808	11·631	11·753	12·544	12·816
Kyle and Carrick	9·087	10·242	10·572	11·582	12·651	12·726	13·389	13·587	13·616
Monklands	14·389	17·495	18·200	19·393	19·466	21·995	21·186	23·244	24·071
Motherwell	20·229	24·441	26·036	26·485	27·175	28·000	28·667	29·244	30·219
Renfrew	18·786	20·771	22·081	24·272	24·671	25·877	25·218	27·318	28·055
Strathkelvin	5·715	7·063	7·748	8·000	7·956	8·415	8·121	8·782	8·401
Angus	8·359	9·964	10·590	9·854	8·853	9·169	9·180	9·821	10·320
Dundee	20·483	22·349	23·773	23·860	24·468	26·959	27·988	27·796	30·092
Perth and Kinross	7·816	9·152	9·289	9·657	9·937	10·221	11·015	10·580	11·084
Orkney Islands	1·781	1·927	1·922	1·796	1·814	2·072	2·357	2·122	2·137
Shetland Islands	3·060	4·758	4·376	4·450	4·931	5·877	6·985	7·773	7·921
Western Isles	2·320	2·943	3·404	3·853	4·617	4·507	5·106	4·842	5·273

Notes:
(1) Figures for 1979-80 to 1983-84 are audited accounts.
(2) Figures for 1984-85 to 1986-87 are authorities' near actual returns.
(3) Figures for 1987-88 are authorities' estimates.

Labour Statistics

Mr. McAllion asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the seasonally adjusted unemployment figures for Scotland and the Dundee travel-to-work area for the last available date, and figures in May 1979, June 1983 and June 1987, compiled on a similar basis.

Mr. Lang: In Scotland the labour force survey is conducted by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys and the General Register Office for Scotland on behalf of the Department of Employment and the European Community. The 1986 labour force survey is the most recent of which results are available, but the sample size is too small for reliable estimates to be produced either for Dundee or for the Tayside area.

Universities and Colleges (Funding)

Mrs. Fyfe asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what attempts were made to find out the views of the students, staff, and graduates on the STEAC recommendation for the funding of universities and colleges.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: When the STEAC report was published in December 1985 the Government issued a public invitation for comments on the report's recommendations.

Scottish Committee for Planning of Higher Education

Mrs. Fyfe asked the Secretary of State for Scotland on what criteria he based his decision that appointments to the proposed Scottish committee for planning of higher

education in Scotland will be made by the Universities Funding Committee in consultation with himself; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The Scottish committee of the Universities Funding Council will advise the council on higher education in Scotland, and its views will be available to my right hon. and learned Friend. As the committee will consider issues affecting other sectors of higher education besides the universities, it seems appropriate that the composition of the committee should not be left solely to the UFC.

Woodilee and Stoneyetts Hospital

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the future of Woodilee hospital and Stoneyetts hospital.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: As I explained when I met the hon. Member on 7 July, the Greater Glasgow health board is conducting a strategic review of psychiatric services in the Greater Glasgow area as a whole and any decisions on the future roles of these particular hospitals will be dependent on the outcome of that review. The board will be issuing a consultative document about its proposals later this year.

Monofilament Gill Nets

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has received advice from the European Commission regarding the validity under Community regulations of the Inshore Fishing (Prohibition of Carriage of Monofilament Gill Nets) (Scotland) Order 1968; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Before the order was laid the Commission of the European Communities was consulted on its terms. The Commission indicated that the order was compatible with Community law and in conformity with the common fisheries policy.

Nonach Mor Ski Project

Sir Russell Johnston asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to make an announcement about the Nonach Mor ski project.

Mr. Lang: Letters conveying my right hon. and learned Friend's decision not to support the project have been sent to the hon. Member, Lochaber district council and Highland regional council. The Highlands and Islands Development Board has also been informed that its proposal to provide assistance to the scheme has not been approved.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Adult Education

Mr. Turner asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the report by Her Majesty's inspectors on "Aspects of Educational Provision for Unemployed Adults in Wolverhampton"; and whether he will adopt this scheme as a national model.

Mr. Dunn: It is for individual local education authorities to determine their policy on educational provision for the unemployed adults in their area, taking account of advice and information available under the Department's REPLAN programme and from other sources. In reviewing their policy, they may well find it useful to study the report by Her Majesty's inspectors on educational provision for unemployed adults in Wolverhampton and to note the comments and advice offered in it.

Co-operative Awards (Science and Engineering)

Mr. Peter Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many and what percentage of co-operative awards in science or engineering allocated to universities in 1986 remained vacant by 30 June 1987.

Mr. Jackson: In 1986, 1,035 co-operative awards in science and engineering projects were approved at universities, and of these 324 (31·3 per cent.) had not been taken up by 30 June 1987. Awards approved in 1986 will be available for take up until March 1988.

Mr. Peter Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many co-operative awards in science or engineering there were from polytechnics in 1986; and what proportion of these were rejected.

Mr. Jackson: In 1986 there were 102 proposals for co-operative awards in science and engineering from polytechnics, and of these 55 per cent were rejected.

Spina Bifida

Sir Bernard Braine asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science, in view of the official recognition now given by the Committee on the Safety of Medicines that Pregnavite Forte F is an effective means of preventing high-risk mothers from bearing spina bifida afflicted children, if he will state why the Medical Research Council is continuing its folic acid trials which involve giving placebos to women known to be at risk of bearing an afflicted baby.

Mr. Jackson: I understand that the Medical Research Council has not seen the evidence presented to the Committee on Safety of Medicines. The council is unaware of any new evidence which suggests that preparations such as Pregnavite Forte F are an effective means of preventing high-risk mothers from bearing children afflicted with spina bifida. The MRC still holds the view that the value of vitamin supplementation in the prevention of neural tube defects is unknown and that it is important that the clinical trial which it is supporting be continued.

Sir Bernard Braine asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish in the *Official Report* full details of the Medical Research Council's trials on folic acid and the results so far.

Mr. Jackson: The council has informed me that at present there are 29 centres in five different countries and over 1,000 women participating in the trial. It is not normal practice to release results publicly before a trial is completed. The results from the trial, and any evidence from other sources, are regularly reviewed so that the trial can be stopped if clear evidence regarding the efficacy of vitamins in preventing neural tube defects emerges.

DEFECTIVE PRINTING

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Furniture (Code of Practice)

Mr. Holt asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what estimate he has made of the likely effect of his new code of practice on jobs in the furniture industry.

Mr. Maude: It is estimated that employment in the United Kingdom in the manufacture of upholstered furniture is about 22,000 and employment in the supplier industries is about 14,000. A substantial proportion of upholstery fabrics used in United Kingdom manufacture are imported.

It is difficult to estimate the effect on employment of the introduction of new regulations based on the code of practice proposals.

I do not anticipate that there will be significant adverse effects on employment in furniture manufacturing. One supplier of fire-retardant fillings has estimated that the development of these materials, which the code of practice approach will encourage, will lead to substantially enlarged employment in that sector, amounting to several thousand new jobs. The code of practice also provides opportunities for import substitution in the fabrics sector. Overall, the effect on employment in the furniture industry and its suppliers is likely to be beneficial.

Financial Services Act 1986 (Exemptions)

Mr. Barry Field asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he will grant exemption under section 46(1) *(a)* of the Financial Services Act 1986 to those members and officers of local superannuation administering authorities which are using external fund management organisations to take the day-to-day investment decision provided that the authority's own investment strategy satisfies the requirement of superannuation regulation P3;

(2) what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the protection enjoyed by members and pensioners of local superannuation administering authorities under the Financial Services Act 1986, in cases where the whole council, the committee or investment panel members, or county treasurers have not sought authorisation under the Act.

Mr. Maude: Under the provisions of section 191 of the Financial Services Act, members and officers of local superannuation administering authorities who use external fund managers are not likely to require to be authorised, provided that those managers take the day-to-day investment decisions. So the question of granting an exemption does not arise.

Fund managers who take day-to-day investment decisions will have to be authorised and will be subject to the appropriate conduct of business rules drawn up by their authorising bodies. Contributions to those funds will thus have the same degree of investor protection as is available generally under the regulatory regime.

Garment Imports

Mr. Anthony Coombs asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what action is being taken by the Government to ensure that imports of garments made from ramie are restricted through EEC quotas under the multi-fibre agreement.

Mr. Alan Clark: With the co-operation of Her Majesty's Customs my Department has been closely monitoring imports of garments made predominantly of ramie under an import surveillance arrangement which provides provisional figures at 10-day intervals. After significant levels of imports at the beginning of the year, the volume has fallen back sharply. At present the levels do not justify consultations with supplying countries. However I am aware that ramie mix garments are seasonal in nature and imports may again increase. We have alerted our Community partners and the European Commission to this possibility and my Department will continue to monitor imports and is ready to take action as necessary.

Bursett and Hallanshire Holdings plc

Mr. Ashton asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster why Bursett and Hallanshire Holdings plc, of Careta road, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, has not been asked to produce a report under the EEC code of conduct for companies with interests in South Africa; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: Full reports under the EC code of conduct are sought from United Kingdom companies with a controlling interest in a South African company. Other companies with a minority shareholding are expected to make efforts to ensure that the principles of the EC code are implemented and to report to the extent that they are able to do so. My Department's dealings with Bursett and Hallanshire Holdings plc have been in line with the code's requirements.

LAUTRO Rule Book

Mr. Butterfill asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what assessment he has made of the extent to which the proposed revisions to the LAUTRO rule book permitting pension quotations to be made in both monetary and real terms *(a)* may lead to investor confusion and *(b)* will permit investors to make an adequately informed choice between competing products; and what observations he has received on the above proposals from the Director General of Fair Trading.

Mr. Maude: No assessment of any proposed rules of the Life Assurance and Unit Trust Regulatory Organisation (LAUTRO) has been made because LAUTRO has yet to submit an application to become a recognised self-regulating organisation under the Financial Services Act. When it does so, it will be for the Securities and Investments Board to determine whether LAUTRO meets the criteria for recognition laid down in the Act, including whether its rules provide investors with at least equivalent protection to SIB's own rules. The Secretary of State will however have to be satisfied that LAUTRO's rules are either not significantly anti-competitive or are no more anti-competitive than is necessary for the protection of investors. In reaching this decision, the Secretary of State will have regard to a report on the effect on competition of SRO's rules which the Director General of Fair Trading will be making.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Educational Provision

Mr. Radice asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to make available the report of Her Majesty's Inspector on the effects of local authority expenditure policies on the education service in England in 1986.

Mr. Kenneth Baker [*pursuant to the oral reply of the Leader of the House*, 16 July 1987, c. 1281]: The HMI report on the educational provision made by LEAs in England, and the quality of response to that provision, as observed in the autumn of 1986 has been published today. Copies are available in the Vote Office. This is the seventh report to be published since this Government decided that HMI findings should be made generally available. Over that period the nature of the report has undergone several major changes. However, it is still based on inspections carried out in just one term. I have therefore asked the senior chief inspector to consider whether an annual report can be produced for publication which will distil the lessons to be gleaned from Her Majesty's inspectors' observations of teaching and learning in schools and colleges over the full academic year. The report should aim to offer local education authorities, teachers and parents an independent view of the nature, quality and effectiveness of the education provided in schools and colleges.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Ships' Crews

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action is being taken by Her Majesty's Government to ensure that ships operating from British ports are crewed with 75 per cent. British nationals.

Mr. Gummer: It has not been the Government's policy to require British fishing vessels to be crewed with 75 per cent. British nationals.

The British Fishing Boats Act and Order 1983 require any British fishing boat fishing in British fishery limits to be crewed with 75 per cent. British citizens or nationals of another member state of the European Community.

From 1 January 1986 vessels over 10 m have been subject to new licence conditions designed to ensure that vessels fishing against the United Kingdom quotas under the common fisheries policy had a real economic link with this country. These conditions include requirements that the vessel should operate from the United Kingdom, Isle of Man or Channel Islands and that 75 per cent. of the crew should be British nationals or nationals of a Community member state (other than, until 1 January 1993, Spain and Portugal under transitional arrangements on the free movement of labour in the treaty of accession) ordinarily resident in this country. These licence conditions have been the subject of judicial review proceedings and of references to the European Court of Justice for a preliminary ruling under article 177 of the treaty of Rome as to their compatibility with various provisions of Community law.

Farmers, North Devon

Mr. Speller asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if he will list the price supports, subsidies, grants and specialist help available for sheep farmers in North Devon;

(2) if he will list the price supports, subsidies, grants and specialist help available for dairy farmers in North Devon;

(3) if he will list the price supports, subsidies, grants and specialist help available for beef farmers in North Devon;

(4) if he will list the price supports, subsidies, grants and specialist help available for the mixed farm farmers in North Devon;

(5) if he will list the price supports, subsidies, grants and specialist help available for the horticulturalists in North Devon.

Mr. MacGregor: Farmers in North Devon, together with those in the rest of the United Kingdom, benefit from the support provided under common agricultural policy market regimes. In the dairy sector, this includes intervention arrangements for butter and skimmed milk powder, protection from low-priced imports by means of the levy system, and refunds to enable the Community to export to world markets. Substantial compensation is available to milk producers who take advantage of the outgoers schemes and for suspension of part of their quota.

Support for the beef producer is provided through the beef variable premium scheme; premium is payable on steers and heifers and young bulls sent to slaughter, provided they meet certain standards as to quality. At its current level the premium is worth about £51 per head — over 11 per cent. higher than it was a year ago. In addition, beef producers benefit from the operation of the intervention system and from the protection afforded to the internal market by levies on imports from third countries. Specialist beef producers (those with no dairy cows) may also benefit from the suckler cow premium scheme, receiving an annual premium of £33·40 — an increase of 35 per cent. on a year ago.

Sheep farmers benefit from the support arrangements of the Community's sheep regime. These include the payment of sheep annual premium on breeding ewes in the United Kingdom flock: and, in Great Britain, a variable premium on clean sheep going for slaughter. Sheep producers also benefit from the wool guarantee arrangements operated by the British Wool Marketing Board.

Hill livestock compensatory allowances are payable annually to producers with breeding cattle and sheep in the less favoured areas of North Devon.

The Community's common organisation of the market in fruit and vegetables provides for compensation to be paid to recognised producer groups which withdraw certain products from the market. Of products grown in the United Kingdom; cauliflowers, tomatoes, apples and pears are eligible for such compensation. There is also a system of reference prices and countervailing charges to prevent imports into the Community at unduly low prices.

Support under these and other regimes is also available to the mixed farmer. In particular, cereals growers with fewer that 100 hectares of arable and grass may be eligible for the small cereal producers aid scheme. Additionally.

potato producers will benefit from the market support arrangements administered by the Potato Marketing Board in Great Britain.

Under the agriculture improvement scheme, grant is available on a wide range of capital investments to small and medium-sized farms, including farms in North Devon, which put forward an acceptable improvement plan. A narrower range of grants is available to all farms for certain investments in horticulture and in works which are environmentally beneficial. The rates of grant vary from 15 per cent. in the lowlands to 60 per cent. in the less-favoured areas of North Devon.

Various grants are also available to co-operatives under the Agricultural and Horticultural Co-operation Scheme, EC Regulation 1035/72 and EC Regulation 355/77.

A full range of ADAS advisory services, including free general advice on conservation, rural diversion and animal health and welfare is available to farmers in North Devon. They also benefit from the plant health measures administered by my Department. Finally, my Department sponsors a wide range of research and development which is intended to be of benefit to the agricultural sector.

Intervention Statistics

Mr. Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are the latest available figures by commodity for the total amounts of food taken into European Economic Community intervention by the United Kingdom Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce; and if he will break these figures down by region.

Mr. Donald Thompson: At 31 March 1987 intervention stocks in the United Kingdom were:

Tonnes

	Cereals	*Beef*	*Butter*	*Skimmed milk powder*
England (Regions)				
Northern	208,164	6,912	28,190	1,034
Midland and Western	719,285	4,795	67,934	3,840
South-West	226,230	1,133	45,190	4,306
Eastern	993,024	8,477	26,143	—
South-East	81,073	1,774	15,880	—
Scotland	467,048	4,374	13,589	321
Wales	19,033	69	16,789	2,365
Northern Ireland	—	27,852	9,440	7,140
Total	2,714,127	55,386	223,155	19,006

EC (Commodity Withdrawals)

Mr. Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what amounts, by commodity, of fruit and vegetables have been withdrawn from the market under European Economic Community regulations in the United Kingdom so far in the current year, and each year for the past seven years; what proportion of that amount has been destroyed or left to rot; and what proportion has been put to some use.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The figures requested are given in the table:

Withdrawn (tonnes)

Marketing year[1]	*Used for human or animal food*	*Destroyed*	*Total*
Cauliflowers			
1987-88 (to date)	91	606	697
1986-87	4,100	20,000	24,100
1985-86	800	4,100	4,900
1984-85	560	7,800	8,360
1983-84	25	575	600
1982-83	110	8,100	8,200
1981-82	nil	nil	nil
1980-81	400	675	1,075
Tomatoes			
1987-88 (to date)	nil	nil	nil
1986-87	nil	nil	nil
1985-86	1	20	21
1984-85	5	125	130
1983-84	nil	180	180
1982-83	nil	54	54
1981-82	nil	5	5
1980-81	nil	4	4
Apples			
1987-88 (to date)	nil	nil	nil
1986-87	3,550	3,560	7,110
1985-86	2,100	8,500	10,600
1984-85	7,800	15,200	23,000
1983-84	2,300	3,600	5,900
1982-83	8,400	13,850	22,250
1981-82	160	300	460
1980-81	5,400	19,000	24,400
Pears			
1987-88 (to date)	nil	nil	nil
1986-87	230	33	263
1985-86	735	142	877
1984-85	600	130	730
1983-84	515	260	775
1982-83	535	30	565
1981-82	nil	40	40
1980-81	45	140	185

[1] Cauliflowers: 1 May—30 April
Tomatoes: 1 January—31 December
Apples: 1 July—30 June
Pears: 1 July—30 June

Mr. Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list by commodity, town of location, and amount in each store, the stocks held in European Economic Community intervention by the United Kingdom Intervention Board for Agriculture Produce.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave to the hon. Member for Pontypridd (Mr. John) on 15 July.

Food Aid

Mr. Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are the final figures of the amounts of food distributed in the United Kingdom under the free food for the needy scheme, broken down by region and by commodity.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information is as follows:

A. Products released from intervention stores: final figures (Regional breakdown by location of store)

	tonnes
Butter	
England and Wales	8,959·2

	tonnes
Scotland	1,571·0
Northern Ireland	3,093·5
United Kingdom total	13,623·7
Beef	
England and Wales	336·602
Scotland	146·475
Northern Ireland	557·752
United Kingdom total	1,040·829

B. Milk and milk products on which reimbursements were claimed by 10 July 1987
(regional breakdown by location of charity claiming reimbursement)

	England and Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom Total
Whole milk (litres)	2,989,537·45	497,444·96	1,409,501·07	4,896,483·48
Semi-skimmed milk (litres)	228,154·38	551,279·04	nil	779,433·42
Cheese (kgs)	7,385,251·42	1,427,402·56	1,401,875·77	10,214,529·75
Concentrated butter (kgs)	81,777·93	3,360·00	nil	85,137·93

Farm Rents

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the average rise in farm rents per hectare, for farms which experienced a rent change, for tenants in each of the English regions during the last full year for which figures are available.

Mr. Donald Thompson [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 July 1987]: Based on the results of the annual rent inquiry conducted in autumn 1986 the average changes in farm rents between 1985 and 1986 in the English regions are presented in the table:

Average changes in farm rent for farms with a rent change

Region	Percentage change 1985 to 1986
Northern	+14·7
Yorkshire and Humberside	+14·2
East Midlands	+10·8
East Anglia	+10·1
South-East	+8·3
South-West	+10·0
West Midlands	+14·4
North-West	+18·3
England	+11·5

TRANSPORT

London-Amsterdam Route (Passenger Statistics)

Mr. John Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Transport what has been the change in the number of passengers using the London to Amsterdam route since it was liberalised.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The liberal air services arrangements with the Netherlands were introduced in June 1984. Traffic between London and Amsterdam in the year ending April 1987 was 35 per cent. higher than in the year ending April 1984.

Ship Registration

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give the number of ships under British registry during each of the past five years.

Mr. David Mitchell: The number of ships of 100 gross registered tons and above under the British registry at the mid-point of each of the past five years is as follows:

	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
United Kingdom	2,754	2,503	2,386	2,298	2,173
Crown Dependencies[1]	72	67	82	80	83
Dependent Territories[2]	641	729	788	864	963
Totals	3,467	3,299	3,256	3,242	3,219

[1] The Crown Dependencies are the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.
[2] The Dependent Territories are Anguilla, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Montserrat, St. Helena, Turks and Caicos Islands and the British Virgin Islands.

Car Transporters

Sir Julian Ridsdale asked the Secretary of State for Transport: (1) whether he will make a statement concerning the recent incidence of accidents on the M25 and the M5 motorways involving car transporters;

(2) whether he is satisfied with the operation of the regulations relating to avoidance of danger for car transporters on roads;

(3) whether he will consider including car transporter vehicles in a code similar to the code for vehicles carrying dangerous loads;

(4) whether the Health and Safety Executive is enforcing the tying-down of cars to transporter structures on a national basis;

(5) now that many transporters are being introduced with three decks, whether he is satisfied that all the new designs are adequately tested and approved;

(6) whether he is satisfied with the operation of the law with regard to new triple deck transporters over tying down; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We are aware of only one recent accident involving car transporters. This was on the M5 on 10 July. I shall write to my hon. Friend about this when more information is available.

Car transporters with three decks have been used safely for many years. There are no statutory design requirements for these vehicles beyond those that apply to heavy goods vehicles generally.

The construction and use regulations require loads to be carried so as not to be a danger or nuisance to others. This is backed by the Department's code of practice on the safety of loads on vehicles which gives general advice for the securing of vehicles on other vehicles. The police, not the HSE, are responsible for enforcing the law governing the carriage of loads on vehicles.

Earls Court (Relief Road)

Mr. Carrington asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has received the report of the consultants examining the feasibility of the relief road for Earls Court; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I have received the consultants' technical report on the feasibility of options for the western environmental improvement route. Arrangements are being made for it to be published as soon as possible.

Copies of the full report will be placed in libraries in the area of the proposed route when it is available. In the meantime I am arranging for a free summary to be issued.

We shall consider the report carefully. The consultants have more work to do before the Department decides which options to put forward for public consultation which is planned for next spring.

The Department will be continuing discussion with the boroughs and operators, in particular about the traffic management elements of the package.

Traffic and Parking Regulations

Mr. Chapman asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Government are considering any changes to the law on traffic and parking regulations.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The traffic and parking working group, comprising officials from this Department and local authority association representatives, has drawn up a set of proposals to simplify and improve the legislation and procedures governing traffic and parking regulation. Its report is published today as a consultation document. It gives the views of the working group rather than the Government's own position. I am placing copies in the Library.

London Assessment Studies

Mr. Evennett asked the Secretary of State for Transport what comments he has received on the draft terms of reference for stage two of the London assessment studies; what changes he proposes to make as a result; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We have received comments from the local authorities concerned and from a wide range of other organisations. A number suggested that the studies should be expanded on a Londonwide basis, with a joint steering group with the London boroughs and transport operators, which would evaluate alternative strategies for London as a whole. Others asked that the studies should address the need for additional road capacity. There was widespread concern that the studies should consider options for both road and public transport improvements assessed on a comparable basis. There were also a number of detailed comments.

The assessment studies cover four areas which suffer from particularly severe transport problems. The studies are intended to identify practical options for tackling them within a reasonable time scale. They are only one of the measures we are pursuing to improve transport in London, including the existing programmes of trunk and local road improvements and support for more attractive and efficient public transport services. They are not intended to be a vehicle for reviewing policies for London as a whole. I have, however, amended, the draft terms of reference to make it clearer that the studies are concerned with all modes of transport, not just roads.

We shall be inviting the authorities concerned to join a consultative group for each of the studies. While we do not see the need for a formal joint steering group, we shall be glad to discuss wider issues at any time with the local authority associations and other representative organisations. There will be consultation on the stage two reports when they are completed.

WALES

Homelessness

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many people are homeless in each district authority area in Wales; and what were the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Grist: Information relating to the number of persons homeless at a point in time is not collected centrally. The numbers of persons accepted as homeless by each local authority for each year since 1979 are shown in the following table.

Persons accepted

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Aberconwy	151	203	159	130	99	167	74	153
Alyn and Deeside	301	250	205	237	251	239	427	366
Arfon	80	59	50	55	61	38	62	51
Blaenau Gwent	333	361	388	464	459	453	444	493
Brecknock	69	114	86	157	152	134	217	162
Cardiff	690	1,410	973	1,053	730	862	1,646	1,751
Carmarthen	187	160	152	127	192	136	218	165
Ceredigion	94	102	92	103	149	203	149	140
Colwyn	55	40	42	72	55	60	71	102
Cynon Valley	898	1,018	965	985	1,207	959	840	942
Delyn	175	151	264	240	197	255	297	391
Dinefwr	49	34	35	108	31	67	104	93
Dwyfor	138	60	106	74	69	124	126	142
Glyndwr	56	54	63	39	37	52	64	55
Islwyn	189	175	159	68	118	143	139	136
Llanelli	133	100	140	179	219	213	227	371
Lliw Valley	113	129	134	140	119	204	158	205
Meirionnydd	369	489	235	145	159	106	106	147
Merthyr Tydfil	454	392	272	238	263	232	225	179
Monmouth	515	380	532	434	475	447	717	664
Montgomeryshire	124	110	125	89	83	58	52	97
Neath	481	483	624	NA	1,016	963	806	793
Newport	864	1,110	1,358	1,300	1,218	1,199	1,513	1,254
Ogwr	338	343	517	736	599	448	826	1,667
Port Talbot (Afan)	170	133	94	112	160	226	164	304
Preseli	135	164	130	97	96	78	148	108

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	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Radnor	19	38	45	14	19	34	54	23
Rhondda	569	834	1,164	1,049	852	479	317	323
Rhuddlan	237	139	172	257	268	204	242	249
Rhymney Valley	534	720	510	284	418	344	629	643
South Pembrokeshire	143	188	181	202	230	280	224	165
Swansea	1,604	1,838	2,820	1,887	1,416	1,396	762	685
Taff-Ely	390	253	200	188	158	176	186	278
Torfaen	1,049	978	723	790	675	421	531	958
Vale of Glamorgan	620	749	636	1,314	896	726	570	427
Wrexham Maelor	235	471	353	212	238	439	411	467
Ynys Môn	137	83	33	26	44	54	50	62

Note: Homelessness data by number of persons for Neath in 1982 are not available.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many families are housed in temporary accommodation in each local authority area in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The numbers of homeless households in temporary accommodation at 31 March 1987 are shown in the following table.

Homeless households in temporary accommodation at 31 March 1987

	Number
Aberconwy	11
Alyn and Deeside	18
Arfon	7
Blaenau Gwent	25
Brecknock	2
Cardiff	81
Carmarthen	9
Ceredigion	1
Colwyn	0
Cynon Valley	59
Delyn	15
Dinefwr	11
Dwyfor	1
Glyndwr	0
Islwyn	20
Llanelli	18
Lliw Valley	24
Meirionnydd	2
Merthyr Tydfil	4
Monmouth	41
Montgomeryshire	3
Neath	24
Newport	105
Ogwr	10
Port Talbot (Afan)	42
Preseli	10
Radnor	0
Rhondda	1
Rhuddlan	1
Rhymney Valley	103
South Pembrokeshire	9
Swansea	0
Taff-Ely	1
Torfaen	8
Vale of Glamorgan	46
Wrexham Maelor	0
Ynys Mon	0
Wales Total	712

Housing

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many houses are available for rent in *(a)* the public sector and *(b)* the private sector, in each district authority area in Wales; and what were the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Grist: I shall reply to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many houses in *(a)* the private sector and *(b)* the public sector in each district authority area in Wales are unfit, or in a serious state of disrepair; and what proportion of the houses in each sector this number represents.

Mr. Grist: Reliable estimates of unfitness and disrepair in each local authority district will not be available until the results of the 1986 Welsh house condition survey are published.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many more homes than households there are in each district authority area in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The following table shows how many more dwellings than households there were in Wales on a country basis, as at June 1986:

	Number
Clwyd	7,000
Dyfed	9,000
Gwent	7,000
Gwynedd	15,000
Mid Glamorgan	8,000
Powys	4,000
South Glamorgan	1,000
West Glamorgan	5,000

Similar estimates are not available at a local authority district level.

These figures are not directly comparable with statistics given to the hon. Member by my hon. Friend on 22 January, at column *683*.The statistics in the reply to the hon. Gentleman's earlier question omitted concealed households—namely, married couples and lone parents living within a household headed by another person. Comparable figures which include concealed households are as follows:—

Dwellings minus households

	Number
1979	27,000
1980	27,000
1981	46,000
1982	51,000
1983	55,000
1984	56,000
1985	57,000
1986	56,000

Pensioners

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many people of pensionable age in Wales live alone; of

those, how many are over 75 years of age: and, in each case, what proportion of the population of that age group each represents.

Mr. Grist: The latest available information derives from the 1981 census. At that time there were 139,268 people usually resident in Wales who were of pensionable age in single person private households in permanent buildings; they represented 27·6 per cent. of usual residents in that age group. Equivalent figures for the age group 75 and over were 58,591 persons and 36·9 per cent.

Disabled Persons

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many disabled persons are living in accommodation unsuited to their needs in each local authority area in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The required information is not available centrally.

Wales Railway Centre

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement about the proposals for and the development of the Wales railway centre.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The Cardiff Bay Development Corporation is currently considering proposals put forward by the Butetown Historic Railway Society to establish a Wales railway centre in Butetown, Cardiff.

Nursing and Residential Homes

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many and what proportion of the retired population of each county of Wales are accommodated in *(a)* local authority owned and *(b)* privately owned nursing and residential homes; and what were the corresponding figures for 1979.

Mr. Wyn Roberts [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 July 1987]: The required information for residential homes is given in the following table.

Number of residents aged 65 and above accommodated in residential homes[1]

	Local authority homes				*Private and voluntary homes*			
	1979		*1986*		*1979*		*1986*	
	Number of residents	*Percentage of population aged 65+*	*Number of residents*	*Percentage of population aged 65+*	*Number of residents*	*Percentage of population aged 65+*	*Number of residents*	*Percentage of population aged 65+*
Clwyd	877	1·4	875	1·3	571	0·9	1,813	2·7
Dyfed	1,031	1·9	1,134	1·9	87	0·2	458	0·8
Gwent	989	1·7	961	1·5	59	0·1	277	0·4
Gwynedd	821	2·1	842	2·0	162	0·4	645	1·5
Mid Glamorgan	1,163	1·6	1,231	1·6	134	0·2	361	0·5
Powys	381	2·2	386	2·0	26	0·2	172	0·9
South Glamorgan	932	1·7	800	1·4	394	0·7	1,004	1·7
West Glamorgan	794	1·4	900	1·5	139	0·3	309	0·5
WALES	6,988	1·7	7,129	1·6	1,572	0·4	5,039	1·1

[1] Figures are based on the number of residents aged 65 and over in residential homes for the elderly, blind, physically handicapped, mentally ill and mentally handicapped.

Information on the number of residents accommodated in nursing homes is not available centrally, but the numbers of private nursing home beds designated for the elderly at 31 December 1985 were as follows:

Private Nursing Home Beds Designated[1] *for Elderly*

	Number	*Number per 100 population aged 65 and over*
Clwyd	655	0·97
Dyfed	8	0·01
Gwent	—	—
Gwynedd	202	0·47
Mid Glamorgan	—	—
Powys	—	—
South Glamorgan	140	0·24
West Glamorgan	351	0·59
WALES	1,356	0.30

[1] Excludes beds designated for general use but occupied by elderly people.

Comparable information for 1979 is not available.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Miss Heather Sinclair

Mr. John David Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has made any representations following the kidnapping in Sudan of Miss Heather Sinclair from Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We are making every effort to secure Miss Sinclair's release. I have raised the matter at the highest level with the Sudanese authorities, which have assured us that they are doing all in their power to help.

South Africa

Mr. Ashton asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further discussions he has had with European Economic Community Ministers on banning imports of coal from South Africa via other countries.

Mrs. Chalker: None.

Foreign Compensation (USSR) (Registration and Determination of Claims) Order 1986

Mr. William Powell asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the response to the advertisement about the Foreign Compensation (USSR) (Registration and Determination of Claims) Order 1986.

Mr. Eggar: The closing date for claims in respect of bonds was 31 March 1987. The total number of bonds received was 849,863, with a face value of £30,229,474. The closing date for claims other than bonds was 30 June 1987. At that date some 1,850 claims had been received by the Foreign Compensation Commission. It will be some time before an estimated value can be placed on these other claims.

European Community (Directives and Regulations)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the total number of directives and regulations, respectively, produced by the European Economic Community in the most recent year for which figures are available; and what were the comparable figures in each of the previous 10 years.

Mr. Cryer asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give the number of European Economic Community directives which have been applied in the United Kingdom in each year from 1979 to 1986 and 1987 to the most recent practicable date.

Mrs. Chalker [*pursuant to her replies*, 7 July 1987, c. *89* and 9 July 1987, c. *210*]: Although no official statistics are available, the following table indicates the number of directives and regulations adopted for the years shown. All directives and regulations are applicable equally to all member states according to the timetable laid down in each of them. The Commission's records do not distinguish between new regulations and those which update or amend regulations already in force, for example, by changing dates or adding new items to a list. Figures for 1987 are not available.

	Council regulations	*Council directives*
1986	514	61
1985	476	66
1984	377	54
1983	409	43
1982	449	44
1981	480	45
1980	443	64
1979	374	51
1978	428	66
1977	476	48
1976	494	57
1975	415	49

Source: Secretariat-General of the Council of the European Communities.

DEFENCE

Stonefield Military Vehicles Ltd.

Mr. Aitken asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the effectiveness of the Defence Export Services Organisation in support of the attempts by Stonefield Military Vehicles Ltd. of Rochester, Kent, to sell vehicles to the army of Thailand.

Mr. Sainsbury: My noble Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement held a meeting with my hon. Friend the Member for Medway (Dame P. Fenner) yesterday, and will write to my hon. Friend on this matter.

Armed Forces (Statistics)

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Defence what are the numbers of young soldiers who have left the Army before completion of their training in each of the last five years; and what are the comparable figures for the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force.

Mr. Freeman: Details of the numbers leaving the Army before completion of their training are not available. The table shows, however, for each service, outflow of male service men recruits within the first six months of their service, which is the period during which they may claim their discharge as a right. The table shows, for those who entered the services during each financial year from 1981-82 to 1985-86 and were aged 16 or 17 on entry, all exits during the first six months. Both the numbers leaving and the percentage they represent of the numbers entering at each age are shown.

Year of and age of entry	*Royal Navy*		*Royal Marines*		*Army*		*Royal Air Force*	
	Number	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*
1981-82								
Age 16	214	15·5	47	23·4	1,921	23·7	18	8·5
Age 17	101	14·3	25	17·5	229	21·5	91	8·6
1982-83								
Age 16	96	13·7	13	14·1	1,081	20·3	19	6·9
Age 17	103	10·1	26	19·1	238	20·0	78	7·6
1983-84								
Age 16	205	16·3	21	25·9	1,617	23·8	83	12·1
Age 17	143	12·7	35	31·5	900	24·4	216	9·8
1984-85								
Age 16	217	17·0	52	30·2	1,550	21·8	23	5·8
Age 17	155	14·5	73	26·7	1,055	25·1	126	7·9
1985-86								
Age 16	171	16·1	79	33·1	1,737	23·8	28	6·9
Age 17	176	17·3	82	33·1	927	27·6	138	9·3

Armed Forces (Bullying)

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many incidents involving allegations of bullying or brutality have been investigated in each of the armed forces in the last three years; how each incident was drawn to the attention of the authorities; what was the result of the investigations; if he will take steps to encourage reports of bullying and brutality; and if he will investigate the incidence of such behaviour in each of the armed forces.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) on 7 April 1987, at columns *172-73*. I also refer him to answers that he received on 7 April 1987, column *173* and on 2 April 1987, at column *565*. I must apologise to the right hon. Member for the fact that an incorrect figure was included in the answer that I gave him on 7 April; the correct figure for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines for 1984 is 10. The figure for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines 1985 is 5: this figure was not available when the question was answered.

Any form of bullying or ill-treatment is not tolerated in the armed forces. Reports and allegations of such treatment are always immediately and thoroughly investigated and where the allegations are substantiated firm disciplinary action is taken against those responsible.

Nuclear Materials (Transport)

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Defence what assesment he has made of the risks to the local populace of the transport of nuclear materials to and from Swynerton; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: For security reasons it has been the practice of successive Governments not to comment on the transport of defence nuclear materials. All aspects of safety remain under review, but the regulations applied by my Department are at least as stringent as those governing the movement of civil radioactive material, which were set out by my hon. Friend the then Under-Secretary of State for Transport on 25 July 1983, at column *289*.

ENERGY

Renewable Energy

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on his Department's research into renewable forms of energy.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My Department is supporting comprehensive research, development and demonstration programmes aimed at exploiting the significant renewable energy resource in the United Kingdom. Over 240 projects valued at nearly £60 million are under way, and a substantial number of new projects will be commissioned this year. Over £106 million has been invested by the Department since 1979 and strong support will continue to be provided to ensure that the renewable technologies will make the maximum environmentally acceptable contribution of which they are economically capable.

Increased attention is being paid in the programme to technical transfer and information dissemination aimed at stimulating increased commercial involvement in development projects as the technologies move towards commercialisation.

Hydroelectric Power Research

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the current status of hydroelectric power research by his Department.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My Department's small-scale hydro energy research programme is primarily aimed at supporting innovative devices which have the prospect of achieving the cost reductions necessary for the technology to become commercially attractive in the United Kingdom energy market, and at continuing to explore the potential for small-scale hydro energy in the United Kingdom. A study has recently been commissioned of the potential of small-scale hydro resource in England and Northern Ireland, and a review of the potential in the United Kingdom generally. The cost of the work is £156,000 and it will be completed in 18 months' time.

Geothermal Power

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on his Department's research into geothermal power.

Mr. Michael Spicer: In June 1986 it was announced that the hot dry rock geothermal programme in Cornwall would be extended for a further two years from October 1986 at an additional cost of £5·85 million. A further £1 million was allocated to support work at other centres. The aim of the work in Cornwall is to develop understanding of the nature, technical requirements, economics, and potential of hot dry rock technology sufficiently to make decisions whether to proceed to further experimental work leading to commercial exploitation at depths of up to 7 km.

Coal Mining Subsidence

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will give the reasons why his Department has not yet responded to the recommendations of the Waddilove committee on the subject of compensation for coal mining subsidence.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The committee made a very large number of recommendations on issues of concern to a wide range of interests. The Government have taken these all into account in preparing their response, which will be published as a White Paper shortly.

Bradwell Nuclear Power Station

Dr. Michael Clark asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has received the independent nuclear installations inspectorate's assessment of the Central Electricity Generating Board's review of the long-term safety of the Bradwell nuclear power station.

Mr. Parkinson: I have today received from the chief inspector of nuclear installations, the findings of the inspectorate's assessment of the long-term safety review of the Bradwell power station. I have arranged for copies to be placed in the Library of the House.

Coal Imports

Mr. Ashton asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many tonnes of coal were imported into the United Kingdom in total in 1986; and how many of these were from *(a)* Holland and *(b)* South Africa.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Total coal imports into the United Kingdom in 1986 amounted to 10·6 million tonnes (9·2 per cent. of total inland consumption); of which 218,000 tonnes (0·2 per cent. of total inland consumption) were imported from the Netherlands and 312,000 tonnes (0·3 per cent. of total inland consumption) from South Africa.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Chapman asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make it his objective to make the United Kingdom the most energy-efficient nation in Europe.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My objective remains to make the United Kingdom the most energy-efficient nation in Europe. I am currently reviewing with my right hon. Friend how best we can achieve this.

Onshore Petroleum Licensing

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Energy what plans he has for a further onshore petroleum licensing round.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I have today placed in the Libraries of both Houses a copy of the notice inviting applications for exploration licences in a second round of landward licensing. The notice, to be published in the official gazettes on 28 July, specifies that applications should be made on 27 October or 28 October 1987.

EMPLOYMENT

Tourism

10. **Mr. Anthony Coombs** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has on the first six months' operation of the "Great English City Breaks" programme, promoted by the English Tourist Board, in terms of bednights and revenue.

Mr. Nicholls: I understand that since the launch of the "Great English City Breaks" campaign in September 1986 some 26,000 bednights have been sold as a result of the campaign and that the cities involved in the programme estimate that over £1 million of spending by tourists has been generated.

24. **Mr. Roger King** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what estimate he has made for the growth rate of jobs per year in the tourism sector.

32. **Mr. Conway** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the trend in the number of employees in the tourist industry.

Mr. Lee: Employment in tourism-related industries rose by 149,000 between March 1984 and March 1987, an average increase of 50,000 per year.

26. **Mr. Bowis** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what action is being taken to alleviate the impact on incoming tourists of passenger delays at Heathrow and other United Kingdom airports.

Mr. Lee: Neither my Department nor the British Tourist Authority is aware of any major delays being experienced by incoming passengers at Heathrow or other United Kingdom airports this year.

39. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for the Employment if he will make it his policy to publish an annual list showing the most popular tourist attractions in each region, distinguishing between those with *(a)* paid and *(b)* free admission.

75. **Mr. Devlin** asked the Secretary of State for the Employment if he will make it his policy to publish an annual list showing the most popular tourist attractions in each region, distinguishing between those with *(a)* paid and *(b)* free admission.

90. **Mr. Mans** asked the Secretary of State for the Employment if he will make it his policy to publish an annual list showing the most popular tourist attractions in each region, distinguishing between those with *(a)* paid and *(b)* free admission.

94. **Mr. Nicholas Winterton** asked the Secretary of State for the Employment if he will make it his policy to publish an annual list showing the most popular tourist attractions in each region, distinguishing between those with *(a)* paid and *(b)* free admission.

Mr. Lee: Statistics on the most popular tourist attractions identifying those with free and paid admissions are available in the "English Heritage Monitor", published by the English Tourist Board (ETB) and "Visits to Tourist Attractions", published jointly by the ETB and the British Tourist Authority. Both identify the location of the attractions listed and are published annually.

"Visits to Tourist Attractions" lists attractions, broken down by category, separately for England, Scotland and Wales.

40. **Mrs. Maureen Hicks** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has on progress being made with regard to the programme of introducing a new system of signposting sites of tourist interest.

91. **Mr. Patrick McNair-Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has on progress towards introducing a new system of signposting sites of tourist interest.

Mr. Lee: I refer my hon. Friends to the reply given earlier to my hon. Friend the Member for Taunton (Mr. Nicholson).

53. **Mr. Neale** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is his latest estimate of the significance of tourism for the United Kingdom economy.

Mr. Lee: Tourism is a £15 billion industry which supports significant and growing numbers of jobs and is a major earner of foreign currency. In 1986 tourism spending was equivalent to about 4 per cent. of gross domestic product, and latest figures show that jobs in the hotel, catering and leisure and recreational centres were 46,000 up in the year to March 1987.

54. **Mr. Bevan** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has as to the forecasts by the British tourist authority of the number of overseas visitors to Britain in 1987 and as to the estimated expenditure by such tourists.

Mr. Lee: Information gathered from the tourism industry by the British Tourist Authority suggests that over 14·5 million visitors will come to Great Britain in 1987, and that expenditure by overseas visitors during the year will be over £6 billion.

64. **Mr. Ian Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has as to how many regional tourist boards *(a)* have or *(b)* propose to set up commercial member groups.

Mr. Lee: Of the 12 regional tourist boards in England, seven have formed commercial members groups. They are Cumbria, North-West, Yorkshire and Humberside, East Midlands, East Anglia, West Country and South-East. I understand that there are no plans at present to set up similar formal groups in any of the other regional boards, although all the regional boards already have a substantial number of commercial members.

72. **Mr. Fearn** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the latest estimate his Department has made of the number of full-time and part-time jobs to be created in the tourist industry.

Mr. Lee: Between March 1984 and March 1987, the number of males and full-time females employed in tourism-related industries rose by 105,000 to 725,000 and the number of part-time female employees rose by 45,000 to 514,000. Separate figures for part-time male employees are not available.

Community Programme

11. **Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the future of the community programme.

44. **Mr. Pawsey** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to make the community programme full-time.

Mr. Fowler: We plan to improve the community programme by making it full-time and paying a premium over and above social security entitlements. This will make the programme much more attractive to long-term unemployed people with families. We also propose to enhance significantly the training content of the programme.

41. **Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to extend the community programme.

66. **Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to increase the number of places on the community programme.

Mr. Lee: The community programme will provide valuable work experience for some 300,000 long-term unemployed people in 1987-88, the same level as in 1986-87.

67. **Mr. Fisher** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to alter the rules of the community programme.

Mr. Lee: We are considering a number of changes to the operation of the community programme. We have already decided that from 1 October all entrants to the programme must have been continuously unemployed for at least 12 months and that priority will be given to those aged under 50 who have been unemployed for more than two years.

73. **Mr. Andy Stewart** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to encourage married men with children to undertaken training and work experience on the community programme.

Mr. Lee: We are planning to make the community programme much more attractive to long-term unemployed people with families by making it full time and by paying participants a premium over and above their social security entitlement. In addition, we propose to enhance significantly the training and job search content of the programme.

101. **Mr. Maclennan** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he is satisfied with the balance in provision of community programme places relative to the number of eligible long-term unemployed.

Mr. Lee: Community programme places are allocated to regions and areas in the light of both national priorities set out in MSC planning guidance for 1987-88 and priorities determined locally in consultation with area manpower boards. This process takes full account of the distribution and concentration of long-term unemployed and I am satisfied that it results in a fair balance of provision throughout Great Britain.

106. **Mr. Harry Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the progress of the community programme.

Mr. Lee: The community programme is successfully providing worthwhile opportunities which enhance the employment prospects of some 300,000 people a year. There have been important improvements in the quality of projects and there is now a closer focus on priorities such as inner cities, enterprise, and national initiatives like crime prevention, energy efficiency and tourism.

Equal Opportunities

12. **Mrs. Wise** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any recommendations to make to local authorities and Government Departments on equal opportunity employment practices in inner-city areas.

46. **Ms. Ruddock** asked the Secretary of State for Employment whether his Department is giving any advice to local authorities, private employers and Government Departments on equal opportunity employment practices in the inner cities.

Mr. Nicholls: As a Government we are fully committed to the promotion of equal opportunities in employment. Our policy, reinforced by equal opportunities legislation and the codes of practice produced by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, is to persuade public and private sector employers that recruitment, training and promotion practices should be based solely on merit and potential.

Labour Statistics

13. **Mr. Colin Shepherd** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the present level of job vacancies registered at jobcentres in the west midlands area.

Mr. Nicholls: On 5 June 1987, the number of unfilled vacancies at jobcentres in the west midlands region was 21,300.

14. **Mr. Bruce** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will produce an analysis of the figures for employees in employment to show the number in full-time and the number in part-time jobs.

Mr. Lee: At March 1987 the latest estimates for employees in employment in Great Britain showed that there were 16·1 million full-time jobs and 5 million part-time jobs. This represents an increase of 121,000 full-time and 607,000 part-time jobs since March 1983. Over the same period there has been an increase of 378,000 full-time and 117,000 part-time jobs in self-employment.

18. **Mr. Andrew MacKay** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the current level of unemployment.

Mr. Fowler: Unemployment in the United Kingdom now stands at 2,905,000. The seasonally adjusted total has fallen 12 months in a row to the lowest level for three and a half years.

Over the last year we have experienced a fall in unemployment of almost 300,000, the largest drop in unemployment since records were first kept. There has also been a growth of over 250,000 jobs between March 1986 and March 1987.

22. **Mr. Allan Roberts** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what are the current levels of unemployment in the local authority areas of Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley and St. Helens.

Mr. Lee: The latest figures show that the number of unemployed claimants in the local authority areas requested was as follows:

	Number
Liverpool	52,537
Sefton	19,028
Knowsley	17,437
St. Helens	13,108

31. **Mr. Redwood** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is his latest estimate of the number of people unemployed in the United Kingdom.

102. **Mr. Parry** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the latest unemployment figures.

Mr. Lee: On 11 June 1987. The number of unemployed claimants in the United Kingdom was 2,905,325.

42. **Mr. Burns** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received relating to the fall in unemployment over the last six months; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: I have received no such representations. Unemployment has fallen more quickly over the past six months than in any equivalent period since similar figures were first collected.

43. **Mr. Janner** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the level of unemployment in Leicester in June 1979 and at the latest available date assessed on a comparable basis.

Mr. Lee: On 11 June 1987, the number of unemployed claimants in the Leicester local authority area was 17,209. Figures for local authorities are derived from the ward-based system and are available only from June 1983.

47. **Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will make a statement on the trends shown by the unemployment statistics.

Mr. Lee: Over the past six months seasonally adjusted adult unemployment has fallen by a record average of more than 32,000 per month. Unemployment has now been falling continuously for a year, and the fall of 287,000 since June 1986 is the largest for any 12-month period since similar records began in 1948.

55. **Ms. Short** asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time employees there were in 1979, 1983 and at the latest available date.

Mr. Lee: For the dates specified the numbers of employees in full-time and part-time jobs in Great Britain were as follows.

	Full-time	*Part-time*
June 1979	18,033,000	4,578,000
June 1983	16,029,000	4,527,000
March 1987	16,192,000	5,065,000

68. **Mr. Favell** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the latest unemployment figures for Stockport.

Mr. Lee: On 11 June 1987 the number of unemployed claimants in the Stockport local authority areas was 12,188.

74. **Mr. Loyden** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what was the number of unemployed in the Merseyside travel-to-work area for June 1987.

Mr. Lee: On 11 June 1987 the number of unemployed claimants in the Liverpool travel-to-work area was 95,322.

80. **Mr. Grocott** asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many people were unemployed in Telford *(a)* in May 1979 and *(b)* on the latest date for which figures are available.

Mr. Lee: On 11 June 1987, the number of unemployed claimants in Telford and Bridgnorth travel-to-work area was 10,518. Statistics of unemployment for travel-to-work areas are derived from the new ward-based system, and are available only from June 1983.

87. **Mr. McLeish** asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many people under the age of 25 years were registered as unemployed in the United Kingdom, Scotland and Fife, Central constituency at *(a)* June 1979, *(b)* June 1983 and *(c)* June 1987; and if he will also give the number of people on Government employment/training schemes on the same dates and for the same areas.

Mr. Lee: The table shows the numbers of unemployed claimants aged under 25 years in all the areas requested on 9 April 1987—the quarterly unemployment figures by age are not available for June—and in the United Kingdom and Scotland on 14 April 1983. Unemployment statistics for parliamentary constituencies are compiled using the ward-based system and are available only from June 1983. For April 1979 the figures given are the numbers of unemployed registrants in that age group.

Unemployed aged under 25 years

	Registrants 5 April 1979	*Claimants 14 April 1983*	*Claimants 9 April 1987*
Central Fife Constituency	n/a	n/a	1,955
Scotland	67,844	137,441	131,672
United Kingdom	451,371	1,191,760	1,025,939

Comprehensive information on the number of people on Government employment and training measures is not available in the form requested. A breakdown of the total

number of people who have benefited from the main employment, training and enterprise measures in 1979-80, 1983-84 and the estimate for 1987-88 is as follows:

	1979-80	1983-84	[1]1987-88
Adult training	110,538	109,850	[2]478,600
YOP/YTS	216,400	353,979	373,000
YWS/NWS	—	130,000	25,300
CI	5,806	9,612	8,000
STEP/CP	22,400	136,968	300,000
JRS	68,164	44,045	24,700
JSS/JS	—	656	1,000
EAS	—	28,453	102,500

[1] Estimate.
[2] Includes JTS.

92. **Mr. Ashton** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the current number of people in full-time jobs compared to July 1979.

Mr. Lee: In March 1987, the latest date for which figures are available, there were 18,653,000 full-time jobs in the employed labour force in Great Britain. In June 1979—there are no estimates for July—the figure was 19,950,000.

The employed labour force is the sum of employees in employment, the self-employed, and members of Her Majesty's forces.

98. **Mr. Speller** asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many job vacancies there are in the Barnstaple and Ilfracombe areas at present; how many are listed as unemployed in this area; and how he intends to improve jobs opportunities there.

Mr. Lee: On 5 June 1987, the number of unfilled vacancies at Barnstaple and Ilfracombe jobcentres was 371, and increase of 57 per cent. on the June 1986 figure; and on 11 June 1987 there were 2,830 unemployed claimants in the Barnstaple and Ilfracombe travel-to-work area; a fall of 150, or 5 per cent., since May, and 9·7 per cent. over the year.

The Government will continue to pursue policies of sound financial management designed further to reduce inflation and to promote investment, enterprise and increased employment in Barnstaple, Ilfracombe and throughout the country. These policies have so far produced more than 1 million new jobs nationally since 1983.

My Department and the Manpower Services Commission operate over 30 employment, enterprise and training measures described in the "Action for Jobs" booklet, all of which are available in Barnstaple and Ilfracombe. In addition, we are actively working with the local authorities in north Devon and the national and regional tourist boards to maximise the tourism potential of the area.

99. **Mr. Flannery** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the average percentage of unemployment throughout the United Kingdom; and what is the percentage in the Sheffield travel-to-work area.

Mr. Lee: On 11 June 1987, the number of unemployed claimants in the Sheffield travel-to-work area, expressed as a percentage of employees in employment plus the unemployed was 15·1 per cent. The comparable rate for the United Kingdom was 11·7 per cent. Expressed as a percentage of the total working population, the unemployment rate in the United Kingdom was 10·5 per cent.

105. **Mr. Ron Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many people under the age of 25 years are currently unemployed in Britain.

Mr. Lee: On 9 April 1987, the number of unemployed claimants under the age of 25 years in Great Britain was 981,345.

Small Firms

15. **Mr. Bellingham** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on his responsibilities for small firms.

Mr. Cope: Our Department is responsible for encouraging the growing contribution of small firms to the economy and especially to employment, and ensuring that it receives proper recognition within Government. Since 1980 the number of businesses has increased at the rate of 500 per week with a net increase of 29,000 in 1986 alone according to VAT statistics, and small firms created 1 million extra jobs between 1982 and 1984. We aim to build on this success.

56. **Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the prospects for the small firms sector.

104. **Mr. Stevens** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the growth of small businesses in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Cope: I refer my hon. Friends to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Kings Lynn (Mr. Bellingham). It remains the Government's intention to ensure that there should be a strong and expanding small firms sector in the United Kingdom economy.

Minimum Wages

16. **Miss Lestor** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will take action to seek to establish within the Council of Europe agreed recommendations on a minimum wage rate.

Mr. Nicholls: No. A minimum wage rate would raise employers' costs and threaten jobs, including the jobs of those it was designed to help.

Adult Training

19. **Mr. Gale** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will sponsor further schemes to offer unemployed adults training and jobs similar to the Open Door 87 scheme operated by the Hotel and Catering Training Board and London employers.

Mr. Cope: The Manpower Services Commission is already funding a number of programmes, similar to the Open Door 87 scheme operated by the Hotel and Catering Training Board, under the new job training scheme which offers unemployed adults the opportunity to gain relevant skills and recent work experience to increase their chances of getting a job.

Restart Programme

20. **Mr. Hayes** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what further measures are proposed for the restart programme.

Mr. Lee: We are extending the restart programme in order to provide reguiar help to every long-term unemployed person. The Government's intention is that interviews will be offered at six-monthly intervals to everyone who has been unemployed for more than six months.

30. **Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what study he has made of the benefit gained by those who have undertaken restart courses.

Mr. Cope: Restart courses are designed to help long-term unemployed people reassess their skills and abilities, and improve their presentation and job search techniques. A survey in 1986 found that 76 per cent. of participants considered restart courses to be useful or very useful.

84. **Mr. John Browne** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the restart programme.

Mr. Lee: By the 29 May nearly 2 million long-term unemployed people had been interviewed under the restart programme.

The Government's intention is that an interview will be offered at six-monthly intervals to everyone who has been unemployed for more than six months.

Since the programme began a positive offer of help to get back to work has been made to nine out of 10 of the unemployed people who have been interviewed.

Apprenticeships

21. **Mr. McAllion** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to increase financial support for apprenticeship training in Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Cope: The Government already make available substantial resources to support apprenticeship training as a part of YTS and have no plans to change this. The Government have already made available more money than ever before for the training of young people through YTS, amounting to around £1,100 million in 1987-88. The introduction of YTS, and its extension to a two-year scheme in April 1986, has increased the opportunities for all 16 and 17-year-old school leavers to benefit from the sort of structured programme of training and work experience which was previously available only to those undertaking apprenticeships.

Amber Valley

23. **Mr. Oppenheim** asked the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to visit Amber Valley.

Mr. Fowler: I have no present plans to do so.

Safety at Work

25. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he is taking to promote safety at work by encouraging the wearing of protective clothing and footwear; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: In promoting safety at work, the Health and Safety Commission and Executive, in general, give priority to the control of hazards at source. Where this cannot be achieved, the use of protective clothing and footwear may be required in regulations, a considerable number of which have been introduced. Their use is also promoted, where appropriate, in approved codes of practice and an extensive range of advisory publications of the Health and Safety Executive.

Manufacturing Industry

27. **Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for Employment how the number of jobs lost in manufacturing industry from 1979 to 1987 compares with losses from 1969 to 1977.

Mr. Lee: There are no figures for job losses and job gains.

Between June 1979 and March 1987 the size of the civilian employed labour force in manufacturing industry in Great Britain decreased by 1,960,000.

Between June 1971 and June 1977 — there are no comparable estimates prior to 1971 — there was a decrease of 705,000.

Some of the recent decrease in the number of employees in employment in manufacturing will be the result of reclassification of jobs, such as industrial cleaning, catering, computer services and road haulage, previously done by manufacturers' own employees and now done by subcontractors. This developing feature of our economy has the effect of exaggerating the extent of the move from manufacturing to service sector employment.

The civilian employed labour force is the sum of employees in employment and the self employed.

63. **Mr. Livsey** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the trend in unemployment in manufacturing.

Mr. Lee: The information is not available. The claimant count of unemployment cannot be analysed by the industry in which the claimant last worked. However, current indications are that compared with a year ago manufacturing output has increased, the rate of reduction in manufacturing employment has slowed, and overtime hours have increased.

Self-Employed People

28. **Mr. Neil Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is his latest estimate of the number of self-employed people in Britain.

Mr. Cope: In March 1987, the latest date for which figures are available, there were an estimated 2,643,000 self-employed people in Great Britain.

YTS

29. **Mr. Wood** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on Government funding for YTS.

Mr. Cope: The Government have made available substantial resources for two-year YTS, amounting to around £1·1 billion in 1987-88. This reflects the Government's commitment to offering young people the

better start in working life that YTS provides and to producing a better trained, better motivated, more adaptable work force.

While making this considerable contribution, the Government also expect employers to bear a fair share of the costs of training young people, in recognition of the benefits they will gain from a better trained work force.

58. **Mrs. Ann Winterton** asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many companies have been involved in the YTS programme to date.

Mr. Cope: We estimate that over 100,000 employers' establishments are involved in YTS, mainly as work experience providers. Surveys indicate that as many establishments again have been involved at some time in the past.

59. **Mr. Sedgemore** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what number of young people have refused a place on YTS in each year since the scheme was launched.

Mr. Cope: The Manpower Services Commission has estimated that around 20,000 to 30,000 from each year's cohort of 16-year-old school leavers have remained unemployed despite the availability of YTS places.

60. **Mr. Nellist** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will estimate the level of first year YTS allowance if it was uprated in line with the rise in the value of earnings since the introduction of YOP in 1978.

Mr. Cope: The youth opportunities programme allowance in April 1978 was £49·00 if adjusted to take account of increases in the index of average earnings between April 1978 and April 1987. YTS allowances are lower to reflect the fact that trainees are still learning, and YTS provides substantially upgraded training compared with the youth opportunities programme.

61. **Mr. David Porter** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the placement rate of YTS.

Mr. Cope: The latest figures show that about three quarters of young people leaving YTS are in jobs or further education or training three months after leaving their scheme.

77. **Mr. Robert Hicks** asked the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any proposals to alleviate the situation of individuals who, having completed their two year YTS, are unable to find permanent work; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: The Manpower Services Commission carries out a survey of all trainees three months after they leave the scheme. The latest figures show 75 per cent. in job or further education or training and 22 per cent. without work; many of those who are unemployed at the three-month point may in addition find a job at a later date.

In addition, young people can benefit from a range of other opportunities available after they leave YTS, such as the new workers scheme and the enterprise allowance scheme. In particular, the new workers scheme helps young people aged 18 to 20, who might otherwise be out of work, into full-time permanent jobs by offering employers an incentive to recruit young people.

86. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many young people have so far taken up places on the two-year YTS.

Mr. Cope: The Manpower Services Commission currently estimates that around 360,000 young people joined YTS in 1986-87; a similar number are expected to join in 1987-88.

Voluntary Part-time and Temporary Work

33. **Ms. Quin** asked the Secretary of State for Employment when he envisages a decision being reached on the proposed EEC directives on voluntary part-time work and temporary work; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: These draft directives have not been discussed by the Council of Ministers since 1985 and 1982 respectively. No further discussion is currently planned.

Dundee

34. **Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many full-time jobs he estimates have been created in Dundee as a result of the various pilot projects initiated by his Department in Dundee.

Mr. Lee: The pilot projects initiated by my Department in Dundee, which include the new job training scheme, restart and jobstart, are not job creation schemes; they are designed to give training, advice or other help to long-term unemployed people to enable them to compete more effectively in the labour market.

Hotel and Catering Industries

35. **Mr. Colvin** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received about youth training in the hotel and catering industries.

Mr. Cope: I have received no representations on this matter.

38. **Mr. Butterfill** asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many organisations in the hotel and catering industry have so far been recognised by the Manpower Services Commission as approved training organisations.

Mr. Cope: Fifty-three organisations in the hotel and catering industry have so far been fully recognised by the Manpower Services Commission as an approved training organisation, and 28 have been provisionally approved.

Low Pay

36. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is his definition of low pay; and what percentage of the full-time employed population in the north-west region fall below that level.

Mr. Nicholls: I do not believe any single definition of low pay would be generally supported. Nor do I believe that the introduction of a definition by the Government would serve any useful purpose.

Trade Union Ballots

37. **Mr. Prescott** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what response has been received from the Confederation of British Industry, the Engineering Employer Federation, the Institute of Personnel Managers and the Trades Union Congress on the proposals for balloting contained in the Green Paper on trade union legislation.

Mr. Nicholls: My Department has received representations from each of these organisations. In addition, Ministers have met the CBI, TUC and the Engineering Employers Federation. All four organisations have made their comments public.

Job Training Scheme

45. **Mr. Darling** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the average number of hours of training provided to participants in the job training scheme.

Mr. Cope: Trainees may spend between three and 12 months on the new job training scheme. In an average length programme of six months a trainee would have the opportunity to undertake at least 300 hours directed training.

Trade Unions (Reform)

48. **Mr. Ashby** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received on his plans for further reform of the trade unions.

Mr. Jack asked the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received seeking further trade union reform.

Mr. Nicholls: The Department has received 122 comments on the Green Paper "Trade Unions and Their Members", which sets out a number of legislative proposals. Eighty-four of these expressed approval of one or more of the proposals, or of the general thrust of the Green Paper. Further trade union reforms have also been suggested in a small number of other letters.

85. **Mr. McLoughlin** asked the Secretary of State for Employment when he expects to be in a position to publish details of his plans further to extend democracy within the trade unions.

Mr. Nicholls: Following consultations on the Green Paper "Trade Unions and Their Members" our manifesto set out proposals to strengthen the democratic rights of individual members in relation to their unions. It is now clear that these command widespread popular support and we shall introduce legislation later this year to fulfil our commitment.

I intend to publish the details in due course.

Ethnic Minorities

49. **Mr. Bernie Grant** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to tackle the severe discrimination faced by black people and minority ethnic groups in employment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The Government are firmly committed to the elimination of all unlawful discrimination and to the promotion of equal opportunities in employment for all workers regardless of race.

To this end the Department of Employment's race relations employment advisory service gives help and guidance to employers on issues concerned with the equality of treatment for all workers both as regards to access to work and progress within employment. In recent years the service has been advising on the provisions of the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice on the elimination of discrimination in employment.

The policy is also pursued through the Manpower Services Commission which seeks to ensure equal access for people of different races to all its public employment and training services and also supports language training to improve the employment prospects of members of ethnic minorities.

In addition the Department is playing a full part in implementing the Government's policy of ensuring equal opportunity in the Civil Service for people from the ethnic minorities, both at the recruitment stage and in their subsequent careers.

The reduction and elimination of racial discrimination in employment requires not only action by the Government but also the support of employers, trade unions and the community in general.

Worker Co-operatives

50. **Mr. Michael** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what responsibility he has for encouraging the development of worker co-operatives.

Mr. Cope: My Department sponsors the National Co-operative Development Agency which, amongst its responsibilities, seeks to encourage the growth of the co-operative sector by providing help and advice to existing co-operatives and to people wishing to set up such enterprises. Co-operatives may also benefit from my Department's wide range of policies to encourage the growth of small firms. The number of co-operatives has increased from 300 in 1980 to more than 1,500 at present.

78. **Mr. Turner** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will state his Department's current policy on work co-operatives.

Mr. Cope: Worker co-operatives can be wealth-creating enterprises which contribute to the economy and create jobs. Co-operatives are therefore entitled to Government assistance on the same basis as forms of business, provided they meet the necessary criteria. In addition, the Government seek to encourage the growth of co-operatives through the sponsorship of the National Co-operative Development Agency.

Disabled Persons

51. **Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the best available estimate of the level of unemployment for disabled people.

Mr. Lee: On 3 April 1987, the number of unemployed people with disabilities who were registered at jobcentres and careers offices in Great Britain was 60,997.

"Pleasure, Leisure and Jobs"

52. **Mr. Simon Coombs** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what progress has been made in implementing the action points in "Pleasure, Leisure and Jobs."

Mr. Lee: Last July the Government published a report "Action for Jobs in Tourism", which provided a detailed review of progress on the action points in "Pleasure, Leisure and Jobs". It is our intention on 27 July to publish "Tourism 87" a similar report setting out further progress.

Factory Inspectors

57. **Mr. Cryer** asked the Secretary of State for Employment, what was the number of factory inspectors employed in 1979, 1983, 1985, 1986 and 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The numbers of factory inspectors employed by the Health and Safety Executive are as follows (1 July figures).

	Factory Inspectors		
	General	*Specialist*	*Total*
1979	741	210	951
1983	648	197	845
1985	645	198	843
1986	[1]622	[1]202	824
1987	[1]609	[1]214	823

[1] Before April 1986 some inspectors now classed as specialists were categorised as general inspectors.

Recruits from a recent competition for general factory inspectors will shortly be joining the inspectorate.

Young Persons (Employment)

62. **Mr. Steen** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he is taking to ensure that the jobcentres in South Hams are taking all steps to see that unemployed young people are encouraged to take up work that is available.

Mr. Lee: Young people under the age of 18 are required to register at either the careers office or the jobcentre as a precondition for the receipt of state benefit. Vacancies are matched against the youngsters registration details and they are notified of suitable opportunities. In addition, all young people leaving full-time education in the 1986-87 academic year who are eligible for YTS are guaranteed an offer of a suitable YTS place by Christmas.

Young people aged 18 to 25 are treated in the same way as any other older job-seeker and registration at the jobcentre is not compulsory. The majority of vacancies are filled through the operation of self-service displays. However, anyone who remains unemployed for six months or more will be interviewed by a member of the restart team at which stage all suitable opportunities will be brought to their attention. Priority is also given to the 18 to 25 age group on the new job training scheme.

As with all unemployed job-seekers a young person who fails to follow up a suitable opportunity of work may be disqualified from receiving state benefit for up to 13 weeks.

Earnings

65. **Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the best available estimate of the number of people paid less than two-thirds of the average wage in 1979, 1983 and at the latest available date.

Mr. Lee: It is estimated that about 3·5 million full-time adult employees in Great Britain earned less than two thirds of average full-time earnings in 1979. The corresponding estimates for 1983 and 1986 are 3·75 million and 4 million respectively.

Unemployment (Trend)

69. **Mr. John Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Employment how the trend in unemployment in the United Kingdom compares with that of the other major industrialised countries.

Mr. Lee: Over the past year the unemployment rate has fallen faster in the United Kingdom than in all other industrialised countries.

Pay (West Yorkshire)

70. **Mr. O'Brien** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what action he intends to take to seek to raise the average level of pay in west Yorkshire; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: Pay in west Yorkshire or elsewhere is entirely a matter to be negotiated between the employers and employees concerned except in those industries covered by wages council orders.

Unemployed People (Assistance)

76. **Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what additional help he intends to provide for the long-term unemployed.

Mr. Lee: As we promised in our election manifesto, we shall (1) guarantee to provide a restart interview at six-monthly intervals to everyone who has been unemployed for six months or more; (2) aim within a year to guarantee a place on the job training scheme or on the enterprise allowance scheme or in a jobclub for everyone aged between 18 and 25 years who has been unemployed for between six and 12 months; (3) aim over the next five years to offer everyone who is under 50 and who has been unemployed for more than two years, a place in the job training scheme or in the new community programme, in a jobclub or in the enterprise allowance scheme.

82. **Mr. Watts** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what progress is being made in providing further assistance for the unemployed.

88. **Mr. William Powell** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what further measures are being proposed to help the unemployed.

Mr. Lee: We are continuing the successful economic policies which have secured six years of uninterrupted economic growth, helped to create more than 1 million new jobs since spring 1983 and brought unemployment down by nearly 300,000 over the past year.

In addition, we are continuing to develop, in accordance with our manifesto commitments, our programme of employment and training measures which help unemployed people to become self employed or compete more effectively for jobs in the labour market.

89. **Mr. Knapman** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what further help will be given to the long-term unemployed in the 18 to 25 years age group.

Mr. Lee: Within a year we aim to guarantee a place on the new job training scheme, enterprise allowance scheme or in a jobclub to all those aged 18 to 25 who have been unemployed for between six and 12 months.

Training Schemes

79. **Mr. Cox** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to increase training schemes for men and women now over 50 years of age and out of work; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: There are no current plans to increase training schemes for unemployed people over the age of 50. All the adult training schemes run by the Manpower Services Commission are open to anyone who is over the age of 18 and can satisfy the other eligibility conditions.

Employment Prospects

81. **Mr. Leigh** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement upon the future prospects for employment in the east midlands.

Mr. Lee: The Government will continue to pursue sound economic policies designed to further reduce inflation and promote the growth of enterprise and investment in the east midlands and elsewhere which have so far created 1 million new jobs nationally since 1983. As part of this overall strategy, my Department and the Manpower Services Commission operate over 30 employment, training and enterprise measures which are described in the "Action for Jobs" booklet.

Over the last two years the number of employees in employment in the east midlands has increased and we see no reason why this trend cannot be maintained.

100. **Mr. Rooker** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement about employment prospects for young people in Birmingham.

Mr. Lee: The Government will continue to pursue policies of sound financial management designed further to reduce inflation and to promote investment, enterprise and increased employment in Birmingham and throughout the country. These policies have so far produced over 1 million new jobs since 1983. We have been encouraged to note the fall in the youth unemployment in the Birmingham travel-to-work area, from 6,641 in April 1986 to 4,987 in April 1987, and are confident that this trend can be maintained.

Dock Work Regulation Act

83. **Sir Anthony Meyer** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will seek to repeal the Dock Work Regulation Act.

Mr. Nicholls: There has been no change in the Government's position with regard to the legislation governing dock work.

Training Access Points Project

93. **Mr. Baldry** asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the training access points project.

Mr. Cope: The Manpower Services Commission's training access point, (TAP) initiative is designed to provide direct public access via computer terminals to information about education and training opportunities backed by personal advice and further help. It aims to raise awareness about the training and education opportunities available and to help people to help themselves in making well-informed choices in this area. The feasibility of the project is being studied and the initiative will be evaluated carefully under a widening variety of operating and market conditions in order to determine the most appropriate way for TAP to develop nationally. Early usage figures for the TAP terminals, developments in the provision of supporting advice services, and technological developments stimulated by the initiative itself are encouraging.

Women (Employment)

95. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is his estimate of the increase in the number of women seeking *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time employment outside the home, in the last five years and 10 years, respectively.

Mr. Lee: The available information, which is from the labour force survey conducted in spring 1981 and spring 1986, shows that the number of women unemployed and seeking work in Great Britain rose by 176,000 between these two dates. Details of the type of work sought are as follows:

Change in numbers of women unemployed and seeking work between spring 1981 and spring 1986—Great Britain

	Estimate
Seeking work as full-time employees	−73,000
Seeking work as part-time employees	+157,000
Seeking work as employees with no preference between full and part-time	+71,000
Seeking work as self-employed[1]	+21,000

[1] People seeking self-employment were not asked whether they sought full-time or part-time work.

Comparable figures showing the change over the 10 years to spring 1986 are not available.

Disabled and Mentally Handicapped People

96. **Dr. Moonie** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he is taking to increase employment opportunities for disabled and mentally handicapped people on Manpower Services Commission schemes.

Mr. Lee: The Manpower Services Commission (MSC) provides a range of special schemes particularly designed for people with disabilities. In addition, people with disabilities, including those who have a mental handicap, have access to the full range of MSC schemes. In many cases the criteria for people with disabilities are relaxed. The MSC is keeping under review what further improvements are required to increase the opportunities for people with disabilities.

Employment Trends (Northern Region)

97. **Mr. Fallon** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the latest trend in employment in the northern region.

Mr. Lee: The civilian employed labour force in the northern region has increased in each of the last three years to December 1986.

The civilian employed labour force is the sum of employees in employment and the self-employed.

Conference Market

103. **Mr. Atkinson** asked the Secretary of State for Employment what was the value of the United Kingdom conference market in each of the last five years.

Mr. Lee: Estimates by the English Tourist Board of the total value of conference business in the United Kingdom up to and including 1984, the last year for which figures are available, are:

	£ million
1981	500
1982	600
1983	655
1984	735

YTS (Eccles)

Miss Lestor asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many young people in Eccles are on YTS schemes.

Mr. Cope: The information is not available in the precise form requested. On 30 June 1987, the latest date for which figures are available, there were 1,758 young people on YTS in Salford local authority district which includes Eccles.

Royal Ordnance Factories

Miss Lestor asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many redundancies have been notified at privatised royal ordnance factories since privatisation.

Mr. Nicholls: Information given to the Department under the redundancy handling provisions of the Employment Protection Act 1975 and the redundancy provisions of the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978 is given in confidence and remains confidential until made public by the company concerned.

Technical and Vocational Education Initiative

Mr. David Martin asked the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has on the introduction of the technical and vocational education programme in Portsmouth.

Mr. Cope: The Hampshire local education authority, which covers the Portsmouth area, has indicated its intention to submit to the Manpower Services Commission a proposal to extend its technical and vocational education initiative pilot project from September 1988. The authority has until 1 October 1987 to submit such a bid.

Subject to the proposal being accepted by the commission, the authority will be responsible for phasing in the extension of the TVEI amongst the individual schools and colleges in the county which will take part. This process will normally take three years from the extension starting date.

Mrs. Kathleen Toothill

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for Employment when a decision is likely to be made on the entitlement to unemployment benefit of Mrs. Kathleen Toothill, formerly of 4 Long Cross, Bessacarr, Doncaster, now of 14 Hillside, Lichfield, which was first submitted on 7 May.

Mr. Lee: Mrs. Kathleen Toothill claimed unemployment benefit on 11 May 1987. Payment was suspended, and the question whether she had voluntarily left her last employment without just cause was referred to the independent adjudication officer for a decision.

I understand that the adjudication officer has requested further information from Mrs. Toothill and will make a decision as soon as these inquiries have been completed.

Professional and Executive Register

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Employment when Her Majesty's Government intends to privatise the professional and executive register; if opportunities will be provided to outside organisations and companies to bid for it; and what was the financial performance of the professional and executive register in the most recent year for which figures are available.

Mr. Fowler: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Labour Statistics

Mr. McGrady asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what are the present employment and unemployment figures for the offices of Downpatrick, Ballynahinch, Newcastle, Banbridge and Newry.

Mr. Viggers: At 14 May 1987, the latest date for which unemployment figures are available, the numbers were as follows:

Social security office (including sub-offices)	*Number of unemployed claimants*
Downpatrick	1,635
Ballynahinch	865
Newcastle	1,176
Banbridge	2,169
Newry	6,411

It is not possible to give recent employment figures for the areas served by these offices. However, preliminary estimates based on the 1984 census of employment suggest that the numbers of employees in employment working in the district council areas in which the offices are situated were as follows:

District Council areas	*Number of employees at September 1984*
Down	12,650
Banbridge	8,450
Newry and Mourne	18,300

Purdysburn Hospital

Mr. Beggs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has with regard to the religious persuasion of *(a)* nurses admitted for nurse training to the Central School of Psychiatric Nursing at Purdysburn hospital in each of the last three years for which records are now available, and *(b)* the nursing administration at Purdysburn hospital.

Mr. Needham: Information about the religious persuasion of staff in the health and personal social services in Northern Ireland is not held.

Diabetics

Mr. Beggs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action has been taken to ensure that diabetics in Northern Ireland will be able to obtain disposable insulin syringes and needles free on prescription when the new scheme is launched on 1 September.

Mr. Needham: Under the scheme, sterile single-use U100 insulin disposable syringes, needles and needle-clipping devices will be made available from 1 September 1987 on general medical practitioner prescription to insulin dependent diabetics. To ensure that this equipment will be in sufficient supply to meet demand at the introduction of the scheme, the Department of Health and Social Services has already been in contact with the main wholesale distributors in Northern Ireland.

In early August, in keeping with the time scale for the rest of the United Kingdom, all general medical practitioners on the medical list and all pharmacists on the pharmaceutical list will, through the Central Services Agency, be given details of the scheme. Each pharmacist and dispensing doctor will also receive copies of a leaflet which offers guidance to diabetic patients on the safe disposal of injection equipment.

Manufacturing

Mr. Kilfedder asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the most recent figure for output in manufacturing industry; and how this compares with 1967 and 1977.

Mr. Viggers: The most recent figures available from the annual census of production and construction for Northern Ireland show that for 1983 the gross output of all Northern Ireland manufacturing establishments employing 20 or more persons was £3,797,785,000. Net output (which is gross output less costs of purchases of materials and fuels and cost of industrial services received) was £1,144,624,000 in the same year.

Figures of gross output and net output at current prices for 1967 and 1977 are as shown. They are not strictly comparable with the 1985 figures since a new definition of manufacturing industry was introduced with the 1980 census of production and the 1967 figures relate to manufacturing establishments employing 25 or more persons.

Year	*Gross Output (£'000)*	*Net Output (£'000)*
1967	775,201	230,227
1977	2,642,565	771,174

Companies

Mr. Kilfedder asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many new companies registered for value added tax in 1986; how many companies were made bankrupt in the same year; and how this compares with 1966 and 1976.

Mr. Viggers: In Northern Ireland in 1986 there were 3,245 new registrations for value added tax. Regional analyses of VAT registrations are not available for the period before 1980. There was no VAT in 1966. Statistics on the number of companies commencing liquidation are as follows:

Year	*Number of companies*
1966	76
1976	87
1986	220

Doctors

Mr. Beggs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many doctors who are not citizens of the United Kingdom were permitted to register at hospitals in Northern Ireland in the current year.

Mr. Needham: The number of doctors who obtained their primary medical qualification in Northern Ireland in 1987 who are not citizens of the United Kingdom and who obtained pre-registration house officer posts in Northern Ireland is 17.

Mr. Beggs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many doctors who were Northern Ireland graduates in 1987 were unable to register at a Northern Ireland hospital in the current year.

Mr. Needham: Two doctors who have obtained their primary medical qualifications in Northern Ireland in 1987 did not obtain pre-registration house officer posts at hospitals in Northern Ireland. Both subsequently were offered posts in Great Britain.

Clandeboye Shopping Centre, Bangor

Mr. Kilfedder asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if the fire brigade was able to use the fire hydrants during the fire at the Clandeboye shopping centre, Bangor; and whether it was necessary to take water from elsewhere to fight the fire.

Mr. Needham: In fighting the fire at the Clandeboye shopping centre on 3 July 1987 the Northern Ireland fire brigade used fire hydrants located both within the shopping centre and outside it. Water supplies from the six hydrants used were more than adequate and no other supplies were needed.

Flooding (Castlereagh)

Mr. John David Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he has received any representations about flooding in the vicinity of 79 to 106 Newtownbreda road in the borough of Castlereagh on 10 July; if there has been any previous concern expressed about the inadequacy of the storm drainage in the roadway at this location; and if he has any proposals to improve the existing drainage system.

Mr. Needham [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 July 1987]: The Department of Environment (Northern Ireland) received telephone complaints about flooding in the vicinity of 79-106 Newtownbreda road at 1745 and from 1800 hours onwards on 10 July 1987.

The site in the area of 79-106 Newtownbreda road is in a hollow with three gullies on one side of the road and two

on the other. The water service investigation revealed that all their manhole installations were intact and that the sewerage system was not at fault.

The roads service investigation found that exceptional rainfall on 10 July 1987 over a short period had washed debris into and interfered with the road drainage system. However the flooding had subsided when roads service staff reached the site. The road gullies were cleared and further work to ensure free drainage was undertaken on the following day. The system is also being checked for any further defects.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Hospital Beds

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many hospital beds in England and Wales, and in Scotland, respectively, are at present closed, due to shortages of nurses or the absence of other resources.

Mrs. Currie: Operational management of hospitals is a matter for local health authorities. Whilst from time to time we become aware of temporary bed closures, which may occur for a variety of reasons, there is no central record for England or Scotland which is either comprehensive or detailed. A record is maintained for Wales: at 31 December 1986 (the latest record) 316 beds were closed because of shortages of nursing staff or other resources.

Claimants

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the number of unemployed claimants who have a partner in full-time work and the number of unemployed claimants who have a partner who is also unemployed.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Civil Servants (Strike Action)

Mr. Holt asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many days were lost through strike action by civil servants in the North of England, in the six months ended 30 June.

Mr. Portillo: In the six months ended 30 June the days lost through strike action by civil servants in the Department in the north of England (north-eastern region, north-western region, Newcastle central office, North Fylde central office) totalled 115,302.

Disablement Services Authority

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many members of the Disablement Services Authority have a disability; and who was consulted about the appointment of its members.

Mr. Scott: Two members of the Disablement Services Authority are disabled—one is an amputee and one is a wheelchair user. The chairman, Lord Holderness, and the vice-chairman, Professor Ian McColl, were consulted about the appointment of the members.

Adoption

Miss Lestor asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the local authorities that are paying the adoption allowance and the number of adoptive children to whom it applies.

Mrs. Currie: The Secretary of State has approved adoption allowance schemes submitted by the following local authorities in England.

London Borough

Barnet
Bexley
Brent
Camden
Croydon
Ealing
Enfield
Greenwich
Hackney
Haringey
Harrow
Havering
Hillingdon
Hounslow
Islington
Kensington and Chelsea
Lambeth
Lewisham
Merton
Newham
Redbridge
Sutton
Tower Hamlets
Waltham Forest
Wandsworth
City of Westminster

Metropolitan District

Barnsley
Birmingham
Bolton
Bradford
Bury
Calderdale
Coventry
Doncaster
Dudley
Kirklees
Knowsley
Leeds
Liverpool
Manchester
Newcastle upon Tyne
North Tyneside
Rochdale
Rotherham
Salford
Sandwell
Sheffield
Solihull
St. Helens
Sunderland
Tameside
Trafford
Walsall
Wirral
Wolverhampton

County Councils

Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Cambridgeshire
Cheshire
Cornwall
Derbyshire
Devon
Dorset
East Sussex

Essex
Gloucestershire
Hampshire
Hereford and Worcester
Hertfordshire
Kent
Lancashire
Leicestershire
Norfolk
North Yorkshire
Northamptonshire
Oxfordshire
Shropshire
Somerset
Suffolk
Warwickshire
West Sussex
Wiltshire

A further 16 schemes have been submitted for approval.

Information on the operation of the schemes and the children who have benefited will be available next year from a research report commissioned by the Department from the National Children's Bureau.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the total amount spent in each district authority area in Wales on housing benefit in each year since the inception of the scheme, at outturn and 1987 prices.

Mr. Portillo: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Rating Reform

Mr. Charles Morrison asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what estimate he has made of the extra cost of social security payments arising from the introduction of the community charge.

Mr. Scott: In the only estimate so far made on this subject, the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" (Cmnd. 9714, paragraph 5.26) estimated that the full replacement of domestic rates by the community charge would lead to an increase of 4 per cent. in expenditure on housing benefit in Great Britain.

Child Abuse (Cleveland)

Mrs. Gillian Shephard asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he can now give further details about the judicial inquiry into child abuse in Cleveland.

Mr. Newton: As I announced last week Mrs. Justice Butler-Sloss has agreed to chair this inquiry. Her assessors will be Mr. John Chant, director of social services for Somerset county council, Professor David Hull, professor of child health, the medical school, Nottingham university and Mr. Leonard Soper, recently retired as chief constable of Gloucestershire.

The terms of reference will be:—

"To examine the arrangements for dealing with suspected cases of child abuse in Cleveland since 1 January 1987, including in particular cases of child sexual abuse, and to make recommendations."

The purpose of the inquiry will be to establish what has taken place in Cleveland with respect to reported cases of suspected child abuse, and to establish what, if anything, has gone wrong in the arrangements for detecting and handling such cases. The inquiry is not intended to judge whether abuse has taken place in any particular instance. Where such cases are being heard by the courts it is for the courts to decide such issues. The preliminary hearing will take place on 4 August.

Mentally Handicapped Children

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many children, by yearly age breakdown, are living in mental handicap hospitals in each health district; and how many of these children now have been jointly assessed by the appropriate local education authority, health authority and social services department.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 7 July 1987, c. *129*]: I cannot supply my hon. Friend with the information in the form requested as it is not centrally collected. The table shows the number of children resident in NHS mental handicap hospitals and hospital units in England on 31 December 1986. The breakdown shows the figures by four age bands for each health district, and includes children admitted for short-stay or respite care, but excludes children in small NHS units in the community.

Information on the number of such children who have been jointly assessed is not available centrally, but local education authorities have a responsibility under the Education Act 1981 to make joint assessments of children with special educational needs including those in mental handicap hospitals.

Children—resident patients in mental handicap hospitals and hospital units at 31 December 1986

Health Authority	*Aged under 2*	*Aged 2-4*	*Aged 5-9*	*Aged 10-15*	*Total under 16*
England total	2	19	82	289	392
Northern RHA	0	2	6	20	28
Hartlepool	0	0	0	0	0
North Tees	0	2	3	6	11
South Tees	0	0	0	0	0
East Cumbria	0	0	0	0	0
South Cumbria	0	0	0	0	0
West Cumbria	0	0	0	2	2
Darlington	0	0	0	3	3
Durham	0	0	2	5	7
North West Durham	0	0	0	0	0
South West Durham	0	0	0	0	0
Northumberland	0	0	1	4	5
Gateshead	0	0	0	0	0
Newcastle	0	0	0	0	0
North Tyneside	0	0	0	0	0
South Tyneside	0	0	0	0	0
Sunderland	0	0	0	0	0
Yorkshire RHA	0	0	4	21	25
Hull	0	0	2	6	8
East Yorkshire	0	0	0	0	0
Grimsby	0	0	0	1	1
Scunthorpe	0	0	0	2	2
Northallerton	0	0	0	0	0
York	0	0	1	4	5
Scarborough	0	0	0	0	0
Harrogate	0	0	0	0	0
Bradford	0	0	0	2	2
Airedale	0	0	0	0	0
Calderdale	0	0	0	0	0
Huddersfield	0	0	0	0	0
Dewsbury	0	0	0	0	0
Leeds Western	0	0	0	0	0
Leeds Eastern	0	0	1	2	3

Health Authority	Aged under 2	Aged 2-4	Aged 5-9	Aged 10-15	Total under 16
Wakefield	0	0	0	4	4
Pontefract	—	—	—	—	—
Trent RHA	0	1	10	49	60
North Derbyshire	0	0	2	2	4
Southern Derbyshire	0	0	1	7	8
Leicestershire	0	0	0	6	6
North Lincolnshire	0	0	0	5	5
South Lincolnshire	0	0	0	0	0
Bassetlaw	0	0	1	2	3
Central Nottinghamshire	0	0	0	2	2
Nottingham	0	1	1	10	12
Barnsley	0	0	0	1	1
Doncaster	0	0	0	0	0
Rotherham	0	0	2	11	13
Sheffield	0	0	3	3	6
East Anglian RHA	0	0	3	10	13
Cambridge	0	0	2	5	7
Peterborough	0	0	0	2	2
West Suffolk	0	0	0	0	0
East Suffolk	0	0	0	2	2
Norwich	0	0	1	1	2
Great Yarmouth and Waveney	0	0	0	0	0
West Norfolk and Wisbech	0	0	0	0	0
Huntingdon	0	0	0	0	0
North West Thames RHA	0	0	4	7	11
North Bedfordshire	0	0	1	2	3
South Bedfordshire	0	0	0	0	0
North Hertfordshire	0	0	0	0	0
East Hertfordshire	0	0	0	0	0
North West Hertfordshire	0	0	0	0	0
South West Hertfordshire	0	0	3	2	5
Barnett	0	0	0	0	0
Harrow	0	0	0	1	1
Hillingdon	0	0	0	0	0
Hounslow and Spelthorne	0	0	0	0	0
Ealing	0	0	0	0	0
Brent	0	0	0	2	2
Paddington and North Kensington	0	0	0	0	0
Riverside	0	0	0	0	0
North East Thames RHA	0	0	1	13	14
Basildon and Thurrock	0	0	0	0	0
Mid Essex	0	0	0	1	1
North East Essex	0	0	0	0	0
West Essex	0	0	0	0	0
Southend	0	0	0	0	0
Barking, Havering and Brentwood	0	0	0	4	4
Hampstead	0	0	0	0	0
Bloomsbury	0	0	0	0	0
Islington	0	0	0	0	0
City and Hackney	0	0	0	0	0
Newham	0	0	0	0	0
Tower Hamlets	0	0	0	0	0
Enfield	0	0	1	6	7
Haringey	0	0	0	0	0
Redbridge	0	0	0	0	0
Waltham Forest	0	0	0	2	2
South East Thames RHA	1	2	11	31	45
Brighton	0	0	0	0	0
Eastbourne	0	0	0	0	0
Hastings	0	0	0	3	3
South East Kent	0	0	4	6	10
Canterbury and Thanet	0	0	1	1	2
Dartford and Gravesham	0	2	3	4	9
Maidstone	0	0	0	0	0
Medway	0	0	0	0	0
Tunbridge Wells	0	0	0	3	3
Bexley	0	0	0	0	0
Greenwich	0	0	0	2	2
Bromley	1	0	3	12	16
West Lambeth	0	0	0	0	0
Camberwell	0	0	0	0	0
Lewisham and North Southwark	0	0	0	0	0
South West Thames RHA	0	0	4	30	34
North West Surrey	0	0	0	0	0
West Surrey and North East Hampshire	0	0	0	0	0
South West Surrey	0	0	0	0	0
Mid Surrey	0	0	0	2	2
East Surrey	0	0	3	8	11
Chichester	0	0	0	0	0
Mid Downs	0	0	1	5	6
Worthing District	0	0	0	0	0
Croydon	0	0	0	3	3
Kingston and Esher	0	0	0	0	0
Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton	0	0	0	0	0
Wandsworth	0	0	0	0	0
Merton and Sutton	0	0	0	12	12
Wessex RHA	1	7	9	38	55
East Dorset	0	5	4	18	27
West Dorset	1	2	3	12	18
Portsmouth and South	0	0	0	0	0
East Hampshire	0	0	2	8	10
Southampton and South West Hampshire	0	0	0	0	0
Winchester	0	0	0	0	0
Basingstoke and North Hampshire	0	0	0	0	0
Salisbury	0	0	0	0	0
Swindon	0	0	0	0	0
Bath District	0	0	0	0	0
Isle of Wight	0	0	0	0	0
Oxford RHA	0	3	14	28	45
East Berkshire	0	0	0	6	6
West Berkshire	0	0	0	1	1
Aylesbury Vale	0	1	0	6	7
Wycombe	0	0	0	0	0
Milton Keynes	0	0	0	0	0
Kettering	0	1	7	4	12
Northampton	0	1	7	11	19
Oxfordshire	0	0	0	0	0
South Western RHA	0	3	8	17	28
Bristol and Weston	0	1	5	2	8
Frenchay	0	1	1	9	11
Southmead	0	0	0	1	1
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	0	0	0	0	0

Health Authority	Aged under 2	Aged 2-4	Aged 5-9	Aged 10-15	Total under 16
Exeter	0	0	0	0	0
North Devon	0	0	0	0	0
Plymouth	0	1	2	5	8
Torbay	0	0	0	0	0
Cheltenham and District	0	0	0	0	0
Gloucester	0	0	0	0	0
Somerset	0	0	0	0	0
West Midlands RHA	0	1	2	19	22
Bromsgrove and Redditch	0	0	0	0	0
Herefordshire	0	0	0	0	0
Kidderminster and District	0	1	1	5	7
Worcester and Shropshire	0	0	0	0	0
Mid Staffordshire	0	0	0	0	0
North Staffordshire	0	0	0	0	0
South East Staffordshire	0	0	0	0	0
Rugby	0	0	0	0	0
North Warwickshire	0	0	0	5	5
South Warwickshire	0	0	0	0	0
Central Birmingham	0	0	0	0	0
East Birmingham	0	0	0	0	0
North Birmingham	0	0	0	0	0
South Birmingham	0	0	0	0	0
West Birmingham	0	0	0	0	0
Coventry	0	0	0	0	0
Dudley	0	0	1	7	8
Sandwell	0	0	0	0	0
Solihull	0	0	0	0	0
Walsall	0	0	0	2	2
Wolverhampton	0	0	0	0	0
Mersey RHA	0	0	0	5	5
Chester	0	0	0	0	0
Crewe	0	0	0	1	1
Halton	0	0	0	1	1
Macclesfield	0	0	0	0	0
Warrington	0	0	0	0	0
Liverpool	0	0	0	2	2
St. Helens and Knowsley	0	0	0	0	0
Southport and Formby	0	0	0	1	1
South Sefton	0	0	0	0	0
Wirral	0	0	0	0	0
North Western RHA	0	0	1	1	2
Lancaster	0	0	0	1	1
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde	0	0	0	0	0
Preston	0	0	0	0	0
Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	0	0	1	0	1
Burnely, Pendle and Rossendale	0	0	0	0	0
West Lancashire	0	0	0	0	0
Chorley and South Ribble	0	0	0	0	0
Bolton	0	0	0	0	0
Bury	0	0	0	0	0
North Manchester	0	0	0	0	0
Central Manchester	0	0	0	0	0
South Manchester	0	0	0	0	0
Oldham	0	0	0	0	0
Rochdale	0	0	0	0	0
Salford	0	0	0	0	0
Stockport	0	0	0	0	0
Tameside and Glossop	0	0	0	0	0
Trafford	0	0	0	0	0
Wigan	0	0	0	0	0
Special RHA					
Bethlem Royal and Maudsley	0	0	5	0	5

Liverpool Royal Infirmary

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if the site of the former Liverpool royal infirmary has been cleared of asbestos; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 20 July 1987]: The former Liverpool royal infirmary, like many other hospitals, contains asbestos insulation to pipes and certain equipment. Earlier this year vandals disturbed an area of insulation which was subsequently stripped and fine cleaned at a cost of £40,000.

The building is vacant, but entry is now strictly controlled by security staff. Part of the building has been declared free of asbestos and certificates have been issued to that effect.

A team of chemical analysts is currently at work in the remaining part of the building to investigate the extent of asbestos and whether asbestos particles are present in the atmosphere. The team is to prepare a report for the Mersey regional health authority and will make recommendations for any further necessary work.

The hon. Member may wish to write to the chairman of Mersey regional health authority for further information.

Derriford Hospital, Plymouth

Miss Fookes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if there has been any change in the timetable for the planned expansion of Derriford hospital, Plymouth, announced by his Department in February, especially with regard to the start date;

(2) if he will make a statement about the prospects for a maternity unit at Derriford hospital.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 20 July 1987]: I understand that South Western regional health authority has reviewed the timing of its capital programme in the light of progress on projects already under construction. The phase II expansion to Derriford hospital has been rescheduled for start on site in March 1989 and completion in November 1992 instead of April 1988 and March 1992 respectively.

The adjustments to the programme have been made in such a way that should the position on the programme change, the originally proposed start date for the phase II scheme could be reinstated.

Both the region and the district health authority are committed to the provision of a new maternity unit at Derriford subject to the outcome of detailed planning work now under way and the outcome of an approval in principle submission to the Department, scheduled for submission in September 1987. If approved present plans would mean a start on site in November 1990 and completion in February 1993.

Motor Cyclists and Pedestrians (Injuries)

Mr. Sheerman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide details of *(a)* the annual cost to the National Health Services, *(b)* the percentage of emergency orthopaedic admissions, and *(c)* the average length of stay in hospital for the treatment of (i) serious injuries suffered by pedestrians and (ii) serious injuries suffered by motor cyclists.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 20 July 1987]: The treatment of serious injuries suffered by pedestrians is estimated to have cost the National Health Service £26 million in 1985-86, and the treatment of serious injuries suffered by riders and passengers of motor cycles, scooters and mopeds is estimated to have cost £25·7 million. These figures are for England only and are based on an average length of stay for all seriously injured casualties of road traffic accidents of 12·5 days. I am sorry that I cannot give the hon. Member the information he seeks in respect of emergency orthopaedic admissions in precisely the form requested. The latest available information for all road traffic accident cases is given in the table.

Road traffic accident cases (RTA) treated in NHS hospitals, 1985, England

	Estimated numbers	*RTA cases as percentage of emergency cases*
Cases treated in Traumatic and Orthopaedic departments	3,200	12·0
Cases treated in other departments	2,387	1·1
Average duration of stay in days (all departments)	12·5	

ENVIRONMENT

Labour Statistics

107. **Mr. Riddick** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the level of unemployment in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Lee: I have been asked to reply.

On 11 June 1987, the number of unemployed claimants in the United Kingdom was 2,905,325.

Charitable Housing Associations (Tenants)

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether he is satisfied with the working of the Housing Corporation's home scheme for tenants of charitable housing associations; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what plans his Department has for the future of the Housing Corporation's home ownership scheme for tenants of charitable housing associations; and if he will make a statement;

(3) whether his Department intends to consult the Housing Corporation over the working of its home ownership scheme for tenants of charitable housing associations.

Mr. Waldegrave: The home ownership scheme for tenants of charitable housing associations was introduced in September 1984 to help tenants who were excluded from the right to buy. It has proved popular, but demand outstrips the resources available. I shall keep the operation and effectiveness of the scheme under review in consultation with the Housing Corporation.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) when his Department last provided additional funds for the Housing Corporation's home ownership scheme for tenants of charitable housing associations; and how much was provided;

(2) whether he intends to provide additional funds during the current financial year for the Housing Corporation's home ownership scheme for tenants of charitable housing associations.

Mr. Waldegrave: The funding of transferable discounts under the home ownership scheme for tenants of charitable housing associations has to be accommodated within the Housing Corporation's cash-limited approved development programme. In 1986-87 expenditure on the scheme amounted to £17·58 million; a further £19 million has been allocated for the current financial year.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many new home owners are estimated to have been assisted by the Housing Corporation's home ownership scheme for tenants of charitable housing associations; and how many are now on the waiting list.

Mr. Waldegrave: Since the scheme was introduced in September 1984, approximately 4,300 properties have been purchased. Over 1,100 applications have been made since the current waiting list was started on 1 October 1986.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he intends to seek to amend the way in which the Housing Corporation's home ownership scheme for tenants of charitable housing associations operates to take greater account of regional differences.

Mr. Waldegrave: The scheme already takes account of regional variations in house prices, and the Housing Corporation allocates funds to its regions on the basis of local demand for the scheme.

Improvement Grants

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes to announce modifications to the improvement grant procedure following the consultation he carried out with the publication of the Green Paper, "Home Improvement—New Approach".

Mr. Waldegrave: Shortly.

Flags

Mr. Robert Sheldon asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the cost of the new flags of the United Kingdom currently flying over the Treasury.

Mr. Chope: The 11 United Kingdom flags currently flying above the Treasury have been provided from existing stock and are not new. Their approximate replacement cost is £1,400.

Spectrum Arena

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much is due to the Warrington and Runcorn development corporation from the former lessees of the Spectrum arena, the Birchwood project.

Mrs. Roe: The outstanding debt was extinguished on the surrender of the lease.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if any specific proposals have yet been made by the Warrington and Runcorn development corporation to his Department about the amount and nature of investment in new facilities at Birchwood.

Mrs. Roe: The development corporation has sought the Department's approval for the construction of an indoor tennis centre at Birchwood and to its disposal on concessionary terms to the borough council. These proposals are being considered.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what were the losses involved in the operation of the Spectrum arena.

Mrs. Roe: The losses of the Birchwood Project (Warrington) Ltd. and its subsidiary the Birchwood Project Trading Company Ltd. are set out in the companies' accounts which are open to inspection under the Companies Acts.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if there have been any discussions between Warrington borough council and the Warrington and Runcorn development corporation concerning the sale of the Spectrum arena; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Roe: Discussions took place before the closure of the Spectrum arena last year.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the Warrington and Runcorn development corporation proposes to consult Warrington borough council over the future of the Spectrum arena.

Mrs. Roe: Yes.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will consider an increase in the rate support grant to Warrington borough council to assist in financing the purchase of the Spectrum arena; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Roe: Local authorities' need to spend on recreation facilities and on the financing of capital expenditure is already recognised in assessments of their grant-related expenditure, which is a major factor in determining their entitlement to block grant.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will consider a transfer of other assets from Warrington and Runcorn development corporation to Warrington borough council to offset any of the costs incurred by Warrington borough council in running the Spectrum arena; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Roe: The development corporation has submitted no such proposal to the Department.

St. George's Hospital

Mr. Chapman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how long the St. George's hospital building, Hyde park corner, has been unoccupied; what initiatives he will take to ensure this grade II building is adequately protected from any further deterioration which might necessitate its demolition; and what further initiatives he will take to ensure this building will be restored to its original design.

Mr. Moynihan: I shall answer this question shortly.

Rental Purchase

Mr. Pike asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if his Department currently gives any funding or financial subsidies to companies involved in rental purchase schemes; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what recent representations he has received regarding Bradford Investments plc; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what recent representations he has received regarding rental purchase schemes; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what is his Department's policy with regard to rental purchase schemes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: This Department does not currently give any financial assistance to rental purchase schemes. Representations have recently been received from one local authority and from Shelter on rental purchase schemes in general and Bradford Investment plc in particular. The Housing Act 1980 extended to occupiers under rental purchase agreements certain rights under the Protection from Eviction Act 1977. The Government are keeping the use of rental purchase under review.

Thamesmead

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give a full and detailed account of the terms of the sale of Thamesmead to Thamesmead Town Ltd.; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Roe: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing and Planning to my hon. Friend the Member for Erith and Crayford (Mr. Evennett) on 20 July.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has exercised his rights to nominate tenants to accommodation at Thamesmead; and what will happen to his nomination rights if Thamesmead is sold to Thamesmead Town Ltd.

Mrs. Roe: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has been content to leave the London area mobility scheme to agree suitable arrangements with the London residuary body and Thamesmead town while Thamesmead has been vested in the LRB. When Thamesmead is transferred to Thamesmead town his nomination rights will cease. Thamesmead town has, however, undertaken to make some vacancies available to the scheme.

Ministerial Cars

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the total cost of providing chauffeured cars for Ministers in each of the past five financial years; and if he will break down the total according to Department.

Mr. Chope: Costs for the years 1982-83 to 1985-86 were provided on 23 February 1987 at column 95. Costs in 1986-87 were £2,450,000. Breaking these down between Departments would involve disproportionate cost.

Housing and Planning

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when section 6 of the Housing and Planning Act 1986 will come into effect; why its commencement has been delayed; why he commenced section 9 of the Act before section 6; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Section 6, which concerns consultation before the disposal of housing subject to secure tenancies, is unconnected with section 9, which relates to redevelopment and disposal with vacant possession. It is planned to bring section 6 into force at the same time as section 8, which concerns the preservation of the right to buy, when regulations relevant to that section are ready to be made. They are currently in draft.

Albert Memorial

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has of the likely cost of restoring the Albert memorial; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: I shall answer this question shortly.

Local Authorities (Professional Services)

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received seeking the inclusion of professional services including architectural and engineering services within the ambit of those services for which local authorities will have to seek tenders within the terms of the Local Government Act.

Mr. Chope [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 July 1987]: The Department has received several representations arguing for the inclusion of further services in the list of those subject to compulsory competition.

There has been one formal representation about the inclusion of professional services since the Bill was published.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 22 July 1987

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Company Accounts (Publication)

Mr. Thurnham asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will provide the latest details of the current average length of time between the receipt of annual accounts by companies registration office and their publication, listed separately for April, May and June.

Mr. Maude: In recent months, days have been lost due to industrial action and an accompanying overtime ban. The Registrar of Companies estimates that the average time between the receipt of batches of annual accounts and returns and their publication at the end of April, May and June this year was around five weeks, six weeks and seven weeks respectively.

The registrar greatly regrets this lengthening of the time taken to place documents on the public record: he accords high priority to the reduction of the accumulated arrears as quickly as possible.

Net Book Agreements

Mr. Butler asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to what extent his Department's competition division monitors the operation of the net book agreement; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: The Restrictive Trade Practices Act 1976 and the Resale Prices Act 1976 provide the current legal framework within which arrangements such as the net book agreement may be considered in the light of the public interest. Judgments as to the public interest in such cases are a matter for the Restrictive Practices Court. As stated in my reply to the hon. Member on 15 July 1987, at columns 483-84, an application to the court to review its 1962 judgment in respect of the net book agreement may be made by the Director General of Fair Trading. There is no provision for the Secretary of State to make such an application.

It is therefore for the Director General to determine whether the conditions for an application to the court in respect of the net book agreement are met and in these circumstances the operation of the agreement is not monitored by my Department.

Textiles (Labelling)

Mr. Madden asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received from the West Yorkshire trading standards joint committee concerning false labelling on textiles with particular regard to the overstatement of wool content in garments; what further action he is planning; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: I have recently received a letter from the West Yorkshire trading standards joint committee on this matter. This is currently receiving attention.

The European Commission is currently investigating the situation and I understand that the Commission is expected to make known its findings in October.

Radio Navigator Receivers

Mr. Nicholas Brown asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when the report of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission on the supply of marine radio navigation receivers compatible with the Decca navigator system is to be published; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: The report is published today.

The Commission found that a monopoly situation existed in favour of several subsidiary companies of the Racal Group in the supply in the United Kingdom of marine radio navigation receivers compatible with the Decca navigator system but concluded that this did not operate against the public interest.

At the time the reference was made, the DNS transmitters were operated and financed by Racal. Complaints had been made about some of Racal's practices, particularly those directed against the supply of competitors' receivers whose manufacture Racal had not licensed. Racal explained these practices as being necessary in the past in order to generate and safeguard the income needed for it to meet the operating costs of DNS transmitters. However, as a result of a contract concluded in February this year with the general lighthouse authorities Racal, while still owning the DNS transmitters in the United Kingdom, will operate them under the superintendence of the GLAs and as a charge to the general lighthouse fund, which will provide the necessary income. Racal assured the commission that following this agreement it had abandoned the practices complained of and that there was now total freedom as to the use made of DNS signals. The commission was, however, critical of Racal's having made certain changes to DNS transmissions in the past which might have compromised safety at sea. The commission therefore made two suggestions about authorising future changes to the DNS transmissions and instituting type approval for all DNS receivers.

I accept the findings of the commission's report. Because the commission found that the monopoly situation under reference did not operate against the public interest, there is no statutory basis on which to take further action. I shall, however, be drawing the commission's suggestions on authorisation of future changes to DNS transmissions and introduction of type approval for all DNS receivers to the attention of my ministerial colleagues at the Department of Transport.

Consumer Protection Act 1987

Mr. Patrick Thompson asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act 1987 will be brought into effect.

Mr. Maude: My noble Friend intends to make a commencement order under section 50(2) of the Consumer Protection Act 1987 to bring into force on 1 October 1987 part II together with its related provisions in parts IV and V and schedules 2, 4 and 5. Section 10 in part II creates the general safety requirement, which requires consumer goods to be reasonably safe.

The same commencement order will bring the product liability provisions into effect on 1 March 1988 (part I and

schedule 1, together with the related provisions of part V and schedules 4 and 5). Businesses will need rather more time to prepare themselves for the changes to product liability and therefore sufficient time has been allowed for this purpose. However, my Department will be consulting interested parties urgently about the dates of implementation.

A guidance leaflet for manufacturers will be published explaining the way in which the safety provisions of the Act will work. Regulations ancillary to the general safety requirement will be laid at the appropriate time.

On misleading prices (part III of the Act) we expect to consult interested parties on a revised draft of the code of practice and any draft regulations in the autumn.

It is presently envisaged that section 36 and schedule 3, which makes amendments to the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, will be brought into force on 1 March 1988.

Textiles (Statistics)

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he will publish as a table in the *Official Report* the United Kingdom imports and exports of textiles and clothing from and to *(a)* other individual European Community countries, *(b)* the rest of the world and *(c)* the European Community for each year since 1970;

(2) what are the figures for imports and exports of textiles and clothing between the United Kingdom and separately, the European Community and the rest of the world in real terms for each year since 1975.

Mr. Alan Clark [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 July 1987, c. *583*]: The information is in the following tables. Information in real terms is not available.

United Kingdom trade in textiles and clothing[1] 1970 to 1986
Imports

£ million

	France	Belgium/ Luxembourg	Netherlands	Federal Republic of Germany	Italy	Irish Republic	Denmark	Greece	Portugal	Spain	Rest of World	European Community[2]
1970	11·9	14·7	14·7	21·9	20·6	38·1	7·7	0·2	20·3	3·2	232·3	153·5
1971	14·5	18·6	14·2	31·7	23·2	46·3	10·9	0·3	31·7	4·8	307·0	196·2
1972	19·3	23·0	16·0	33·9	26·4	55·7	15·1	0·4	42·4	4·6	351·7	236·9
1973	30·2	27·8	23·3	56·1	38·7	80·8	19·8	1·1	67·9	4·7	497·4	350·4
1974	42·7	35·0	32·0	73·1	60·6	108·0	19·9	4·6	82·8	7·2	624·1	465·8
1975	53·0	47·1	29·3	76·9	84·4	106·8	21·5	3·3	78·4	7·9	679·1	508·4
1976	66·9	65·9	43·1	116·1	128·1	132·9	23·6	8·1	78·4	9·9	621·9	673·2
1977	100·7	79·9	55·4	140·1	190·4	173·1	23·9	12·8	86·9	13·2	1,008·2	876·3
1978	138·2	123·5	87·1	190·4	272·5	194·5	28·9	18·9	118·6	22·1	1,179·6	1,194·7
1979	151·6	142·0	96·5	236·7	323·8	205·4	37·0	23·1	157·9	25·2	1,486·1	1,399·2
1980	140·7	149·0	91·2	222·9	264·0	197·4	37·3	27·9	146·3	23·5	1,474·2	1,300·2
1981	166·5	198·6	107·3	291·8	319·7	195·7	46·1	37·2	140·2	32·1	1,664·7	1,535·3
1982	190·4	212·1	122·5	374·3	374·1	197·5	48·7	37·1	184·7	36·1	1,649·9	1,777·6
1983	227·3	273·2	145·4	447·8	472·2	211·4	57·3	39·8	218·7	43·3	1,785·1	2,136·4
1984	288·7	326·7	188·1	548·5	565·2	220·6	67·2	52·8	267·7	53·9	2,137·6	2,579·5
1985	339·2	358·1	242·3	646·3	620·8	238·5	70·7	60·8	305·8	59·1	1,180·6	2,941·5
1986[3]	341·5	398·2	293·3	677·8	669·5	260·0	74·1	71·4	389·5	59·8	2,394·3	3,155·0

[1] Textiles and clothing defined as Divisons 65 and 84 of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC).
[2] European Community total includes all member states as at 1 January 1987 throughout.
[3] Provisional figures.
Source: Overseas Trade Statistics.

United Kingdom trade in textiles and clothing[1] 1970 to 1986 Exports

£ million

	France	Belgium/ Luxembourg	Netherlands	Federal Republic of Germany	Italy	Irish Republic	Denmark	Greece	Portugal	Spain	Rest of World	European Community[2]
1970	11·8	8·0	16·3	31·1	12·5	36·3	25·0	2·7	6·3	4·2	365·2	154·1
1971	13·4	8·2	15·6	34·3	10·4	41·9	26·5	2·7	8·6	3·2	390·3	164·7
1972	19·6	11·9	16·9	35·7	11·9	47·8	30·8	3·0	8·7	4·4	399·0	190·7
1973	28·1	18·2	21·9	45·4	17·2	67·5	44·0	3·9	14·4	7·0	501·5	267·6
1974	37·1	23·3	32·0	58·8	22·9	88·8	43·6	3·6	22·6	8·2	633·8	340·9
1975	45·2	27·8	41·3	71·5	21·4	92·3	43·6	3·6	13·9	7·7	596·2	368·3
1976	79·2	49·7	67·8	106·0	37·8	126·9	70·2	5·8	20·5	10·0	772·0	573·8
1977	105·7	69·8	96·2	152·0	47·2	168·1	79·8	9·7	19·9	10·3	986·3	758·8
1978	127·5	80·5	111·3	175·3	55·9	219·4	69·6	12·3	16·3	6·6	1,032·6	874·7
1979	164·0	94·3	124·6	196·6	80·7	265·6	73·2	14·1	18·7	11·6	1,047·1	1,043·4
1980	179·5	100·0	129·2	233·1	109·0	155·4	58·8	11·2	22·9	13·6	1,052·4	1,118·2
1981	159·0	81·6	112·0	188·6	94·8	254·9	43·2	11·9	17·5	11·9	1,074·0	975·3
1982	165·0	83·1	96·9	177·6	84·9	267·3	47·2	13·9	19·4	15·2	1,061·3	970·6
1983	172·9	85·5	105·2	206·0	99·3	288·5	45·6	14·3	19·7	16·4	1,096·8	1,053·4
1984	194·5	95·8	112·9	245·7	128·1	301·1	54·4	17·3	17·7	14·2	1,299·4	1,181·8
1985	118·2	106·1	133·7	268·5	147·8	326·0	67·8	21·2	24·9	16·3	1,531·2	1,349·5
1986[3]	268·9	121·5	147·0	335·7	148·9	345·8	74·2	17·6	30·2	24·9	1,425·0	1,514·8

[1] Textiles and clothing defined as Divisions 65 and 84 of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC).
[2] European Community total includes all member states as at 1 January 1987 throughout.
[3] Provisional figures.
Source: Overseas Trade Statistics.

ENERGY

Energy Efficiency Policy

Mr. Speller asked the Secretary of State for Energy if the energy efficiency policy proposals for 1987 submitted to the Energy Select Committee by his predecessor remain his policy.

Mr. Peter Morrison: It is important that energy is used efficiently. I am currently reviewing with my right hon. Friend how this can best be done.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Universities (Medical Education)

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if, in the light of Sir John Burnett's public statement at the Edinburgh university convention on Saturday 18 July, a copy of which has been sent to him, he is satisfied with the provision of medical education in British universities over the last 10 years.

Mr. Jackson: I have read Sir John's remarks with interest. The Government, in their joint note of guidance on medical education to universities and health authorities, have asked the University Grants Committee to give careful consideration to the level of funding it provides for medical education and to the guidance it gives to institutions. The UGC has impressed upon universities the need for decisions about clinical academic posts to be the subject of close consultation with the relevant health authorities. The Government are also examining the arrangements for co-ordination and co-operation among the relevant Departments at national level and the responses received to the recommendations on this matter by the Croham committee ("Review of the University Grants Committee", Cm. 81).

Non-advanced Further Education

Mr. Robert G. Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when the report of the joint efficiency study of non-advanced further education will be published; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The report, which is entitled "Managing Colleges Efficiently", is published today.

It recommends a number of measures which LEAs and further education colleges should take so as to manage their resources more efficiently and effectively. It is the outcome of a joint study undertaken by the DES, the WOED and the local authority associations, and we intend to build on that partnership so as to ensure that the report's challenging recommendations are implemented.

Sports Facilities

Mr. Mans asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has yet received the report from the study of the dual use of school sports facilities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: This study which has now been completed confirms first that there is scope for expanding the dual use of school sports facilities. Secondly it makes recommendations for improved accounting, management and marketing for dual use. We shall now be working towards the publication of practical advice arising from this study. A copy of the report has been placed in the Library.

Interim Advisory Committee on School Teachers' Pay and Conditions

Mr. Curry asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science who will be the members of the interim advisory committee on school teachers' pay and conditions.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The membership of the Interim Advisory Committee on School Teachers' Pay and Conditions is as follows:

Chairman

Lord Chilver FRS:—
Vice-Chancellor of Cranfield Institute of Technology.

Members

Dr. Peter Andrews CBE:—
GCSE Co-ordinator for Derbyshire, former head of a comprehensive school in Derbyshire.

Mr. Geoffrey Armstrong:—
Director of Metal Box PLC.

Mr. Ray Carter:—
Director of Marathon Oil (UK) Ltd., and Former Labour Member of Parliament for Birmingham, Northfield.

Mrs. Judith Chaplin:—
Head of policy unit, Institute of Directors and former Chairman of Norfolk County Council Education Committee.

Mr. Ken Graham CBE:—
Recently retired Deputy General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress.

Dr. Anne Hogg:—
Consultant and member of the Doctors and Dentists Review Body.

Mrs. Rosemary White:—
Just retiring as head of a primary school in Cardiff.

The committee's first main task will be to advise on the April 1988 pay settlement for school teachers in England and Wales in accordance with the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Act 1987.

Universities (Grants)

Mr. Sumberg asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will list grants made available to universities in Great Britain in the financial year 1986-87, on the advice of the University Grants Committee and the Computer Board.

Mr. Jackson: The information requested is as follows:

Grants to Universities and Colleges, etc.

1986-87

	For Recurrent Grants			
	General Purposes	*Overseas Research Student Awards Scheme*	*Total Subhead C1*	*Computers Subhead D2*
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Aston University	16,181	27	16,208	223
Bath University	14,239	55	14,294	1,454
Birmingham University	42,007	71	42,078	348
Bradford University	16,262	12	16,274	180
Bristol University	32,691	35	32,726	278
Brunel University	13,960	15	13,975	140
Cambridge University	46,479	861	47,340	556
City University	12,943	13	12,956	170
Durham University	18,973	35	19,008	123
East Anglia University	14,775	15	14,790	188
Essex University	9,488	38	9,526	205
Exeter University	16,658	23	16,681	85
Hull University	15,659	6	15,665	229
Keele University	9,237	6	9,243	165
Kent University	12,142	14	12,156	218
Lancaster University	14,653	23	14,676	220
Leeds University[4]	45,990	157	46,147	359
Leicester University	19,855	20	19,875	171
Liverpool University	40,634	77	40,711	267
London Business School	2,246	10	2,256	0
London University, including its Colleges and Schools[4]	249,967	1,043	251,010	5,883
Loughborough University of Technology	20,065	34	20,099	252
Manchester Business School	1,771	3	1,774	43
Manchester University	52,147	107	52,254	3,070
Manchester University Institute of Science and Technology	18,441	222	18,663	
Newcastle upon Tyne University	35,567	69	35,636	351
Nottingham University	30,471	40	30,511	432
Oxford University	46,741	553	47,294	587
Reading University	20,402	49	20,451	177
Salford University	14,512	17	14,529	311
Sheffield University	35,377	92	35,469	239
Southampton University	27,286	77	27,363	319
Surrey University	13,870	44	13,914	172
Sussex University	15,299	58	15,357	125
Warwick University	20,364	18	20,382	240
York University	12,570	28	12,598	116
University of Wales, including University Colleges and Institute of Science and Technology	77,128	141	77,269	863
Aberdeen University	24,942	32	24,974	305
Dundee University	17,186	33	17,219	118
Edinburgh University	52,083	132	52,215	892
Glasgow University	49,158	72	49,230	345
Heriot-Watt University	13,086	26	13,112	157
St. Andrews University	13,273	33	13,306	116
Stirling University	10,124	15	10,139	107
Strathclyde University	27,868	108	27,976	295
Other payments	[1]649	[2]145	794	[3]603
TOTAL	1,315,419	4,074	1,320,123	21,695

[1] £609,000 paid direct to the University Central Council on Admissions, and £40,000 in respect of the National Engineering Laboratory, East Kilbride.

[2] £104,000 paid to Cranfield Institute of Technology, £33,000 to the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals for administration of the Overseas Research Student Fees Support Scheme and £8,000 to the Royal College of Art.

[3] £603,000 paid to the Rutherford and Appleton Laboratories (SERC).

[4] In addition to the payments tabulated alongside, the following in respect of subhead D1, compensation for loss of fee income were also made:- Leeds £17,000 and London £6,000.

1986-87

	For Capital Expenditure			
	Universities etc. Subhead A1(1)	*Medical and Dental Schools Subhead A1(2)*	*Equipment and Furniture Subhead A2*[1]	*Computers Subhead B1*
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Aston University	—	—	1,612	49
Bath University	751	—	1,426	718

	For Capital Expenditure			
	Universities etc. Subhead A1(1)	*Medical and Dental Schools Subhead A1(2)*	*Equipment and Furniture Subhead A2*[1]	*Computers Subhead B1*
	£000	*£000*	*£000*	*£000*
Birmingham University	—	94	3,052	1
Bradford University	—	—	1,290	211
Bristol University	51	15	2,707	126
Brunel University	—	—	1,241	197
Cambridge University	—	32	5,861	116
City University	—	—	817	4
Durham University	74	—	1,198	4
East Anglia University	61	—	828	768
Essex University	—	—	637	8
Exeter University	—	4	975	8
Hull University	—	—	869	251
Keele University	59	—	542	17
Kent University	—	—	686	686
Lancaster University	—	—	897	24
Leeds University	—	158	3,273	84
Leicester University	—	35	1,392	284
Liverpool University	25	93	3,138	—
London Business School	150	—	69	—
London University, including its Colleges and Schools	1,335	5,992	22,286	4,595
Loughborough University of Technology	—	—	1,865	—
Manchester Business School	—	—	42	—
Manchester University	394	700	3,900	1,899
Manchester University Institute of Science and Technology	1,868	—	2,668	
Newcastle upon Tyne University	—	315	2,573	407
Nottingham University	—	640	2,456	16
Oxford University	111	101	5,711	3
Reading University	63	—	1,695	58
Salford University	985	—	1,180	23
Sheffield University	—	107	2,546	54
Southampton University	1,775	653	3,218	1,771
Surrey University	—	—	1,359	—
Sussex University	—	—	1,208	326
Warwick University	21	—	1,331	28
York University	—	—	971	617
University of Wales, including University Colleges and Institute of Science and Technology	506	—	5,643	693
Aberdeen University	—	64	1,601	—
Dundee University	819	—	1,276	4
Edinburgh University	—	—	3,630	151
Glasgow University	186	53	3,718	11
Heriot-Watt University	3,771	—	1,470	9
St. Andrews University	—	—	716	—
Stirling University	—	—	476	—
Strathclyde University	75	—	1,995	551
Other payments	—	—	—	[2]514
Total	13,080	9,056	108,044	15,285

[1] The sums provided from Subhead A2, earmarked for individual universities as shown, were transferred to a Deposit Account with the Paymaster General from which issues were made as required towards meeting the cost of furniture and equipment. The balance remaining in the Deposit Account at 31 March 1987, which is not liable to surrender to the Consolidated Fund, was £15,839,000. This sum includes £2,418,000 in respect of the Engineering and Technology Programme for use in 1987-88.

[2] Other payments comprise £300,000 fees paid to the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency for negotiating contract and £214,000 paid to the Rutherford and Appleton Laboratories (SERC) for networking projects.

Grants and loans for long-term capital projects: universities etc. (subhead A1(1))
Details of expenditure on works services costing more than £1,000,000 shown in table 1 to the Estimate

1986-87

Project	*Provision £000*	*Expenditure £000*	*Expenditure compared with provision*	
			Less than provided £000	*More than provided £000*
Building projects and purchases of existing buildings:				
1. New and on-going projects originally expected to cost £1 million or more				
East Anglia University Education Building	61	61	—	—
Glasgow University: Library III	185	153	32	—
Salford University: Physical Restructuring	1,982	804	1,178	—

Project	Provision £000	Expenditure £000	Expenditure compared with provision: Less than provided £000	Expenditure compared with provision: More than provided £000
London University: Bedford/Royal Holloway merger				
(a) Earth Sciences Building	74	140	—	66
(b) Life Sciences, Arts and Mathematics	71	—	71	—
Liverpool University: Faculty of Education and Extension Studies	25	25	—	—
Heriot-Watt University:				
(a) Department of Building	1,233	1,460	—	227
(b) Administration Building	546	578	—	32
(c) Chemical and Process Engineering	714	485	229	—
(d) Library Phase II	635	334	301	—
(e) Department of Brewing and Biological Science	407	387	20	—
Southampton University: Library	1,435	1,683	—	248
UMIST: Library	1,007	1,868	—	861
Bath University: Building 6 East	1,175	751	424	—
Dundee University: Library	841	819	22	—
London University: Queen Mary College: Library	1,595	825	770	—
SUB TOTAL	11,986	10,373	3,047	1,434
2. Engineering and Technology Programme	1,300	504	796	—
3. Ongoing projects	—	2,203	—	2,203
TOTAL (Universities etc.) (subhead A1(1))	13,286	13,080	3,843	3,637

1986-87

Grants and Loans for Long Term Capital Projects: Medical and Dental Schools, (Subhead A1(2))
Details of expenditure on works services costing more than £1,000,000 shown in Table 2 to the Estimate

Project	Provision £000	Expenditure £000	Expenditure compared with Provision: Less than Provided £000	Expenditure compared with Provision: More than Provided £000
Building projects and purchases of existing buildings:				
1. New and on-going projects originally expected to cost the UGC £1 million or more				
London University: St. Mary's HMS, Phase 1B	895	890	5	—
London University: Institute of Child Care, Cardiac Wing, Remedial Works	970	2,242	—	1,272
London University: Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Cyclotron Building, Remedial Works	280	258	22	—
London University: Cardiothoracic Institute, Cardiothoracic Centre, Phase I	195	766	—	571
London University: Institute of Dermatology, Relocation at St. Thomas' Hospital	570	—	570	—
Manchester University: Royal Infirmary, Phase II	340	598	—	258
Sheffield University: School of Clinical Dentistry	345	99	246	—
2. New and on-going phased medical projects, the total UGC contribution to all phases expected to be £1 million or more				
London University: St. George's HMS, Block H	25	74	—	49
London University: Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Redevelopment of Hammersmith Hospital, Phase I	245	265	—	20
London University: University College Middlesex HMS Whittington Hospital Redevelopment, Phase I	55	9	46	—
SUB TOTAL	3,920	5,201	889	2,170
3. Projects expected to start in 1986-87 on which the UGC contribution not yet agreed	1,650	—	1,650	—
4. On-going projects costing the UGC less than £1 million	4,630	3,120	1,510	—
5. Furniture on Health-controlled schemes	1,300	396	904	—
6. Purchase of sites and buildings for demolition	1,600	339	1,261	—
7. End-year flexibility				
TOTAL (Medical and Dental Schools) (Subhead A1(2))	13,100	9,056	6,214	2,170
TOTAL (Universities, etc.) (Subhead A1(1) (Table 1))	13,286	13,080	3,843	3,637
TOTAL SUBHEAD A1	[1]26,386	22,136	10,057	5,807

[1] Treasury agreement was given for £1,559,000 of this total amount to be vired from subhead A1 to C1 for distribution as Capital-in-Recurrent Grant.

1986-87

Grants for Expenditure Long Term Capital Computer Projects, (Subhead B1)

Details of expenditure on computer projects costing more than £1,000,000 payable under subhead B1

Project	*Provision*	*Expenditure*	*Expenditure compared with Provision*	
			Less than Provided	*More than Provided*
	£000	*£000*	*£000*	*£000*
Projects costing £1 million or more[1]				
Newcastle University new computer	369	315	54	—
Aston University new computer	230	—	230	—
Southampton University new computer	1700	1,762	—	62
London University (ULCC) front end computer	3,250	3,098	152	—
Strathclyde University new computer	299	229	—	—
Manchester (UMRCC) front end computer	—	1,671	—	1,671
Sub total	5,778	7,075	436	1,733
Projects costing less than £1 million	9,469	8,210	1,259	
End-year flexibility				
Total (Subhead B1)	15,247	15,285	1,695	1,733

[1] These purchases are made on the basis of fixed price contracts.

Information Technology

Mr. Hargreaves asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to advance the use of information technology in schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: We have developed a new and comprehensive strategy on IT in schools which will take us into the 1990s and beyond. Details are set out in a letter to chief education officers, which was issued yesterday. Copies are available in the Library.

Polytechnics and Colleges

Sir Fergus Montgomery asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science which polytechnics and colleges currently maintained or assisted by local education authorities will be covered by the forthcoming Education Bill.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The following maintained institutions were listed in "Higher Education: Meeting the Challenge" (Cm. 114), to be re-established as free-standing corporate bodies, coming within the ambit of a new Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council:

Bath College of Higher Education
Bolton Institute of Higher Education
Bretton Hall College of Higher Education
Brighton Polytechnic
Bristol Polytechnic
Bulmershe College of Higher Education
Charlotte Mason College of Education
City of Birmingham Polytechnic
Coventry Polytechnic
Crewe and Alsager College of Higher Education
Dorset Institute of Higher Education
Ealing College of Higher Education
Edge Hill College of Higher Education
Essex Institute of Higher Education
Garnett College (this will now instead merge with Thames Polytechnic in August 1987)
Hatfield Polytechnic (includes Harfordshire College of Higher Education, merged in April 1987)
The Polytechnic, Huddersfield
Humberside College of Higher Education
Kent Institute of Art and Design (to be established in September 1987 from the Canterbury College of Art, Maidstone College of Art and Medway College of Design)
Kingston Polytechnic
Lancashire Polytechnic
Leeds Polytechnic
Leicester Polytechnic
Liverpool Polytechnic
Loughborough College of Art and Design
Manchester Polytechnic
Middlesex Polytechnic
Nene College
Newcastle Polytechnic
North East London Polytechnic
North Riding College
North Staffordshire Polytechnic
Oxford Polytechnic
Plymouth Polytechnic
Portsmouth Polytechnic
Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication
Rolle College
Royal Northern College of Music
Sheffield City Polytechnic
Slough College of Higher Education
Southampton Institute of Higher Education
South West London College
Sunderland Polytechnic
Teesside Polytechnic
Trent Polytechnic
West Midlands College of Higher Education
West Surrey College of Art and Design
The Polytechnic, Wolverhampton
Worcester College of Higher Education

The following assisted institutions will also come within the ambit of the PCFC:

Polytechnic of Central London
City of London Polytechnic
Derbyshire College of Higher Education
Polytechnic of North London
Polytechnic of the South Bank
Thames Polytechnic (including Garnett College)
West London Institute of Higher Education
West Sussex Institute of Higher Education

In addition, in the case of 11 institutions with fewer than 350 full-time equivalent higher education students, there is a choice as to whether to opt in to the new arrangements. The legislation will cover those which exercise this choice.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Prisoners (Statistics)

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people are currently serving prison

sentences in Her Majesty's prisons for sexual assault on a child; and what is the average sentence currently being served.

Mr. John Patten: Information in the form requested is not available. The number of offenders sentenced to immediate imprisonment or youth custody in 1985 for certain sexual offences against children is given in the following table, which also shows the average length of sentence imposed. For other offences it is not possible, from the records of the results of court proceedings held centrally, to distinguish the age of the victim.

Persons sentenced to unsuspended imprisonment and youth custody for sexual offences where the victim is known to be aged under 16 and average sentence length

England and Wales 1985

Offence description	*Numbers sentenced to*		*average sentence length (months)*	
	Unsuspended imprisonment	*Youth custody*	*Unsuspended imprisonment*	*Youth custody*
Buggery with a boy under the age of 16 or with a woman or an animal	95	7	41	22
Attempt to commit buggery with a boy under the age of 16 or with a woman or an animal	11	—	33	—
Indecent assault on a male person under 16	160	11	20	12
Indecent assault on a female person under 16	368	40	17	10
Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 13	53	5	28	22
Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 16	77	11	10	7
Incest with girl under 13	40	-	34	—
Inciting girl under 16 to have incestuous sexual intercourse	—	2	—	9
Abduction of unmarried girl under 16	2	1	13	12
Gross indecency with children	61	6	11	6

Pregnant Women (Remand)

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will issue guidelines regarding the circumstances in which pregnant women are placed on remand; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: In deciding whether or not to remand an accused person in custody, a magistrates' court is required by the terms of the Bail Act 1976 to have regard to any considerations which appear to be relevant. Such decisions are taken in the exercise of judicial discretion, in accordance with the provisions of the Bail Act 1976, and we would not think it right to issue guidance to the courts on how they should interpret their responsibilities in the light of individual circumstances.

Nenneh Jalloh and Mohammed Parkit

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will hold an urgent inquiry into the deaths of *(a)* Nenneh Jalloh on 24 April at Marylebone police station and *(b)* Mohammed Parkit on 1 May; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that he has not received any complaints arising from the deaths of either Mohammed Parkit, who did not die in police custody, or Nenneh Jalloh, and that there was no criticism of police action by the coroner at the inquests into their deaths. The Commissioner has referred the death of Nenneh Jalloh to the Police Complaints Authority, which is supervising an investigation into the circumstances in which it took place.

I have no plans to institute any other form of inquiry.

Immigration

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans there are to extend the lease on the car ferry Earl William for use as an immigration detention centre.

Mr. Renton: The existing lease is for three months, with the option of extensions up to a maximum of 12 months. We have decided to exercise that option for a period of three months in the first instance.

Police Establishment (Newham)

Mr. Leighton asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to how many police officers there are at each of the police stations in the London borough of Newham, and as to what the comparable figures were for the three previous years.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested is set out in the table. Figures for 1984 are not available. The figures for 1987 are not comparable with those for earlier years, as manpower accounting procedures were changed during the force reorganisation; officers in certain units who had previously been carried on divisional strengths now form part of the establishment of area headquarters.

	16 June 1985	*15 June 1986*	*14 June 1987*
East Ham			
Uniformed	115	138	105
CID	6	11	5
Total	121	149	110
Plaistow			
Uniformed	117	114	110
CID	16	14	17
Total	133	128	93
West Ham			

	16 June 1985	15 June 1986	14 June 1987
Uniformed	156	172	143
CID	16	21	21
Total	172	193	164
Forest Gate			
Uniformed	114	104	100
CID	10	8	6
Total	124	112	106
North Woolwich			
Uniformed	11	19	34
CID	0	0	2
Total	11	19	36

Economic League

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will publish in the *Official Report* the date and place of the police examination of the records of names held by the Economic League.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand that the police examination referred to took place at the Skipton offices of the Economic League on 25 March 1987.

Prison Department Houses (Culcheth, Warrington)

Mr. Doug Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made in selling the empty prison houses and hostel in Culcheth, Warrington; how many have been sold; when the remainder will be placed on the market; what is the value of these empty properties; and how long they have now been empty.

Mr. John Patten: Marketing of the 39 empty prison officers' houses and hostel at Culcheth, which are being sold as a single block, has been resumed, following agreement with the local authority of adoption specifications for roads and services. A considerable amount of interest has been shown in the properties by prospective purchasers, but to date no firm offers have been received. Information about the value of the properties is subject to usual commercial confidentiality. The bulk of the houses have been empty for five to six years and the hostel for about five years.

Broadcasting

Mr. Neil Hamilton asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the Government's policy towards the encouragement of the development of an independent sector in broadcasting by the stipulation of a substantial proportion of independently-produced programmes on BBC and ITV; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: Our policy is to ensure that at least 25 per cent. of programmes broadcast on both ITV and BBC television are supplied by independent producers as soon as possible. We have asked the IBA and BBC to come forward with firm plans for the achievement of this target.

Police (Complaints)

Mr. Leighton asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many members of the Police Complaints Authority are engaged in supervising investigations of complaints against the police.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Five members, supported by a staff, supervise investigations which are carried out by police officers.

Mr. Leighton asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases the Police Complaints Authority has dealt with over the last 12 months for which figures are available; and what percentage of the total number of complaints this represents.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The most recent statistics relating to complaints are published in the annual reports for 1986 of the Police Complaints Authority, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary and the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, copies of which are in the Library.

Mr. Greg Knight asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has completed his review of the arrangements for investigating allegations of misconduct made against senior police officers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: Yes. This review was undertaken in the light of concern expressed about the investigation of allegations against the former deputy chief constable of Greater Manchester, Mr. John Stalker.

It had the benefit of observations from the Greater Manchester police authority, the Police Complaints Authority and the chief constable of West Yorkshire, Mr. Colin Sampson, all of whom were involved in the investigation of allegations against Mr. Stalker, and from the Association of Chief Police Officers and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary.

The essential requirements of any disciplinary arrangements are that they should be fair and thorough and that they should afford adequate safeguards to the person against whom allegations are made. I have concluded that the present arrangements, which are contained in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and regulations continue to meet these criteria. In particular, I am satisfied that the central feature in these arrangements should continue to be the role of the police authority as disciplinary authority. It is the responsibility of the police authority to decide:

whether to launch an investigation against a senior police officer;

whether to suspend the officer from duty;

what action to take in the light of an investigating officer's report;

what punishment to award if the officer is found guilty.

The police authority does not have complete freedom in these matters. Thus, a decision to suspend a senior officer can be taken only with the approval of the Police Complaints Authority; and that authority can decide to supervise the investigation of any allegations. (In the case of the investigation of allegations made against Mr. Stalker, the Police Complaints Authority approved his suspension, supervised the investigation, and publicly stated its view that the allegations were serious enough to warrant investigation.) Moreover, if a police authority decides to bring disciplinary charges against a senior officer, it is a requirement that the charges must be drawn up by an independent solicitor and that they must be heard by a tribunal consisting of a single person selected from a list of persons nominated by the Lord Chancellor. Some of those consulted wanted still more scope for independent

review of the police authority's role in the procedures, but there was no agreement on what form such further review might take.

Other matters considered during the review included the extensive media coverage of the investigation of allegations about Mr. Stalker and of the consideration of Mr. Sampson's report by the Greater Manchester police authority, and the absence of any right for senior officers to recover the costs of employing legal advice in investigations which do not lead to criminal or disciplinary proceedings. On the first issue, I have concluded that there is no case for any restriction on the reporting of investigations against police officers; and, as regards the payment of legal costs in discipline proceedings from public funds, I am not persuaded of the need to change the present arrangements under which a police authority has discretion to make a payment.

In the light of these conclusions, I have no plans to modify existing procedures by changes in the law. But the review has suggested that it might be useful to amplify the existing guidance on the procedures which must be followed when allegations are made against senior officers. Accordingly, I intend shortly to consult police authorities and other interested parties about the content of such further guidance.

Pool Competitions Act 1971

Mr. Greg Knight asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has plans to renew the Pool Competitions Act 1971; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: No. In line with the policy as announced in Standing Committee on 5 July 1983 and on subsequent occasions, I have decided that the Pool Competitions Act 1971 should not be renewed. The Act will therefore lapse on 26 July. The few organisations affected have already been notified.

Football Hooliganism

Mr. Greg Knight asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has about recent trends in the incidence of football hooliganism; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: The Association of Chief Police Officers for England and Wales has reported that the improvement in standards of crowd behaviour during the 1985-86 season was maintained during last season, which saw a welcome increase in overall attendances at football matches.

The police take the view that the use of closed-circuit television and the controls on alcohol have made a major contribution to the prevention of disorder inside grounds. They have been increasingly able to take prompt and effective action to control violent behaviour where it occurs, and have also tackled other forms of unacceptable behaviour such as racial chanting. This is reflected in the statistics for arrests at Football League matches and ejections from grounds in 1986-87, which show an increase in comparison with 1985-86. The figures for divisions 1 and 2 are as follows:

	Division 1			*Division 2*			
	1985-86	*1986-87*	*Percentage change*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*Percentage change*	*Overall percentage change*
Attendances	9,008,673	9,213,328	+ 2	3,542,028	4,144,905	+17	+ 6
Arrests	1,839	2,008	+ 9	1,050	1,708	+68	+29
Ejections	2,206	3,532	+60	1,089	1,255	+15	+45

The Government remain determined to seek further progress, in partnership with the football authorities, through measures such as the wider adoption of membership schemes and the exclusion order provisions of the Public Order Act 1986, which will come into force on 1 August.

Terrorism

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals held under the international provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 and against whom an extension of detention was authorised by the Secretary of State were *(a)* subsequently charged with an offence or *(b)* deported under the Immigration Act 1971.

Mr. Hurd [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 July 1987, c. *364*]: From the implementation of the 1984 Act on 22 March 1984 to 31 March 1987, 24 persons whose detention under the international provisions of the Act had been extended beyond 48 hours were later charged with offences. I shall write to the hon. Member later about the numbers deported after having been so held.

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals were successfully contacted from 1984 in connection with the comprehensive review of exclusion orders made under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Acts 1974 and 1976 that were still in force.

Mr. Hurd [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 July 1987, c. *364*]: Ninety five people were successfully contacted in respect of the main review of exclusion orders made under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984.

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons excluded under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Acts 1974, 1976 and 1984 were excluded direct from prison after completing a prison term.

Mr. Hurd [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 July 1987, c. *363*]: The information which can be provided without disproportionate cost relates to the period 1 January 1982 to 31 March 1987, during which 12 persons were excluded on release from prison.

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons excluded under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Acts were originally detained in London.

Mr. Hurd [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 July 1987, c. *363*]: The information which can be provided relates to the period from 1 January 1979 to 31 March 1987, during which a total of 30 persons were made subject to exclusion orders, having been originally detained by the Metropolitan police, eight of whom were detained in 1979, 12 in 1980 and two in 1981.

TRANSPORT

Barking-Gospel Oak Railway Line

Mr. Summerson asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will seek a meeting with the chairman of British Rail to discuss the standard of services on the Barking to Gospel Oak line.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have agreed standards for the quality of BR services as a whole, which I shall be monitoring in general terms, but it would not be appropriate for me to discuss each and every service's performance with Sir Robert Reid. These aspects will be being watched carefully by the statutory consumer bodies, and I expect them to report on any persisting difficulties.

Road Accident Statistics

Mr. Temple-Morris asked the Secretary of State for Transport for the last year for which records are available, how many accidents have occurred on (*a*) motorways, (*b*) other trunk roads for which his Department is responsible, and (*c*) other roads generally caused by the problems on the road or hard shoulder of broken down vehicles, involving (i) damage, (ii) personal injury and (iii) fatality.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I regret the information is not generally available. Reports received by the Department do not identify causes of accidents. The presence of broken-down vehicles is not recorded.

Kowloon Bridge

Sir David Price asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he proposes to publish his Department's report on the grounding and subsequent sinking of the Kowloon Bridge.

Mr. David Mitchell: My noble Friend the Minister with responsibility for aviation and shipping has received the report and arranged for a copy to be placed in the Library. The report, made on behalf of the Hong Kong Administration, does not hold anyone to blame, but concludes that a succession of events associated with atrocious weather led to the grounding and loss of the Kowloon Bridge. Of these events, the most serious was the failure of the steering gear and this was probably linked to the grounding of the vessel while she was in Bantry Bay. A successful evacuation of all 28 persons on board was effected by RAF aircraft, which were using Cork airport at the time in connection with another rescue. Apart from an RAF winchman who sustained arm injuries, everyone else was rescued unhurt. The rescue was admirably carried out with RAF personnel displaying the courage and professionalism which we have come to expect in such circumstances. The master and his crew also carried out their part in the abandonment of the vessel with calmness and courage.

British Railways Board (Property)

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made on implementation of the recommendations made in the report by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission on the British Railways Board's property activities, published in June 1985; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: The Railways Board is continuing to make good progress in implementing the commission's recommendations, and I am placing copies of its second response in the Library of the House.

A number of improvements have been made in the British Rail property board's organisation and management structure. This action has also taken account of advice from consultants appointed by the property board to review its organisation, management structure, systems and procedures, and working practices. I am pleased to note that simpler procedures for releasing land no longer needed for the railway have been introduced. In particular, I welcome the opportunities for increased sales of surplus land that the board has identified, amounting to an additional £100 million in its latest business plan. The board's development division has also been reviewed and reorganised, taking account of recommendations from a group of private sector property consultants.

Good progress is also being made in increasing the commercial exploitation of the board's operational property, with more extensive private sector involvement. The arch refurbishment programme, which generates income and helps the environment, has been stepped up to cover over 700 schemes over the last two years, and is expected to continue at a high level, and greater competition is being introduced in station trading.

I am also placing in the Library a copy of my Department's review of the board's liabilities for property no longer needed for the railway, particularly in connection with closed branch lines, as proposed by the commission. The property board's current and forecast levels of expenditure in this area are small in relation to the board's overall finances, and we see no case for removing the liabilities or for separately funding them. The evidence suggests that the property board should continue broadly with its present maintenance policies, negotiating with local highway authorities and other interested parties to shed its liabilities on the basis of voluntary agreements, taking every opportunity to transfer individual liabilities where this makes financial sense.

The Department will assist the board to establish an English and Welsh viaducts committee, similar to that which exists in Scotland, in order to provide a forum for considering the future of listed viaducts on closed railway lines, and we will support a further application to the Charity Commissioners seeking charitable status for the Railway Heritage Trust, if the board and the trust judge it advantageous. We will also keep under review the question of ownership and statutory responsibility for the board's road overbridges.

BAA Flotation

Mr. Haselhurst asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about the tender offer in the British Airports Authority flotation.

Mr. Channon: The tender element in the offer for sale has proved very successful. Valid tender applications at or above 283p per share will be satisfied in full. Valid applications at 282p per share will be accepted and an allocation of about 15 per cent. of the shares applied for will be made.

The level of subscription for tender shares means that all the 125 million shares provisionally placed with institutions at the fixed price of 245p have been clawed back and the taxpayer will benefit by an extra £56 million of proceeds.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

United Nations Agencies

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the total value in constant prices of all contributions made by Her Majesty's Government to the United Nations children's fund since 1970.

Mr. Chris Patten: The information is as follows:

Contributions at current prices (£ million)				*1986 prices (£ million)*	
Year	*General Fund*	*Special Appeals*	*Total*	*General Fund*	*Total*
1970	0·600	—	0·600	3·2	3·2
1971	0·600	—	0·600	2·9	2·9
1972	0·700	—	0·700	3·1	3·1
1973	0·800	0·350	1·150	3·4	4·8
1974	1·300	—	1·300	4·8	4·8
1975	2·000	1·545	3·545	5·7	10·2
1976	2·300	—	2·300	5·7	5·7
1977	3·300	0·020	3·320	7·2	7·3
1978	4·500	2·032	6·532	8·9	12·9
1979	[1]5·800	1·582	7·382	10·0	12·7
1980	4·300	0·691	4·991	6·2	7·2
1981	5·900	1·456	7·356	7·6	9·5
1982	5·900	0·083	5·983	7·1	7·2
1983	6·000	0·069	6·069	6·8	6·9
1984	6·000	0·025	6·025	6·6	6·6
1985	6·300	2·100	8·400	6·5	8·7
1986	6·500	0·238	6·738	6·5	6·7
1987	[2]7·000	[2]5·000	[2]12·000	[3]6·7	[3]11·5

[1] Special increase to mark International Year of the Child.
[2] Pledged.
[3] Estimates.

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has as to the total value in constant prices of all contributions made by member states of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee to the United Nations children's fund since 1980.

Mr. Chris Patten: The information is given in the tables at constant 1986 prices. The constant prices allow for the effects of both national rates of inflation and changing dollar exchange rates.

a. Contributions to General Fund at 1986 constant prices ($ million)

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1980-86 total*
Australia	2·2	2·4	3·2	3·5	1·8	1·9	1·8	16·7
Austria	0·8	1·0	1·1	1·0	1·0	1·1	1·1	7·0
Belgium	1·0	1·0	0·8	1·2	1·2	1·5	1·4	8·1
Canada	9·1	9·2	10·0	10·4	12·2	9·8	10·5	71·2
Denmark	6·2	6·2	6·7	6·8	7·1	7·0	7·6	47·7
Finland	1·9	2·6	2·8	4·8	7·8	7·4	11·4	38·7
France	2·6	2·0	2·2	5·5	5·7	5·0	5·0	28·0
Germany	6·4	5·9	6·1	6·1	7·4	6·6	7·3	45·7
Ireland	0·5	0·5	0·4	0·4	0·6	0·5	0·5	3·5
Italy	2·9	6·5	23·8	21·4	19·3	24·2	21·6	119·7
Japan	7·7	8·7	12·7	15·3	18·1	20·5	15·5	98·4
Netherlands	7·8	9·4	9·9	9·7	9·1	9·2	11·4	66·5
New Zealand	0·7	0·6	0·5	0·5	0·5	0·4	0·5	3·7
Norway	13·3	12·7	15·2	18·2	17·7	18·7	21·9	117·8
Sweden	27·3	25·2	24·9	25·8	26·7	29·1	31·1	190·1
Switzerland	4·8	4·6	4·9	5·1	5·5	7·1	7·4	39·5
United Kingdom	9·0	10·9	10·4	10·2	9·6	9·8	9·6	69·5
United States	45·7	43·5	47·4	46·8	55·7	54·9	51·4	345·3
DAC total	149·8	152·9	183·0	192·5	207·1	214·9	217·0	1,317·1

b. Total contributions at 1986 constant prices ($ million)
(These include contributions to both the General Fund and Special Appeals)

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1980-86 total*
Australia	3·5	2·7	7·8	4·4	3·3	2·6	2·2	26·6
Austria	1·7	1·0	1·6	2·3	1·0	1·5	1·1	10·1
Belgium	1·0	1·0	1·1	1·2	1·2	1·5	1·4	8·4
Canada	14·6	9·6	11·5	10·8	15·6	13·2	16·5	91·7
Denmark	6·6	6·6	7·6	6·8	7·5	7·3	7·9	50·2
Finland	2·0	2·6	3·3	4·8	9·4	9·0	12·2	43·2
France	3·7	2·0	2·2	5·5	6·1	5·0	5·0	29·4
Germany	14·6	6·4	6·4	6·1	7·4	6·6	7·7	55·1
Ireland	0·5	0·6	0·4	0·4	0·6	0·5	0·6	3·7

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1980-86 total
Italy	2·9	6·5	26·8	21·4	20·6	26·4	22·1	126·6
Japan	17·1	13·8	14·2	15·3	18·2	27·3	16·3	122·2
Netherlands	10·4	11·3	10·9	9·9	10·9	9·5	11·7	74·5
New Zealand	0·9	0·6	0·5	0·5	0·5	0·9	1·0	5·0
Norway	13·8	14·6	16·4	18·6	19·3	18·9	22·2	123·8
Sweden	28·4	25·4	26·9	26·0	27·7	30·1	32·9	197·3
Switzerland	5·8	5·0	5·2	5·1	5·7	7·3	7·5	41·6
United Kingdom	10·5	13·7	10·5	10·3	9·7	13·0	10·0	77·6
United States	57·5	51·2	62·4	46·8	56·7	64·6	55·0	394·2
DAC total	195·4	174·4	215·6	195·9	221·2	245·1	233·21	1,480·9

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has as to the level of official aid per capita contributed by each member state of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Development Assistance Committee to the United Nations children's fund; in constant prices, for each year since 1980.

Mr. Chris Patten: The information is given in the tables at constant 1986 prices. The constant prices allow for the effects of both national rates of inflation and changing dollar exchange rates. The 1986 figures are based on provisional population estimates.

(a) Contributions per capita to General Fund at 1986 constant prices ($)

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Australia	0·15	0·16	0·21	0·23	0·11	0·12	0·11
Austria	0·10	0·13	0·14	0·13	0·13	0·15	0·14
Belgium	0·10	0·10	0·09	0·12	0·13	0·15	0·15
Canada	0·38	0·38	0·41	0·42	0·48	0·39	0·41
Denmark	1·21	1·22	1·31	1·33	1·39	1·38	1·49
Finland	0·40	0·53	0·59	0·98	1·61	1·52	2·33
France	0·05	0·04	0·04	0·10	0·10	0·09	0·09
Germany	0·10	0·10	0·10	0·10	0·12	0·11	0·12
Ireland	0·15	0·15	0·11	0·13	0·17	0·14	0·15
Italy	0·05	0·12	0·42	0·38	0·34	0·42	0·38
Japan	0·07	0·07	0·11	0·13	0·15	0·17	0·13
Netherlands	0·55	0·66	0·69	0·67	0·63	0·63	0·78
New Zealand	0·22	0·18	0·17	0·15	0·16	0·13	0·15
Norway	3·26	3·11	3·70	4·41	4·27	4·51	5·25
Sweden	3·28	3·02	2·99	3·10	3·21	3·49	3·73
Switzerland	0·76	0·72	0·75	0·79	0·85	1·09	1·13
United Kingdom	0·16	0·19	0·18	0·18	0·17	0·17	0·17
United States	0·20	0·19	0·20	0·20	0·23	0·23	0·21
DAC Total	0·22	0·22	0·27	0·28	0·30	0·31	0·31

(b) Total contributions per capita at 1986 constant prices ($)
(These include contributions to both the General Fund and Special Appeals)

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Australia	0·24	0·18	0·51	0·28	0·21	0·17	0·14
Austria	0·22	0·13	0·21	0·30	0·13	0·20	0·14
Belgium	0·10	0·10	0·11	0·12	0·13	0·15	0·15
Canada	0·61	0·39	0·46	0·43	0·62	0·52	0·65
Denmark	1·28	1·28	1·49	1·33	1·46	1·43	1·55
Finland	0·41	0·53	0·68	0·98	1·93	1·83	2·49
France	0·07	0·04	0·04	0·10	0·11	0·09	0·09
Germany	0·24	0·10	0·10	0·10	0·12	0·11	0·13
Ireland	0·16	0·17	0·11	0·13	0·17	0·14	0·17
Italy	0·05	0·12	0·47	0·38	0·36	0·46	0·39
Japan	0·15	0·12	0·12	0·13	0·15	0·23	0·13
Netherlands	0·73	0·79	0·76	0·69	0·76	0·65	0·81
New Zealand	0·30	0·20	0·17	0·15	0·16	0·27	0·31
Norway	3·39	3·55	4·00	4·50	4·65	4·56	5·34
Sweden	3·42	3·05	3·23	3·13	3·32	3·60	3·94
Switzerland	0·91	0·77	0·80	0·79	0·87	1·12	1·15
United Kingdom	0·19	0·24	0·19	0·18	0·17	0·23	0·18
United States	0·25	0·22	0·27	0·20	0·24	0·27	0·23
DAC Total	0·29	0·26	0·31	0·28	0·32	0·35	0·33

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give such information as he has, in the form of a list, in rank order, by size of total contribution in constant prices, of those member states of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee that provided funds for the United Nations children's fund for each year since 1980.

Mr. Chris Patten: The information is given in the tables; ranking is by constant 1986 prices in United States dollars. The constant prices allow for the effects of both national inflation rates and changing dollar exchange rate.

(a) Contributions to General Fund at 1986 constant prices

Rank	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
1	United States	United States	United States	United States	United States	United States	United States
2	Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Sweden
3	Norway	Norway	Italy	Italy	Italy	Italy	Norway
4	Canada	United Kingdom	Norway	Norway	Japan	Japan	Italy
5	United Kingdom	Netherlands	Japan	Japan	Norway	Norway	Japan
6	Netherlands	Canada	United Kingdom	Canada	Canada	Canada	Finland
7	Japan	Japan	Canada	United Kingdom	United Kingdom	United Kingdom	Netherlands
8	Germany	Italy	Netherlands	Netherlands	Netherlands	Netherlands	Canada
9	Denmark	Denmark	Denmark	Denmark	Finland	Finland	United Kingdom
10	Switzerland	Germany	Germany	Germany	Germany	Switzerland	Denmark
11	Italy	Switzerland	Switzerland	France	Denmark	Denmark	Switzerland
12	France	Finland	Australia	Switzerland	France	Germany	Germany
13	Australia	Australia	Finland	Finland	Switzerland	France	France
14	Finland	France	France	Australia	Australia	Australia	Australia
15	Belgium	Austria	Austria	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium
16	Austria	Belgium	Belgium	Austria	Austria	Austria	Austria
17	New Zealand	New Zealand	New Zealand	New Zealand	Ireland	Ireland	Ireland
18	Ireland	Ireland	Ireland	Ireland	New Zealand	New Zealand	New Zealand

(b) Total contributions at 1986 constant prices

Rank	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
1	United States	United States	United States	United States	United States	United States	United States
2	Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Sweden
3	Japan	Norway	Italy	Italy	Italy	Japan	Norway
4	Canada	Japan	Norway	Norway	Norway	Italy	Italy
5	Germany	United Kingdom	Japan	Japan	Japan	Norway	Canada
6	Norway	Netherlands	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Japan
7	United Kingdom	Canada	Netherlands	United Kingdom	Netherlands	United Kingdom	Finland
8	Netherlands	Denmark	United Kingdom	Netherlands	United Kingdom	Netherlands	Netherlands
9	Denmark	Italy	Australia	Denmark	Finland	Finland	United Kingdom
10	Switzerland	Germany	Denmark	Germany	Denmark	Denmark	Denmark
11	France	Switzerland	Germany	France	Germany	Switzerland	Germany
12	Australia	Australia	Switzerland	Switzerland	France	Germany	Switzerland
13	Italy	Finland	Finland	Finland	Switzerland	France	France
14	Finland	France	France	Australia	Australia	Australia	Australia
15	Austria	Austria	Austria	Austria	Belgium	Austria	Belgium
16	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	Austria	Belgium	Austria
17	New Zealand	New Zealand	New Zealand	New Zealand	Ireland	New Zealand	New Zealand
18	Ireland	Ireland	Ireland	Ireland	New Zealand	Ireland	Ireland

Developing Countries (Aid)

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the total value in constant prices of all multilateral aid flows by Her Majesty's Government to developing countries since 1970.

Mr. Chris Patten: The information in constant 1986 prices is as follows:

	£ million
1970	105·8
1971	147·5
1972	219·5
1973	262·7
1974	310·9
1975	377·8
1976	342·7
1977	442·2
1978	370·0
1979	442·1
1980	378·9
1981	446·0
1982	491·9
1983	546·7
1984	580·6
1985	508·4
1986	510·6

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the total value in constant prices of all aid flows by Her Majesty's Government to developing countries since 1970.

Mr. Chris Patten: The information in constant 1986 prices is as follows:

	£ million
1970	1,187
1971	1,358
1972	1,301
1973	1,234
1974	1,326
1975	1,298
1976	1,323
1977	1,328
1978	1,481
1979	1,617
1980	1,387
1981	1,525
1982	1,297
1983	1,336
1984	1,441
1985	1,355
1986	1,358

EMPLOYMENT

Job Training Scheme

Mr. Hardy asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he is satisfied that all 16-year-old school leavers in south Yorkshire will have the opportunity to be meaningfully engaged in the two-year training scheme during 1987.

Mr. Cope: The Government have given an undertaking that all unemployed 16-year-old school leavers will be offered a suitable place on 2-year YTS by the Christmas after they leave school. I am confident that all concerned will work to ensure that this guarantee will be substantially met in 1987 as it has been in previous years.

Youth Training Scheme

Ms. Armstrong asked the Secretary of State for Employment to what causes he attributes the fact, as revealed in "Regional Trades 1987", that a lower proportion of those who leave YTS schemes in the north find full-time employment, following completion of the scheme, than in any other region in Great Britain.

Mr. Cope: It is difficult to attribute regional variation in the placement rate of YTS trainees to particular factors, though the characteristics of the regional labour market are bound to have an influence.

It is encouraging that, in the six months from April to September 1986, 49 per cent. of those leaving one year YTS in the north entered full-time employment compared with 40 per cent. in 1985-86.

Child Abuse

Mr. Stern asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will instruct all agencies sponsored by his Department that any person employed under any scheme which involves working with children should be vetted for any previous history of child abuse or assault on children; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The main programmes which provide support services for young children are community programme and YTS. I am not aware of any allegations of child abuse or assault in either of these programmes. The main providers of these programmes are local authorities and voluntary organisations. The Manpower Services Commission, which administers both programmes, requires providers to ensure appropriate selection of those entering the programmes and to maintain an appropriate level of supervision.

Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

Mr. Flynn asked the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to ensure that the nuclear installations inspectorate achieves its target recruitment figure for inspectors of 150.

Mr. Cope: The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) current target is to increase the number of Nuclear Installations Inspectors to 120 by 1 April 1988. The Government and the Health and Safety Commission and Executive remain committed to ensuring that the inspectorate is adequately staffed. A continuous recruitment competition is in progress. Substantial increases in the salaries paid to Nuclear Installations Inspectors have recently been agreed and should ensure that the inspectorate will now be able to attract a sufficient number of recruits.

Tourism

Mr. Matthew Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the potential for job creation in the tourist industry.

Mr. Lee: In recent years there has been substantial growth in the number of employees in those industries which most directly serve tourists (up by 46,000 in the hotel, catering and leisure and recreational services sectors in the year to March 1987).

On the basis of the indication we have so far, I would expect to see further significant growth in jobs in these industries in 1987.

Bridge Programmes

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Employment (1) how many bridge programmes for unemployed managers and professionals have been set up since the scheme was first launched; and at what estimated annual cost;

(2) how many unemployed managers and professionals have been accepted into bridge programmes since the scheme was launched: and how many are estimated to have found permanent employment as a result.

Mr. Cope: In 1986-87, courses under the bridge programme were mounted by 43 training providers through 55 centres at a cost of £2·4 million. The cost of similar provision in earlier years cannot be separately identified, but available information on numbers helped is as follows:

Financial year	*Number of trainee starts*
1983-84	3,735
1984-85	5,648
1985-86	6,795
1986-87	6,722
Total	22,900

The most recent follow-up survey of former bridge trainees, held in September 1986, indicated that some 59 per cent. had obtained employment or self-employment within three months of leaving the scheme.

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received about the decision to end the bridge programme for unemployed managers and professionals; and what response he has offered.

Mr. Cope: Hon. Members, training providers and trainees have written about the need to continue provision for unemployed executives and managers seeking training in job-searching and interviewing skills. We have explained that the decision to withdraw funding from separate bridge courses was taken as part of a wider redeployment of resources to increase help for long-term unemployed people. Similar training assistance is available through the new job training scheme and jobclubs for those who have been unemployed for more than 26 weeks, and some opportunities will continue to be available for executives and managers with shorter periods of unemployment through the wider opportunities training programme.

Disposable Income

Mr. Nicholas Brown asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish figures on the distribution of aggregate disposable income in 1985, showing lowest and highest deciles, upper and lower quartiles, and the median, for *(a)* all households in the United Kingdom and *(b)* for Greater London, in an adjusted form that will allow direct comparisons with the published figures for 1983 and earlier years.

Mr. Lee: The exact information requested is available only at disproportionate cost. However provision was made in analysis of the 1983 "Family Expenditure Survey" (when the introduction of the housing benefit scheme necessitated a change of income definition) to provide results on two bases. The figures below show 1985 and 1983 distributions from the "Family Expenditure Survey" on the current basis.

Distribution of weekly household disposable income

	Lowest decile	*Lower quartile*	*Median*	*Upper quartile*	*Highest decile*
	£	£	£	£	£
All United Kingdom households					
1983	46·03	75·96	133·25	198·32	271·94
1985	48·44	83·45	152·73	232·74	322·59
Greater London households					
1983	47·94	75·84	142·61	231·57	324·46
1985	46·60	89·50	167·50	261·50	367·82

Data in this table are subject to sampling variation.

Pay Levels

Mr. David Nicholson asked the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will publish tables showing the percentage increases in average pay levels from 1972, 1979 and 1983 up to the latest available date for the following groups of full-time adult workers: primary and secondary school teachers in England and Wales, National Health Service nurses and midwives, ambulancemen, National Health Service ancillary staff, National Health Service administrative and clerical staff, non-manual grades in local authority services, the police service, the fire service, prison officers, the Civil Service, subdivided as appropriate, but indicating separately, the professional and technology group and the science group, non-manual staff in gas, electricity and water, salaried staff in British Rail and clerical and executive grades in the Post Office.

Mr. Lee: The available information which is based on new earnings survey results for national agreements affecting these groups is shown in the table. Comparable information for 1972 was not collected for all the agreements shown.

Percentage increase in average gross weekly earnings of full-time[1] adult employees by agreement
Great Britain—April

	1972 to 1986 per cent.	*1979 to 1986* per cent.	*1983-1986* per cent.
Full-time adult employees			
Primary and secondary schools teachers England and Wales	471·5	114·8	22·5
National Health Service			
Nurses and midwives	528·7	120·4	22·4
Ambulancemen	. .	117·3	24·6
Ancillary staff	405·8	85·6	14·1
Administrative and clerical staff	398·9	84·2	11·4
Full-time adult non-manual employees			
Local authorities services			
Administrative, professional, technical and clerical NJC			
England and Wales	. .	108·1	19·9
Scotland	. .	108·1	21·4
Police service—ranks below superintendent only	. .	127·9	20·2
Fire service—operational ranks below station officer	. .	115·9	22·4
Prison officers	. .	133·8	21·2

	1972 to 1986 per cent.	1979 to 1986 per cent.	1983-1986 per cent.
Civil Service			
Administration group:			
Middle and higher grades	. .	95·5	18·5
Clerical grades	. .	84·8	18·8
Professional and technology group	. .	108·4	18·0
Science group	. .	88·0	15·4
Secretarial, typing and data processing grades	. .	94·2	21·1
Gas staffs and senior officers NJC	. .	112·8	22·0
Electricity administrative and clerical grades NJC	. .	119·3	26·5
Water service staffs NJC	. .	117·5	24·9
British Rail—salaried staff	. .	125·7	27·3
Post Office—clerical and executive grades	. .	. .	20·1

[1] Whose earnings were not affected by absence.
. . Not available.

The figures shown in the table can be affected by the timing of pay settlements. Changes in average earnings can reflect several factors including changes in the amount of overtime worked and changes in the structure and composition of employment.

WALES

Cardiff Bay Development Authority

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Wales who has been shortlisted by his Department for the position of chief executive of the Cardiff Bay development authority.

Mr. Peter Walker: The recruitment and appointment of a chief executive are matters for the Cardiff Bay development corporation.

Local Government Ombudsman

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list by each Welsh district and county for the years 1980 to 1986 and classify by type of case (i) the number of complaints made to the local government ombudsman and (ii) the number of complaints upheld.

Mr. Grist: I have no information about the numbers of complaints against individual local authorities. The information you seek is held by the Commissioner for Local Administration in Wales who is independent of central Government.

Planning Inspectors

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many of his Department's planning inspectors speak both Welsh and English.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: One.

Housing

Mr. Dafydd Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether he has any plans to replace his Department's 1984 circular on housing provision in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The Secretary of State has no plans to replace circular 47/84, "Land for Housing in Wales". However, further guidance on procedures involved in securing an adequate housing land supply is under consideration.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many houses are available for rent in *(a)* the public sector and *(b)* the private sector, in each district authority area in Wales; and what were the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Grist: *[pursuant to his reply,* 21 July 1987]: The numbers of vacant local authority dwellings available for letting are set out in the following tables. Similar information is not available in respect of housing association or private sector dwellings.

At 1 April

Welsh Districts	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
Aberconwy	—	—	—	—	45	4	22	7	4
Alyn and Deeside	—	35	14	—	6	51	9	5	8
Arfon	—	—	13	20	30	9	12	10	—
Blaenau Gwent	n/a	14	—	—	—	50	35	—	—
Brecknock	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cardiff	89	72	46	550	223	254	175	120	45
Carmarthen	n/a	7	2	4	3	4	4	3	4
Ceredigion	—	16	14	4	32	—	20	12	6
Colwyn	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	1	—
Cynon Valley	2	5	6	72	50	29	5	14	19
Delyn	42	30	37	36	32	30	28	10	59
Dinefwr	—	6	2	12	—	—	—	—	—
Dwyfor	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Glyndwr	n/a	6	2	34	52	14	12	6	8
Islwyn	—	1	4	—	—	23	13	12	16

Welsh Districts	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Llanelli	—	—	5	2	3	12	14	12	10
Lliw Valley	n/a	—	—	—	1	2	4	7	6
Meirionnydd	10	5	6	7	5	16	7	6	2
Merthyr Tydfil	48	10	26	34	—	36	94	—	10
Monmouth	n/a	21	11	43	6	10	19	13	21
Montgomeryshire	8	—	21	47	43	43	15	16	24
Neath	12	—	—	—	50	30	22	22	22
Newport	n/a	29	35	250	176	169	55	157	130
Ogwr	12	10	9	30	40	35	30	25	32
Port Talbot-Afan	24	—	10	127	5	15	10	15	25
Preseli	29	6	6	13	54	48	21	19	8
Radnor	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	10	4
Rhondda	20	47	18	188	32	52	13	19	20
Rhuddlan	—	—	11	—	—	—	—	18	15
Rhymney Valley	n/a	—	3	6	6	—	—	10	14
South Pembrokeshire	n/a	—	19	27	29	9	28	—	4
Swansea	46	14	29	62	86	51	38	125	115
Taff-Ely	4	—	—	—	2	13	8	6	8
Torfaen	9	17	7	21	22	27	20	18	39
Vale of Glamorgan	53	54	51	77	15	83	95	7	1
Wrexham Maelor	162	275	147	302	341	474	247	16	49
Ynys Môn	n/a	n/a	7	36	—	10	20	12	7
Wales total (LA)	570	680	561	2,005	1,389	1,603	1,100	732	758
Cwmbran	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Newtown	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wales total (ALL)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Anglo-Argentine Relations

Sir John Biggs-Davison asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about Anglo-Argentine relations.

Mr. Eggar: I refer my hon. Friend to the Gracious Speech made from the Throne to both Houses on 25 June:

"My Government . . . will stand by their pledge to the people of the Falkland Islands, while seeking more normal relations with Argentina."

Central America

Mr. John Evans asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what meetings he has had recently concerning proposals for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in central America.

Mr. Eggar: We regularly discuss central America with other Governments. Most recent discussions by my right honourable and learned Friend were with President Arias of Costa Rica and the Foreign Minister of Uruguay, Sr. Iglesias.

El Salvador

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will provide a detailed budget of Her Majesty's Government's current *(a)* military and *(b)* non-military aid programme to El Salvador.

Mr. Eggar: The information requested is as follows:

(a) Military aid programme—no provision for 1987-88.

(b) Non-military aid programme—aid funds for 1987-88 have been allocated as follows:

	£
United Kingdom Civilian Training Awards	17,000
Heads of Mission Gift Scheme	10,000
Books Presentation Programme	3,000
Unused balance of 1985 equipment grant	15,000

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give details of scholarships for study in Britain that are proposed for nominated students from El Salvador; where the students will study; on what courses; when the scholarships will commence; and what is the budget for the scholarship programme.

Mr. Eggar: There have been no students nominated for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office scholarships and awards scheme from El Salvador since that scheme began in 1983.

With regard to the ODA-funded awards for El Salvador announced in 1983, no nominations have been received since the awards first became available in the financial year 1985-86, but the allocation remains and stands at £17,000 for 1987-88 (which would cover about two awards).

Guatemala

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give details of Her Majesty's Government's technical scholarship programme for Guatemala; what is the cost of funding for the programme; on what date the scholarships will commence; what training will be offered by the scholarships and where; how many such scholarships are proposed; and what will be the selection procedure for candidates.

Mr. Eggar: Following the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Guatemala, ODA will provide up to 6 scholarships in the United Kingdom with effect from 1987-88, at a total cost of £48,000 per annum.

Priority areas for study include public health, human nutrition, agriculture and water supply.

It is proposed that selection be assisted by a board, chaired by a representative of the British embassy and including a representative of the Government of Guatemala and local specialists appropriate to the applicant's field of study. Nominations have not yet been

received for the scholarships; but it is envisaged that a selection board would meet before the end of the year and could still take candidates who might start their courses before the end of the financial year.

Guatemalan Ambassador

Mr. Smith asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what date he expects the new ambassador of Guatemala to arrive in Britain to take up his appointment; and where the new embassy will be.

Mr. Eggar: The Guatemalan ambassador arrived in the United Kingdom on Wednesday 15 July and took up his appointment on 16 July. He is currently making arrangements to acquire embassy premises.

Conference on Security and Co-operation

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the present situation regarding the conference on security and co-operation in Europe negotiations.

Mr. Mellor: The Vienna conference on security and co-operation in Europe Meeting is still in its third and final phase, during which work is underway on drafting of a final document. We expect the meeting to go into recess at the start of August and to reconvene in late September. During the current round of negotiations, the United Kingdom delegation has continued to explain and defend the ambitious and constructive initiatives we have tabled in conjunction with other Western countries: these include proposals for a three-stage action programme designed to ensure concrete progress on human rights after Vienna, for an East-West economic conference in the Federal Republic of Germany and for an information forum in London. More recently, the Alliance tabled on 10 July a proposal for further work on confidence and security building measures. We also remain concerned about the many breaches by the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries of their current CSCE commitments, and have continued to raise these issues regularly in debate.

High Commissions, Embassies and Consulates

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many high commissions, embassies and consulates Her Majesty's Government sustain in *(a)* Commonwealth and *(b)* non-commonwealth countries.

Mr. Eggar: In Commonwealth countries there are 42 High Commissions, 4 Deputy High Commissions, 9 Consulates-General, 5 Consulates and 3 Offices of Honorary British Representatives.

In non-Commonwealth countries there are 87 embassies, 36 consulates-general and 168 consulates or vice-consulates.

United Nations Agencies

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the total value in constant prices of all contributions made by Her Majesty's Government to all United Nations agencies since 1970.

Mr. Eggar: The information requested is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Military Exercises

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make a statement on the implementation of the conference on security and co-operation in Europe agreement on military exercises as it affects this autumn's North Atlantic Treaty Organisation exercises in the United Kingdom and Germany;

(2) whether Warsaw pact observers will be invited to visit the United Kingdom under the conference on security and co-operation in Europe agreement to observe this autumn's exercises.

Mr. Mellor: The exercises taking place in the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany this autumn were included in the annual calendars of notifiable military activities for 1987 produced by NATO countries in accordance with the provisions of the Stockholm Document. The United Kingdom will be involved in three: "Certain Strike" and "Keystone", both in the FRG, in September and October respectively and "Purple Warrior" in Scotland in November. All Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe states will be invited to send observers to these three exercises, all of which are above the observation as well as the notification threshold.

Falkland Islands (Fishing)

Dr. Marek asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give details of fishing licences and quotas off the Falkland Islands for the coming year; and whether the total catch is such as to be self sustainable in the present unchanging ecology.

Mr. Eggar: Eighty-five fishing licences have been allocated by the Falkland Islands Government for the second season, 1 July to 31 December 1987. The number is consistent with estimated sustainable catch levels for squid and finfish. Arrangements for 1988 will be decided in the autumn after analysis of catch data gathered in the first six months of 1987.

Foreign Affairs Council

Sir Philip Goodhart asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* a statement on the outcome of the Foreign Affairs Council held on 20 July.

Mrs. Chalker: I attended the Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels on 20 July.

The Council agreed a programme of work on the future financing of the Community. It reflects United Kingdom priorities satisfactorily.

The Council reaffirmed its concern at the possible consequences for bilateral and world trade of United States trade legislation; and the Community's determination to respond to any United States restrictive measures in accordance with its GATT rights, if necessary. The Council asked the Commission to continue to make every effort to reach a satisfactory settlement with the United States in the dispute over export restitutions on pasta and

agreed that the Community would need to respond to any restrictive measures unilaterally imposed by the United States.

The Council noted that reasonable, if modest, progress had been made in the Community's negotiations with Japan to reduce barriers to trade in a number of sectors (motor vehicles, cosmetics, medical equipment), but that there was a need for quicker progress on a wider range of sectors and the establishment of timetables for the implementation of measures already agreed.

The Council adopted the annual report on EC/EFTA Co-operation. Ministers welcomed the progress which had been made towards the achievement of a wider European economic area and stressed the importance of keeping up the momentum as the EC made progress in the internal market.

The Council discussed but did not approve a Commission proposal for a phased reduction of the crisis levy imposed in 1981 on the emoluments of Community officials. A staff request for conciliation was agreed.

The Presidency reported to the Council that agreement had been reached on the Framework Programme for Research and Development for 1987-1991. The agreement implements the proposal put to the European Council by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

Turks and Caicos Islands (Development Project)

Mr. Wells asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about the outcome of the commission of inquiry into the North Creek development project in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Mr. Eggar: The Commission, led by Mr. Louis Blom-Cooper QC, has submitted its report to the Governor. The Report is being printed as a Command Paper and copies are being placed in the Library of the House.

The report finds that Mr. Terence Donegan committed various acts of misfeasance in public office while Attorney General of the Turks and Caicos Islands from 1980 to 1982 in promoting the Little Bluff Development Company in which he had a considerable interest and in failing in his fiduciary duty to the Crown.

In the light of the report the Governor has decided that it is not in the public interest that Mr. Donegan should remain in the islands. Acting upon his own authority under the powers vested in him in the constitution and the local Immigration Ordinance the Governor has therefore issued a deportation order against Mr. Donegan. The question of restitution of profits and the possible restitution of alienated Crown Lands by compulsory purchase under the constitution are matters which are the legitimate interest of the Turks and Caicos Islands Government and have been referred to them for decision. We fully endorse the Governor's decision.

The report also makes it clear that in seeking to promote the development of Crown Lands at North Creek through a project involving the Raul Construction Company certain TCI Ministers in the Executive Council acted without proper regard for the public interest.

No action is considered necessary in the case of those Ministers. One of the Ministers concerned was sentenced by United States Courts for drugs-related offences in 1985. Another was among those who resigned office shortly before the decision to suspend Ministerial Government in the TCI announced on 25 July last year. No other Ministers appear to be implicated.

This is the third Commission on TCI matters since January 1986. All three have revealed serious weaknesses in the administration of the Islands. Our decision to suspend Ministerial Government in the Islands in July 1986, and our action following the Report of the constitutional Commission appointed in September last year, shows that Her Majesty's Government are fully determined to correct these weaknesses and to ensure that the Islands are provided with the responsible administration to which they have an undoubted right.

PRIME MINISTER

Official Costs

Mr. Skinner asked the Prime Minister (1) what is the latest figure for the cost of entertaining at *(a)* Chequers and *(b)* 10 Downing street since (i) May 1979 and (ii) July 1983;

(2) what is the latest cost figure for maintaining her Private Office since May 1979;

(3) what is the latest figure for the cost of her foreign tours since May 1979.

The Prime Minister: The cost of maintaining my Office since 1979 (including the full costs for the financial year 1979-80) is £25,350,000; of foreign visits since May 1979 is £2,923,000; and of entertainment (i) since May 1979 is £146,000 and (ii) since July 1983 is £82,000. The figures for entertainment cover both Chequers and No. 10 Downing street; the information is not available by location.

Telecommunications

Mr. Michael Marshall asked the Prime Minister whether she had an opportunity of discussing with President Reagan the common interests of the United Kingdom and the United States of America in a speedy resolution to the negotiations for the second KDD international telecommunications network in Japan.

The Prime Minister: No. The United States Administration, however, are well aware of our views.

Official Secrets Act

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister if she will introduce legislation to amend the Official Secrets Act so as to provide that civil servants who provide information to Mr. Speaker are not open to prosecution in the courts.

The Prime Minister: We have no plans at present to amend the Official Secrets Act.

British Museum

Mr. William Powell asked the Prime Minister if she has reviewed departmental responsibility for the British Museum (Natural History); and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I have decided that responsibility for the British Museum (Natural History) should be transferred from the Secretary of State for Education and Science to the Minister for the Arts. Such a change will enable this world famous museum to play its full part

alongside the other great national museums and galleries in the Government's developing policies for the national heritage. It will also enhance its potential for collaboration with the other museums, particularly those in South Kensington.

I and my Ministerial colleagues concerned hope and intend that, following the transfer which will come into effect on 1 August, the museum will maintain and develop its distinguished scientific standing and strong working links with the scientific community. The Royal Society will continue as now to advise on the appointment of one member of the trustees; this advice will in future be given to the Minister for the Arts. In addition the museum will be eligible to apply in future on a competitive basis to the bodies funded from the science budget for research grants and awards allocated by normal peer review procedures.

The transfer will not imply or require any change in the pay, conditions and grading of current or future staff.

Members' Correspondence

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop asked the Prime Minister whether she will repeat her instruction that, to preserve the confidentiality of hon. Members' correspondence with Ministers, acknowledgement cards will not be sent out naked, but enclosed in an envelope.

The Prime Minister [*pursuant to her reply*, 9 July 1987, c. *208*]: I have arranged for Departments to be advised that, in order to preserve the confidentiality of hon. Members' correspondence with Ministers, where acknowledgement cards are not sent in envelopes they should omit the subject matter of constituents' correspondence.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Retired Judges

Mr. Alton asked the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on the practice of retired judges in receipt of pensions continuing to preside as judges.

The Attorney-General: Retired judges in receipt of pensions may sit as deputy judges in accordance with the provisions of section 9 of the Supreme Court Act 1981, in the case of judges of the Supreme Court, and section 24 of the Courts Act 1971, as amended by section 146 of the Supreme Court Act 1981, in the case of circuit judges.

Judge John Edward Jones

Mr. Alton asked the Attorney-General how many sittings Judge John Edward Jones has had since his retirement; and what remuneration he has received.

The Attorney-General: Since his retirement in 1984, his Honour Judge John Edward Jones has sat a total of 311½ days. He received payment at the current daily rates.

Mr. Alton asked the Attorney-General what pension Judge John Edward Jones receives following his retirement; and what is the level of that pension.

The Attorney-General: On retirement, his Honour John Edward Jones was granted a pension in accordance with the provisions of section 5 of the Judicial Pensions Act 1981. It is accepted practice not to divulge the details of an individual's personal pension.

Mr. Peter Wright

Mr. Dalyell asked the Attorney-General what is the estimated cost of sending Mr. John Lewis to Australia to plead before the New South Wales Court of Appeal in relation to the Peter Wright proceedings.

The Attorney-General: I do not give details of the fees of individual counsel.

"Spycatcher"

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Attorney-General whether he intends to bring an action for criminal contempt against the *Sunday Telegraph*, for publishing material on 19 July taken from the book, "Spycatcher" by Mr. Peter Wright; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: The matter is under consideration.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Attorney-General whether he intends to bring an action for criminal contempt against *The Observer*, for publishing material on 19 July in an article by David Leigh, the contents of which were drawn from the book, "Spycatcher" by Peter Wright; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: The matter is under consideration.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Special Education

Rev. Martin Smyth asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what arrangements exist for the training of teachers in respect of meeting special educational needs in Northern Ireland; how many teachers in Northern Ireland are currently qualified to teach children with special educational needs; and what changes he plans in this provision.

Dr. Mawhinney: I shall reply to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Licensed Bookmakers

Mr. Ian Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has any plans to permit licensed bookmaking offices in Northern Ireland to show televised broadcasts of races and other events on which betting takes place.

Mr. Needham: Yes, it is my attention to make an order for this purpose as soon as possible under article 32 (14) of the Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.

South Tyrone Hospital

Mr. Maginnis asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were on the waiting list for surgery at the South Tyrone hospital, Dungannon on 1 January 1986, and on the first day of each subsequent month up to, and including, 1 July.

Mr. Needham [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 July 1987]: The available information is as follows:

Number waiting for admission for surgery

At	*Number*
31 December 1985	508
31 March 1986	418
30 June 1986	405
30 September 1986	304
31 December 1986	304
31 March 1987	446
30 June 1987	523

DEFENCE

Chemical Defence Establishment, Porton Down

Mr. Key asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the safety of the community in Salisbury and in nearby villages in view of experiments with gas and chemicals at the Chemical Defence Establishment, Porton Down.

Mr. Sainsbury: All work carried out at the Chemical Defence Establishment, (CDE) Porton Down, is subject to exacting safety standards. The procedures followed conform fully with the appropriate national and international standards and the establishment is open to inspection by the Health and Safety Executive. I can assure my hon. Friend that the work of the CDE poses no hazard to the local community, which includes many members of staff and their families.

Military Research Spending

Mr. Wilkinson asked the Secretary of State for Defence what are the comparisons, as a percentage of gross domestic product at 1987 prices, between *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* the United States of America, *(c)* Japan, *(d)* West Germany and *(e)* France for military research spending in non-governmental establishments.

Mr. Sainsbury: Total Government spending on defence R and D as a percentage of GDP in the countries stated is given in table F1a of the "Annual Review of Government Funded R and D 1986". In the United Kingdom, 0·036 per cent. of GDP will be spent on extra-mural defence research in the financial year 1987-88, but comparable figures are not readily available for other countries. Statistics on private venture research expenditure by the United Kingdom defence industry are not held centrally.

Extra-Mural Research Projects

Mr. Wilkinson asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department issues a list of extra-mural research projects which it is willing to fund.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Ministry of Defence carries out extra-mural research in the major fields described in the MOD section of the "Annual Review of Government Funded R and D".

Further detail on areas of interest is given in the brochures of the small firms research initiative and the joint Research Council/Ministry of Defence research grants scheme.

Research contracts over £500,000 are covered by the MOD contracts bulletin.

Training Exercises (Live Contaminants)

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence if, pursuant to the statement by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Kettering (Mr. Freeman) on 15 July, he will give the chemical formula of *(a)* radium sulphate and *(b)* any other live contaminants used in military training exercises.

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list *(a)* all radioactive materials used in training exercise simulating nuclear accidents and *(b)* the half-life of each radionuclide involved.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The table shows the live contaminants used in nuclear accident response exercises and training and their approximate half-lives. In addition, a number of sealed sources have been used for such purposes as instrument calibration. The use of all these materials is subject to stringent precautions to ensure the safety of the public and participating personnel. The smallest quantities of such materials are used and they are of very low levels of radioactivity. Even at the time of exercises they are of no more than the lowest level of radioactivity required to achieve instrument readings for training purposes.

Radioisotope	*Half-life*	*Chemical formula*
Actinon (Radon 219) daughters	40 minutes	Rn
Radium 223 sulphate	11·4 days	$Ra\ SO_4$
Radium 224 chloride	3·65 days	$Ra\ Cl_2$
Radium 224 sulphate	3·65 days	$Ra\ SO_4$
Technetium 99m	6 hours	Tc
Yttrium 90 oxide	64 hours	Y_2O_3

RTM 322 Engine

Mr. Page asked the Secretary of State for Defence, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Hertfordshire, South-West, *Official Report*, column *162*, on 2 July, over the evaluations of the RTM 322 engine in the SH60B by the United States authorities, how the evaluation is proceeding in those tests which were started some two months earlier than 6 June.

Mr. Sainsbury: RTM 322 engines were installed in the SH60B during February, in preparation for the United States navy evaluation. Some initial ground running and flying were then carried out before the aircraft was handed over to the United States navy on 6 June. I understand that, during that preparatory period, the testing was entirely satisfactory and the engines performed fully up to expectations.

Exercise Reforger

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether United States Air Force, Army, Navy and reserve units will exercise in the United Kingdom as part of this autumn's Reforger exercises;

(2) how many United States regular and reserve service men and women will visit the United Kingdom during this autumn's Reforger exercises.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I am advised that some 2,000 United States service personnel, regulars and reserves, are expecting to visit the United Kingdom to take part in Exercise Reforger. The breakdown of this figure between the services is classified.

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether air-launched cruise missiles will be deployed in Britain as part of the Reforger 87 exercises.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The position remains as stated by my right hon. Friend, the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Mr. Stanley) in his answers to the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) on 18 June 1984 at column *41*, 26 July 1984 at columns *751-52*, and 15 November 1985 at column *309*.

Nuclear Weapons (Exercises)

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will give details of any of this autumn's exercises involving either British forces or British territory and airspace which will simulate the use of nuclear weapons;

(2) whether any estimate of civilian casualties will be made as part of Exercise Certain Strike;

(3) if he will give the total civilian casualties estimated during Exercise Lionheart.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Details of exercise scenarios are classified.

NATO Exercises

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list the titles and purposes of each of this autumn's North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's exercises involving British territory or forces;

(2) if he will list by both constituency and exercise name such information as is yet available on the United Kingdom Army and Royal Air Force units which will participate in this autumn's North Atlantic Treaty Organisation exercises in the United Kingdom and Germany; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: In general it is not the Government's policy to provide details of United Kingdom participation in forthcoming NATO exercises prior to their announcement by the relevant NATO authority.

Warsaw Pact Exercises

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has as to the most recent Warsaw pact exercises in Germany involving *(a)* more than 80,000 ground and air forces and *(b)* more than 50,000 ground and air forces.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Under the 1975 Helsinki final act, states were encouraged to notify major military manoeuvres exceeding a total of 25,000 troops. The Warsaw pact has held much larger exercises in the Soviet Union than in Germany. However, a number of exercises held in the GDR were notified, although the only notified exercise of the size specified by the hon. Member was a ground, air and naval exercise involving 60,000 troops which was held partly in the GDR in 1984. Under the Stockholm document, which came into operation on 1 January this year, it is mandatory to notify military activities involving more than 13,000 troops; but none of the exercises planned to be held in the GDR this year involves 50,000 or more troops.

Cruise Missiles

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the use of either conventional or nuclear submarine-launched cruise missiles will be included in any exercise involving either British Army of the Rhine or the northern flank this autumn.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The United Kingdom has no submarine-launched cruise missiles. It is not for Her Majesty's Government to comment on the training of other national military forces in exercises of this nature.

United States Navy Vessels (Visits)

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the visits to United Kingdom ports of United States Navy vessels by ship name, ship type and port in the last year for which such information is available.

Mr. Ian Stewart: As my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling, the then Minister of State for the Armed forces, told the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas) on 20 February 1984 at column *432*, 13 March 1984 at column *132* and 16 May 1985 at columns *209-10*, full records of visits by United States Navy ships are not generally held. However the following information is available, covering the period 1 July 1986 to 30 June 1987:

Portsmouth
Submarines
Albuquerque
Minniapolis St. Paul
Bluefish
Scamp
Narwhal
Lapon
Phoenix

Destroyers
Thorn
Deyo

Frigates
Moinester
Antrim

Assault Ships
Inchon
Saipan

Battleship
Iowa

Amphibious Command Ship
Mount Whitney

Amphibious Transport Dock
Raleigh

Tank Landing Ship
Sumpter

Plymouth
Submarines
Lewis and Clark
Augusta

Portland
Submarines
Lafayette
Andrew Jackson

Rosyth
Cruiser
Bainbridge

Dover
Amphibious Transport Dock
Austin

Glasgow
Fleet Ocean Tug
Powhattan

Survey Ship
Kane

Southampton
Fleet Ocean Tug
Apache

Tactical Nuclear Forces

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Defence what decisions have been taken regarding the modernisation of the tactical nuclear forces of the Army or Royal Navy or Royal Air Force.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I have nothing to add to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the hon. Member for Newport, East (Mr. Hughes) on 24 March 1987 at column 162.

Exercise Certain Strike

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether French forces will participate in exercise Certain Strike.

Mr. Ian Stewart: That is a matter for the French Government.

Military Aircraft Losses (Training Exercises)

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will publish a list of all military aircraft lost, damaged or irreparably damaged over the United Kingdom in the last 12 years, including aircraft belonging to foreign powers and aircraft assigned to NATO but not British, involved in training exercises over the United Kingdom mainland.

Mr. Freeman: Details of losses of, and serious damage to, aircraft of the three United Kingdom services are published each year in the "Statement on the Defence Estimates". Details of accidents over the United Kingdom mainland involving foreign aircraft are not held centrally and the collation of the information requested would involve disproportionate cost and effort.

Materials and Equipment (Bolton)

Mr. David Young asked the Secretary of State for Defence what information is given by his Department to local authorities and police of the nature of cargoes of defence materials and equipment parked overnight in Bolton.

Mr. Freeman: My Department has no knowledge of any cargoes of defence materials and equipment being parked overnight in Bolton. If the hon. Member would care to write to me with further details I will have the matter fully investigated.

Defence Review

Mr. Allen asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he is planning to announce a Defence Review.

Mr. Stewart: No.

RAF Binbrook

Mr. Leigh asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he is yet able to make a statement on the future of RAF Binbrook.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The future of RAF Binbrook has been under review for some time as a result of plans to withdraw the Lightning air defence force from service in September 1988.

A number of options for the future of the station after that date have been evaluated including both operational flying tasks and ground training functions. However, after a thorough and careful examination of defence needs and possible uses for the station, I regret to say that no alternative use has been identified and RAF Binbrook will therefore be closed at the end of 1988. We plan to retain the airfield there as a relief landing ground for RAF Scampton and as a war reserve airfield to provide flexibility for dispersed operations. In the light of this decision, other Government Departments who might have a possible interest in the facilities will be consulted.

There will be no requirement for permanent staff at RAF Binbrook, either civilian or service, after the closure. Civilian staff, other than those who will reach normal retirement age or leave voluntarily, will be offered redundancy terms. Full consultation with the trades union side will be pursued in the usual way. Service personnel will be redeployed elsewhere, including a small detachment to RAF Scampton who will commute to RAF Binbrook.

Lea Aviation Ltd.

Mr. Denzil Davies asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if it is with his approval that two serving Royal Air Force officers are directly connected with a private company, Lea Aviation Limited, using Royal Air Force assets for commercial gain;

(2) what are the guidelines for circumstances whereby serving military personnel are allowed to be directly connected with commercial organisations whose business includes the use, for private profit, of military equipment.

Mr. Freeman [*pursuant to his reply*, 7 July 1987, c. 7*l*]: Serving military personnel who wish to be connected with commercial organisations of any sort are required by the Queen's Regulations to seek approval; in the case of the Royal Air Force by QR(RAF) paragraph J910. The two serving Royal Air Force officers connected with Lea Aviation Ltd. have received approval under this regulation.

Mr. Denzil Davies asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) who authorised the use by Lea Aviation Limited of an airshow on the North Weald airfield, Epping, of front-line Royal Air Force aircraft including Tornados, Harriers and Hawks;

(2) on what basis is the amount paid by Lea Aviation Limited to his Department for the use of Royal Air Force assets computed;

(3) whether the contract for the use of Royal Air Force aircraft at the recent private airshow operated by Lea Aviation Limited at the North Weald Airfield, Epping, was put out for tender;

(4) who provided the security arrangements for the protection of the Tornado, Harrier and Hawk aircraft

which took part in a recent airshow organised by Lea Aviation Limited at North Weald Airfield, Epping; and who paid for the arrangements.

Mr. Freeman [*pursuant to his reply*, 7 July 1987, c. *71*]: The presence of RAF aircraft at the air display at North Weald on 27-28 June was authorised under long-standing arrangements for the participation by the Royal Air Force in public functions in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. For the 1987 display season RAF resources have so far been allocated to some 328 events including that at North Weald. Charges for RAF participation in this event, were levied in accordance with regulations made by the Ministry of Defence: the organisers also provided and paid for security arrangements to the standard agreed with the RAF.

RAF Boulmer

Mr. Beith asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many married quarters at RAF Boulmer have been vacant for more than 12 months.

Mr. Freeman [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 July 1987, c. *71*]: There are three married quarters at RAF Boulmer which have been vacant for more than 12 months.

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Frank Cook asked the Secretary of State for Defence what are the implications for the strategic and tactical role of the British Army of the Rhine of French plans to place nuclear weapons in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Member to the reply he received from my hon. Friend the Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor) to his related questions on 16 July at column *636*.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Research (Tax Relief)

Mr. Wilkinson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what tax relief is allowed against expenditure on research by private industry in the United Kingdom; and how this compares with the position in *(a)* the United States of America, *(b)* Japan, *(c)* West Germany and *(d)* France.

Mr. Norman Lamont: A recent Inland Revenue and Her Majesty's Treasury study "Fiscal Incentives for Research and Development Spending" (a copy of which has been placed in the Library) reviewed the tax treatment of R & D spending in the United Kingdom and nine other OECD countries, including the United States of America, Japan, West Germany and France. In all the countries studied most research expenditure, being on current account, is allowed for tax purposes in the year in which it is incurred. In the United Kingdom this treatment extends also to trade-related capital expenditure on scientific research. The position in each of the other countries is described in the survey referred to.

International comparisons are difficult, but, broadly speaking, while the overall effect of the corporate tax systems in the United Kingdom, Japan and West Germany is more or less neutral in relation to R & D investments, France and the United States offer very small incentives to invest. The evidence of the cost-effectiveness of such incentives remains uncertain but in general it suggests that only one half the value of tax revenues forgone by Governments under such schemes is actually spent by companies on additional R & D.

Income Tax

Mr. Wigley asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many households in Wales with incomes of £125 per week or less pay income tax.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The information held is in terms of tax units (married couples and single persons) rather than households. About 390,000 tax units resident in Wales were liable to income tax and had earned income averaging £125 per week or less assessable for 1984-85, the latest year for which information is available.

Civil Servants

Mr. David Nicholson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many under-secretaries, assistant secretaries and senior principals there were in post on the latest available date; and how many of each there were on the same date in 1979, 1981, 1983 and 1985, respectively.

Mr. Brooke: From 1 January 1984 under-secretary was designated as Grade 3 and unified Grades 5 and 6 were also introduced. Grade 5 comprises former assistant secretaries and their equivalents in the Science, Professional and Technology and other groups. Grade 6 includes Senior Principals and equivalents.

The information available for 1 January of each year is as follows:

Grade	*1979*	*1981*	*1983*	*1985*	*1987*
3	625	587	511	490	489
5	2,228	2,182	2,032	2,021	2,108
6	3,095	3,763	3,484	3,376	3,734

Mr. David Nicholson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how he would define the functions of *(a)* assistant secretary and *(b)* senior principal, as distinct from the functions of other grades in the Home Civil Service.

Mr. Brooke: The grades of assistant secretary and senior principal were incorporated into the unified grades 5 and 6 respectively on the extension of the Home Civil Service open structure on 1 January 1984.

The duties of grades 5 and 6 are described in grading guidance booklets issued by my Department, copies of which have been deposited in the Libraries of the House.

VAT (Zero Rating)

Mr. Watts asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will place in the Library a copy of the report for the hearing of case 416/85 before the European Court of Justice brought by the Commission of the European Communities against the United Kingdom concerning the zero-rating of certain goods and services.

Mr. Brooke: A copy of the report for the hearing of case 416/85 before the European Court of Justice on 15 September 1987 has today been placed in the Library of the House. This is a document prepared by the court on the basis of the submissions put to it and summarises the main issues. It cannot be expected to reflect the full force

of the Government's arguments, which will be vigorously pursued by counsel at the hearing itself. It is not the practice to disclose written pleadings before the ECJ without the agreement of the other party to the case, in this case the Commission. We have approached the Commission to see whether, in the particular circumstances, it would be prepared to agree to publication. But a summary of the Government's position and the general rules on confidentiality of pleadings are set out in appendices 2 and 3 respectively of the fourth report from the Treasury and Civil Service Committee (Session 1986-87) "The defence of VAT zero-rating".

Financial Services

Mr. Neil Hamilton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made in establishing the regulatory regime for the wholesale markets under section 43 of the Financial Services Act.

Mr. Lilley: Under section 43 of the Financial Services Act the Treasury has responsibility for approving the conditions that the Bank of England intends imposing for admission to its list of exempted persons and the arrangements for a person's admission to and removal from it. Draft conditions and arrangements were set out in a consultative document jointly issued by the Treasury and the Bank of England in December 1986. ("The future regulation of the wholesale markets in sterling, foreign exchange and bullion"). Following revisions in the light of comments received, the Treasury has now approved the following conditions and arrangements:

"An applicant will need to satisfy the Bank that it is 'fit and proper', by reason of its capital, managerial and operational resources, its standards of business conduct and its high reputation and standing, to undertake the particular activity and also that it acts on a regular basis as a market maker or broker in one or more of the wholesale market instruments. In determining whether an applicant meets these conditions, the Bank will take into account the following factors:

(a) that the financial position of the applicant is sound;

(b) that its ownership structure does not result in any unacceptable conflicts of interest, nor is in any other way a source of potential weakness;

(c) that its management and staff are of high quality and appropriate experience and that its systems are effective;

(d) that its reputation in the market place is good;

(e) that it is able and willing to adhere to an undertaking to observe the London Code of Conduct, as specified by the Bank of England from time to time;

(f) that it acts as a market maker or broker in one or more of the wholesale market instruments. In those markets where prices are quoted continuously, the term market maker will be taken to mean an institution which, as principal, holds itself out generally and continuously as willing to make a price in the relevant instrument. In less continuous markets (eg in bullion, swaps or options), the Bank will wish to include those institutions who are generally willing to make a price in the relevant instrument. But, unlike for example in the gilt-edged market, there is no absolute commitment or obligation on market makers in the wholesale markets to make prices regardless of market conditions; the Bank is concerned with those institutions whose function is normally to do so."

A firm applying for inclusion on the list will be required to submit a business plan setting out the type or types of activity it intends to undertake, including types of instrument (and currencies) in which it intends to trade. Its permitted scope will be limited to those activities agreed with the Bank, subject to review. Applicants should supply any information requested by the Bank which the Bank reasonably requires to form its view on the application.

Applications should in any event, unless explicitly agreed with the Bank, include the business plan described above, a description of the applicant's organisation and staff resources, details of ownership, information on directors and managers, and details of internal control systems. Where appropriate, applicants should specify which of their operations are already supervised, and by whom.

The Bank will also require the applicant's latest audited accounts. Where it would fall to the Bank to assess an applicant's capital adequacy, the applicant will be asked for any additional information necessary to demonstrate its financial soundness.

The Bank will aim to give its decision within three months of receiving an application. Where the Bank is minded to reject an application, it will give the applicant notice of that fact and specify its reasons. The Bank will allow the applicant reasonable opportunity to make representations and will consider any representations made before coming to a decision.

Once established on the list, an institution will need to continue to satisfy the Bank that it should remain listed.

The Bank will give notice to any listed institution which it considers should no longer be included on the list that it may be removed from the list. The Bank will give its reasons for taking that view. The institution will be given reasonable opportunity to make representations as to why it should not be removed from the list and, where relevant, to take remedial action, before the Bank comes to a decision.

Where the Bank, having considered the representations of an applicant whose application it is minded to reject or an institution it is minded to remove from the list, remains of the view that the application should be rejected or the institution removed, it will specify its reasons for rejecting these representations. The applicant or the institution may have the matter reviewed by a suitable independent person(s) appointed by the Bank for that purpose, such as a member of the panel established under section 96 of the Financial Services Act. In addition to considering and reporting on the substantive issues, the person(s) conducting the review will decide who should pay the costs of review. There will normally be a presumption that where the Bank's decision is supported, these costs will be borne by the applicant or institution. The Bank will require a prior written undertaking from the applicant or institution concerned to pay such costs, if any, as are awarded against it.

Later this week the Bank of England will publish a paper setting out in detail how it intends to supervise these markets, a copy of which will be placed in the Library of the House.

Tax Consultative Committee

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer on how many occasions in the past three years officials from his Department have been involved in meetings of the Tax Consultative Committee; which officials were involved; with whom they met; what is the purpose of the meetings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 July 1987]: The Tax Consultative Committee, which is chaired by a Treasury Minister, has met on nine occasions in the past three years. It is an informal body consisting of senior Inland Revenue and Treasury officials, and of people knowledgeable about tax from the point of view of industry, commerce, accountancy and the law. The meetings cover a wide range of taxation topics.

Tax Relief

Mr. Wigley asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the amount spent on mortgage tax relief in Wales, Scotland and each of the English regions in each financial year since 1979 both at outturn and 1987 prices.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 July 1987]: Estimates for the years 1979-80 to 1982-83 have been derived from the results of the survey of personal incomes and are given in the table.

Cost of mortgage interest relief
(£ million, outturn prices)

	1979-80	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*
Northern	55	80	70	95
Yorkshire and Humberside	100	160	150	160
North West	130	200	180	220
East Midlands	80	110	110	130
West Midlands	130	160	190	170
East Anglia	45	50	60	75
Greater London	220	280	290	260
Other South East	440	560	600	650
South West	100	140	170	140
Wales	45	65	80	80
Scotland	80	120	120	140
Northern Ireland	25	35	30	30
UNITED KINGDOM	1,450	1,960	2,050	2,150

Cost of mortgage interest relief
(£ million, 1987-88 prices)

	1979-80	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*
Northern	95	120	95	120
Yorkshire and Humberside	180	230	200	200
North West	220	300	240	270
East Midlands	140	170	150	160
West Midlands	230	240	250	210
East Anglia	75	75	80	90
Greater London	380	420	390	320
Other South East	760	830	800	820
South West	180	210	230	180
Wales	75	100	110	100
Scotland	140	180	160	180
Northern Ireland	45	50	40	40
UNITED KINGDOM	2,520	2,925	2,745	2,690

Following the introduction of MIRAS in April 1983, regional information on the cost of mortgage interest relief cannot be extracted from Inland Revenue records. The regional distribution of mortgage interest can be estimated from the "Family Expenditure Survey" but, as the sample size for the FES is relatively small, it is not possible to provide robust estimates of regional trends for the period after 1982-83. Accordingly, the following tables show the cost of mortgage interest relief in the United Kingdom from 1983-84 to 1987-88 with the percentage distribution of the relief by county and region, based on FES data from 1983 to 1985.

Cost of mortgage interest relief
(£ million)

	Outturn prices	*1987-88 prices*
1983-84	2,750	3,290
1984-85	3,500	3,980
1985-86	4,500	4,830
1986-87	4,500	4,680
1987-88	4,750	4,750

Regional share of mortgage interest relief based on FES data for 1983 to 1985

	per cent.
Northern	3·6
Yorkshire and Humberside	7·4
North West	9·4
East Midlands	6·5
West Midlands	8·1
East Anglia	3·4
Greater London	14·5
Other South East	26·9
South West	8·3
Wales	3·8
Scotland	6·8
Northern Ireland	1·3
UNITED KINGDOM	100·0

Mr. Grylls asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will introduce legislation to enable Members of Parliament with various interests outside Parliament from which they earn income, to elect to be self employed as regards the whole of their income including Parliamentary salary; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to the reply*, 20 July 1987]: No.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

EC (Butter)

Mr. John Marshall asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what plans he now has to reimburse charities for all the costs involved in the distribution of free European Economic Community butter to pensioners.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Community-funded payments were made for the cost of packaging and of transport to the charities' own distribution points. As we made clear at the outset of the scheme to representatives of the charities, neither Community nor national funds are available for other costs.

Green Pound (Pig Farmers)

Mr. Shersby asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what estimate he has made of the effect of the recent changes in the value of the green pound and changes in the method of calculating the monetary compensatory amounts on *(a)* the price of pigmeat imported into the United Kingdom and *(b)* swill pig farmers in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Donald Thompson: These changes will reduce the MCAs paid on imports into the United Kingdom and the charges on exports of pigmeat from the United Kingdom. Taken together with the helpful reductions agreed in other members states positive MCAs, this should help to make our industry more competitive and so help all pig farmers

in the United Kingdom. The precise benefit cannot be stated as this will depend, to a certain extent, on future movements in sterling.

Milk

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what have been the reductions in milk production in each in each European Community country since April 1984; and what estimate has been made of what further reductions need to be made in order to eliminate surplus production.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Milk deliveries to dairies per member state in 1985-86 compared with 1983-84 are as follows:

Member State	*'000 tonnes* *1983-84*	*1985-86*	*per cent. difference*
Germany	25,472	23,719	−6·9
France	26,247	25,770	−1·8
Italy	8,541	8,356	−2·2
Netherlands	12,929	12,287	−5·0
Belgium	3,269	3,260	−0·3
Luxembourg	282	294	+4·3
United Kingdom	16,786	15,613	−7·0
Ireland	5,436	5,588	+2·8
Denmark	5,280	4,900	−7·2
Greece	429	446	+4·0

Source: Eurostat.
Period: April-March.

Last autumn the European Commission estimated that a reduction in production of 9·5 million tonnes was required to restore balance to the dairy market. It is intended that 7 million tonnes of this should be achieved by the measures already imposed for this marketing year and the remaining 2·5 million tonnes by the further cuts agreed for 1988-89.

Exports

Mr. Amess asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the top 10 agricultural products exported from Great Britain in 1986, in each case giving the amounts produced and the amounts exported.

Mr. Gummer: The top 10 exported agricultural commodities can be defined in a variety of ways. The following table shows those commodities which had the largest export values in 1986. The export information is not completely comparable with the production figures as it includes overseas produce re-exported from the United Kingdom.

Commodities, such as tea, which consist entirely of re-exports have not been included in the table. All the information relates to the United Kingdom as information for Great Britain is not readily available.

Production and Exports of Main Agricultural Commodities in the United Kingdom 1986[1]

Commodity	*United Kingdom Exports '000 Tonnes*	*United Kingdom Production '000 Tonnes*
Wheat	3,987	13,974
Barley	4,119	10,019
Beef and Veal	[2]223	1,039
Milk Powder	220	333
Oilseed Rape	495	965
Animal Feed	338	[3]—
Mutton and Lamb	[2]73	307
Wool	38	[3]59
All Legumes	293	[4]385
Pigmeat	[2]69	1,009

[1] Provisional Estimates.
[2] Includes carcase weight equivalent of carcase meat, preserved and prepared meat, and live animals.
[3] Not readily available.
[4] Includes Peas Harvested Dry for human consumption only.

Fishing Industry

Dr. Godman asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent discussions he has had with the chairman of the Sea Fish Industry Authority about the future of the fishing industry.

Mr. Gummer: My Department maintains close contact with the Sea Fish Industry Authority on matters concerning the future of the fishing industry and I last met the chairman on Monday 20 July.

EEC Food Statistics

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give details of *(a)* the total agricultural support for the European Economic Community, *(b)* overall European Economic Community expenditure and *(c)* total European Economic Community agricultural exports, at the latest date for which information is available.

Mr. MacGregor: Expenditure in 1986 under the common agricultural policy amounted to 23 billion ecu (£14,900 million). Final outturn figures for total Community expenditure are not yet available, but the budget provision was 35,174 mecu (£22,800 million). The value of exports from the European Community of agricultural products in 1986 was nearly 29 billion ecu (£18,800 million). (Source: Eurostat.)

Irradiated Food

Mr. Steel asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if he will make a statement on his Department's policy with regard to irradiation as a method of food preservation;

(2) if he will make it his policy to ensure that all food treated by irradiation will be clearly labelled.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services and I are considering the current legislation which prohibits the general irradiation of food in this country in the light of the Report of the Advisory Committee on Irradiated and Novel Foods. An announcement about whether we intend to issue proposals to amend the existing legislation will be made after we have fully considered the Report and the representations received on it. Consideration will include the advice in the Report of the Food Advisory Committee on the labelling of irradiated food, that if the irradiation of food is permitted such foods should be required to be clearly labelled.

Bovine Somatotropin

Sir John Biggs-Davison asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what experiments have been carried out into the effect on cattle of injection of bovine somatotropin; what representations he has received concerning the prospect of the milk of such cattle being included in the general pool for human consumption; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The data relating to experiments on the effect on cattle of injection of bovine somatotropin were submitted to my Department in support of applications for animal test certificates under the Medicines Act 1968. The Act prohibits the disclosure of such information.

So far this year hon. Members have asked five questions and have sent me letters from about 80 constituents.

About 180 members of the public (including some who had written to hon. Members) wrote to me directly.

As hon. Members already know, the Farm Animal Welfare Council has been asked to look at the wider welfare implications of using BST in cows and to produce a report. Their report, in addition to all the other information available to me, will be taken into account in reaching any decisions that fall to me under domestic or Community legislation.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the dangers arising from the use of bovine somatatropin in milk.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Currently field trials of bovine somatatropin are in progress authorised by animal test certificates granted under the Medicines Act 1968 by my Department. Before such certificates were granted, we were satisfied as to the safety of the consumer of milk or other produce from treated animals, among a number of other matters laid down in the Medicines Act. These questions were thoroughly scrutinised by a committee of independent experts including medical doctors as well as by my officials. Had doubts on this score been revealed, the certificates for the animal tests would not have been granted. Additionally, I have asked the Farm Animal Welfare Council for its advice on the animal welfare implications of this product.

Saddlers' List

Sir Michael Shaw asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has reached a final decision on the future of the saddlers' list arrangements made under the Medicines Act 1968 under which for a three-year period registered saddlers were permitted to sell a specified range of medicinal products for horses.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Following statutory consultation with representative organisations, my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and I have decided that these arrangements should be made permanent. The necessary Order will be laid before Parliament in the autumn.

THE ARTS

Acceptances in Lieu of Tax

Mr. Faulds asked the Minister for the Arts when the Office of Arts and Libraries proposes to issue a press notice giving information laid before the House, in accordance with section 9(6) of the National Heritage Act 1980, specifying disposals and transfers of property accepted in lieu of capital transfer tax or inheritance tax carried out during the financial year 1986-87, and including particulars of the bodies or institutions to whom transfers were made and the amount of tax satisfied in each case.

Mr. Luce: The statement is being prepared and will be laid shortly. A press notice will be issued on the same day.

Museums (Merseyside)

Mr. Alton asked the Minister for the Arts if he will list the grants made by him to the national museums on Merseyside, and constituent institutions, in every year since their inception; and if he will break the figures down by whether they are for capital costs, operating costs, or for purchases.

Mr. Luce [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 July 1987]: The trustee body for the national museums and galleries on Merseyside was formed on 20 February 1986 and was allocated a "setting up" grant of £18,000 in 1985-86.

In 1986-87 the NMGM was allocated allocated £10,145,000. Within this total, £7,995,000 was for running costs; £1,400,000 for the completion of the main contract for the Merseyside maritime museum; and £750,000 for purchase grant.

In 1987-88 the NMGM has been allocated £9,414,000 comprising £8,414,000 for running costs; £250,000 for capital works; and £750,000 for purchase grant.

It is for the trustee of the NMGM to decide how they will divide their grant amonst the constituent institutions.

Museums (Grants)

Mr. Alton asked the Minister for the Arts how much of his Department's expenditure on museums has been set aside for the replacement of the Greater London council and metropolitan authorities grants to museums in every year since the Greater London council and metropolitan authorities were abolished; which institutions have benefited; and by how much.

Mr. Luce [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 July 1987]: On the abolition of the metropolitan county councils, the central Government arts programme took on the direct funding of two major museums: national museums and galleries on Merseyside, which were allocated a total grant-in-aid of £10·145 million in 1986-87 (including a special provision of £1·4 million for the completion of the Merseyside maritime museum project) and £9·414 million in 1987-88; and the Greater Manchester museum of science and industry which was allocated £1·075 million in 1986-87 and £1·252 million in 1987-88. The Government also increased from 33 per cent. to 50 per cent. their contribution towards the costs of the museum of London, a cash increase of £0·75 million in 1986-87 and £0·776 million in 1987-88.

Arrangements for assistance to certain other institutions were made by transfers to the appropriate funding agency in 1986-87. The University Grants Committee received £0·336 million for Manchester university's museum and the Whitworth gallery; the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission received £1·75 million for Kenwood house, Rangers house and

Marble Hill house; and the Inner London education authority £1·361 million for the Geoffrye and Horniman museums.

Assistance to other museums and galleries in abolition areas is channelled through the Museums and Galleries Commission and disbursed as grants. With the exception of the Tyne and Wear museum service where longer term arrangements were appropriate, the commission has negotiated with each successor local authority an agreement whereby central Government support was 75 per cent. of metropolitan county council funding, uprated for inflation, in 1986-87, is 50 per cent. in 1987-88 and will be 25 per cent. in 1988-89 and nil thereafter. All the successor authorities have agreed to make up the funding to at least pre-abolition levels and some have exceeded these. Allocations for 1986-87 are as follows. Precise levels of funding to individual institutions for 1987-88 are still under discussion.

Museums and galleries commission: Post abolition grants 1986-87

	£	£
Greater London (London Boroughs Grants Scheme—Richmond)		
Dulwich Picture Gallery	5,375	
Jewish Museum	8,070	
Museum of the Jewish East End	12,700	
National Museum of Labour History	7,987	
Area Museum Service for South Eastern England, for London Museum Service	10,375	
		44,507
Tyne and Wear		
Tyne and Wear Joint Museums Committee (Joint Committee)	750,000	
Beamish, North of England Open Air Museum (5 separate District Councils)	105,000	
North of England Museum Service	350	
		855,350
Greater Manchester		
Lyme Hall (Stockport)	61,780	
		61,780
Merseyside		
North Western Museum and Art Gallery Service	20,300	
		20,300
West Midlands		
Dudley, Black Country Museum (Dudley)	43,315	
		43,315
South Yorkshire		
Cooper Art Gallery (Barnsley)	46,060	
Worsborough Mill Museum (Barnsley)	21,300	
		67,360
West Yorkshire		
Yorkshire Sculpture Park (Wakefield)	26,380	
Caphouse Colliery, Yorkshire Mining Museum (Wakefield)	33,150	
Area Museum and Art Gallery Service for Yorkshire and Humberside	2,660	
		62,190
		1,154,802

Museums and Galleries (Expenditure)

Mr. Alton asked the Minister for the Arts what the total expenditure by his Department on museums and galleries has been in every year since 1976-77; and within the totals, what sums have been allocated to *(a)* the national museums, *(b)* the Museums and Galleries Commission, and *(c)* the remainder.

Mr. Luce [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 July 1987]: Expenditure by the Office of Arts and Libraries on museums and galleries since 1976-77 is as follows:

£ million

	1976-77	*1977-78*	*1978-79*	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*
(a) National museums and galleries												
British Museum	4·982	5·305	6·406	7·843	10·141	11·116	11·602	12·350	12·771	13·096	13·345	13·938
Imperial War Museum	1·296	1·673	2·035	2·445	3·107	3·710	3·871	3·997	4·100	4·445	4·497	4·727
National Gallery	2·262	2·330	3·255	4·441	5·545	5·657	6·005	6·659	6·992	6·571	6·771	7·017
National Maritime Museum	1·573	1·817	1·986	2·538	3·381	3·563	3·796	3·988	4·275	4·218	4·462	4·677
National museums and galleries on Merseyside	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0·018	10·145	9·414
National Portrait Gallery	0·647	0·735	0·966	1·196	1·474	1·581	1·674	1·757	1·866	1·777	1·814	1·899
Science Museum	2·696	3·183	3·235	4·526	5·917	6·388	7·117	7·642	8·483	8·954	9·171	9·589
Tate Gallery	1·813	2·154	3·152	3·328	4·558	4·681	5·023	5·320	5·594	5·644	5·782	6·497
Victoria and Albert Museum	4·087	4·299	4·939	6·882	8·774	8·749	9·365	10·299	11·340	10·670	11·023	11·680
Wallace Collection	0·315	0·311	0·345	0·414	0·617	0·656	0·759	0·781	0·822	0·876	0·906	0·939
National museums and galleries building programme	10·000	10·333	17·232	12·137	14·159	15·527	23·067	22·378	25·557	30·132	27·681	27·302
(b) Museums and galleries commission (including area museum councils)	0·755	0·906	0·951	1·501	1·557	1·914	2·194	2·375	2·913	4·196	5·961	6·233
(c) Other museums and galleries funded by the Office of Arts and Libraries												
Greater Manchester Museum of Science	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—			1·075	1·252
Museum of London	0·750	0·844	0·735	0·856	1·005	1·034	1·175	1·240	1·278	1·357	2·250	2·329
Sir John Soane's Museum	0·075	0·069	0·075	0·095	0·129	0·144	0·153	0·149	0·205	0·232	0·250	0·287
Total expenditure	31·251	33·959	45·312	48·202	60·364	64·720	75·801	78·935	85·258	92·186	105·133	107·780

Notes:

(1) In 1984-85 responsibility and financial provision for local museum purchase grant funds was transferred from the Victoria and Albert and Science Museums to the Museums and Galleries Commission.

(2) Direct central government funding of the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside and the Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry began on 1 April 1986 following the abolition of the GLC and MCCs. The central government contribution to the cost of the Museum of London increased from 33 per cent. to 50 per cent. Further central government funds were disbursed by the Museums and Galleries Commission as transitional grants to other museums and galleries in areas affected by abolition.

CIVIL SERVICE

Staff Statistics

Mr. David Nicholson asked the Minister for the Civil Service at what age, in general, officials are promoted to the rank of assistant secretary and senior principal, respectively; and from what ranks or grades, in general, these promotions are made.

Mr. Luce: As a means of simplifying and streamlining the Civil Service grading system, unified grading was introduced for most senior levels of the service in the early 1970s. Unified grading was extended to the assistant secretary and senior principal levels on 1 January 1984 and further extended on 1 January 1986 to principal level. Assistant secretary now forms part of unified grade 5, senior principal is included in unified grade 6 and principal in unified grade 7.

Promotions into grade 5 can be made from both grade 6 and grade 7 level. Promotion into grade 6 are made exclusively from grade 7. For the years 1984-86 the average age of those promoted into grade 5 was (i) from grade 6, 47 years and (ii) from grade 7, 39 years. For the same period, the average age of promotions into grade 6 from grade 7 was 45 years.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Hospital Admissions (Waltham Forest)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many patients from Waltham Forest seeking admission to St. Bartholomew's hospital since the beginning of the current year have been refused as a result of the new policy on catchment areas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The hon. Member may wish to approach the chairman of the North-East Thames regional health authority, since information about decisions on referrals of patients from one health authority area to hospitals in another is not held centrally. It should, however, be noted that the guidance to general practitioners whose referrals from outside the City and Hackney health authority catchment area are not accepted is that the case for acceptance will be reassessed if the referring doctor considers this is warranted.

Balderton Hospital (Eastdale Unit)

Mr. Irving asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if a decision has yet been taken to close the Eastdale unit at Balderton hospital.

Mrs. Currie: No decisions have yet been taken. Any proposals would be subject to full local consultation in line with established procedures.

Prescription Charges

Mr. Andrew Bowden asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the cost of extending exemption from prescription charges to all persons aged 60 years or over.

Mr. Newton: Women aged 60 or over and men 65 or over are already exempt from prescription charges. We estimate that it would cost in the region of £10 million to £15 million to extend exemption from prescription charges to men aged 60-64 who are not already exempt, for example, on low income or medical grounds.

AIDS

Mr. Pike asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what arrangements his Department has made to publicise the AIDS campaign in other languages; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We are aware of the need to ensure that people who do not speak English have access to health education information about AIDS. Work is in hand to establish a "dial and listen" service in six Asian languages, and in simple English. The service will be run as an adjunct to the National Advisory Service on AIDS which we set up at the beginning of the year. This provides a free-call helpline, which I am pleased to announce will continue in operation at least until the end of March 1988.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his policy towards the siting of AIDS hospices or hostels in rural village communities.

Mr. Newton: This is a matter for decision by the individual agencies responsible in the light of local circumstances. Health authorities have this year been specifically requested to examine their provision of services for all terminally ill patients.

NHS (Staff Statistics)

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list in the *Official Report* the total National Health Service, establishment figures for each profession allied to medicine and actual variations from these figures for each of the last 10 years up until the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Newton: I regret that information is not available in the form requested. However, chairmen of regional health authorities, at the request of the Pay Review Body covering this group of staff, have conducted sample surveys for the past three years. These indicate that the percentages of funded posts vacant for three months or more were as follows:

Percentage variations against funded posts

Profession	*Sample years* 1984	1985	1986
Chiropody	14·1	11·10	9·00
Dietetics	1·7	3·68	1·19

Profession	Sample years 1984	1985	1986
Occupational therapy	14·3	19·20	12·75
Orthoptics	1·5	1·58	0·93
Physiotherapy	4·5	3·50	0·94
Radiography	1·5	1·20	1·81

Under-fives (Consultative Group)

Mr. Colvin asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how often the inter-departmental consultative group on the under-fives has met since it came into being; and if he will make a statement on the conclusions reached;

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a summary of the brief to the inter-departmental consultative group on the under-fives.

Mrs. Currie: The interdepartmental consultative group was set up in 1979 and has met 11 times, five of which were joint meetings with representatives of the local authority associations and the voluntary sector. Its terms of reference are

"to provide a forum for interdepartmental discussion and co-ordination on provision for the under-fives in the field of community services".

The next meeting is planned for 12 October. Subjects discussed at the meetings include unregistered childminding, playgroups, research in the day care field, nursery education, services for under-fives from the ethnic communities, the implications of the Education Act 1981 for health authorities, the Manpower Services Commission's community programme and the under-fives initiative. We are satisfied that the group fulfils a useful purpose.

EEC (Social Workers)

Mr. Jim Lester asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the number of social workers in total and per hundred thousand population in each of the European Economic Community countries.

Mr. Newton: There were 30,700 field social workers (expressed as whole-time equivalents) employed by local authority social services departments in the United Kingdom in 1985, equivalent to 54 per 100,000 population. I regret that I am unable to supply corresponding information relating to other European Community countries.

Hospitals

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many hospitals of over 800 beds are *(a)* currently being built and *(b)* have been approved but not yet started.

Mrs. Currie: Information held centrally shows there are no hospitals with over 800 beds approved or under construction as discrete projects. There are, however, schemes approved at 12 existing hospitals and schemes under construction at nine more which will bring their total beds over 800.

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his latest estimate of the value of the land owned by Norwich health authority surrounding *(a)* the two hospitals at Thorpe St. Andrews and *(b)* the Hellesdon hospital.

Mrs. Currie: Estimates of the value of these sites depends on assumptions about the planning permissions that could be obtained and current market forces. The East Anglian regional health authority will be reassessing the range of potential values of these sites as part of the further site appraisal for the proposed second district general hospital in Norwich.

Ambulance Authorities (Orcon Standard)

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services which ambulance authorities failed to meet the Orcon standard for *(a)* emergency and *(b)* non-emergency calls in 1979 and 1986.

Mr. Newton: Regional and district health authorities are responsible for the day-to-day operational management and monitoring of National Health Service ambulance services, and I regret that the information requested is not available centrally.

Pensions Appeal Tribunal

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the procedure for implementing the decisions of the independent Pensions Appeal Tribunal when it finds against the Department's own assessment; and what is the normal length of time between the Tribunal's findings and the payment of the award.

Mr. Portillo: The tribunal notifies the decision to the Department within two to four weeks of the hearing. The Department's doctors consider it and advise on the medical aspects. Payment is calculated and aspects such as overlapping benefits are considered. The Department aims to make payment within two months of the hearing.

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) when the arrears of the increased award determined by the independent Pensions Appeal Tribunal on 24 June 1986, both at the 80 per cent. level for 1985-86 and at the 90 per cent. level for 1986-87 will be paid to Mr. J. F. Harding of 5 Undertown, Ugborough, Ivybridge, Devon; and if he will make a statement that Mr. Harding is now getting the pension which he was awarded by the independent Pensions Appeal Tribunal;

(2) what were the reasons for the delay in paying the increase awarded by the independent Pensions Appeal Tribunal against the Department's assessment of 60 per cent. to Mr. J. F. Harding of 5 Undertown, Ugborough, Ivybridge, Devon, from 24 June 1986; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will set out the reasons why Mr. J. F. Harding of 5 Undertown, Ugborough, Ivybridge, Devon, has still not received the award of the independent Pensions Appeal Tribunal on 24 June 1986 for the 12 months previous to 24 June 1986.

Mr. Portillo: The Pensions Appeal Tribunal heard Mr. Harding's appeal on 13 March 1987. Regrettably, because of a clerical error, there were delays in implementing the tribunal's award. It is now in payment, and arrears were paid on 10 July 1987.

Community Care

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will give statistical details of the financial resources for care in the community made

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available by his Department to Leicestershire county council and the other organisations which jointly signed the letter to him dated 3 July; and what are the projected sums for the next three years.

Mrs. Currie: None of the general revenue funds or grants provided centrally to these organisations is specifically earmarked for community care. However, the personal social services allocation made for 1987-88 to Leicestershire county council included £92,000 in respect of schemes funded jointly with Leicestershire health authority. Trent regional health authority also allocates joint finance (capital and revenue) to Leicestershire health authority for community care and primary health care projects. I understand that a total of £1·894 million joint finance has been allocated to Leicestershire health authority for 1987-88 compared with £1·802 million for the previous year.

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received from the Leicestershire county council, acting also on behalf of the Leicestershire health authority and others, about the level of resources available for community care in the county; and what reply he has sent.

Mrs. Currie: My right hon. Friend has received a letter dated 3 July, together with a document commenting on the care in the community initiative, signed by the chief executive of Leicestershire county council on behalf of the three political groups on the county council, the chairmen of Leicestershire health authority and Leicestershire family practitioner committee and one of the voluntary sector representatives on the county joint consultative committee. A reply will be sent shortly. I will ensure that the hon. Members whose constituencies cover Leicestershire receive a copy.

Ambulance Staff (Hepatitis)

Mr. Pike asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will make available to all ambulance men free vaccinations against hepatitis B.

Mrs. Currie: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), which advises the Department on all aspects of immunisation, has considered revised proposals for amending its guidance on hepatitis B vaccination, and has referred them to its advisory group on hepatitis. We hope to be in a position to consider its recommendations, including any on ambulance staff, very shortly.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Pike asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his policy in respect of the use of housing benefit in rental purchase schemes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: The current housing benefits scheme provides help with payments under a rental purchase scheme for people on low incomes. The draft regulations for the reformed housing benefits scheme to be introduced in April 1988 carry forward existing arrangements.

Psittacosis

Sir Anthony Grant asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the incidence of psittacosis in Cambridgeshire in comparison with the rest of Britain; if he will approve at the earliest opportunity the order of the South Cambridgeshire District Council making psittacosis a notifiable disease under section 16 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Speech Therapists

Rev. Martin Smyth asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he intends to take to bring the pay of speech therapists into parity with other graduate professions within the National Health Service.

Mr. Newton: Pay is a matter for the Whitley Council. I understand that negotiations are in progress on the 1987 pay claim.

Overseas Voters

Mr William Powell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the total number of persons resident overseas registered to vote in the United Kingdom as at 11 June 1987 in each parliamentary constituency.

Mrs. Currie: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) on 15 July 1987 at column *523*.

Fluoridation

Miss Widdecombe asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether the Government have any information on the genetic effects of fluoride as used in water fluoridation.

Mrs. Currie: The Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment has recently considered the relevant evidence on genetic effects of fluoride in relation to the addition of fluoride to drinking water to a concentration of 1 milligram per litre including the results of recent research carried out in the United Kingdom. Its conclusions are as follows:

"There is evidence that prolonged exposure of cultured mammalian cells to sodium fluoride can cause mutations in these cells. Although the mechanism of action of fluoride is not understood, there is no chemical evidence to believe that fluoride reacts directly with DNA under physiologial conditions. On the contrary, there are indications that the action of fluoride is probably indirect and would not occur at low concentrations.

Such effects as have been observed in cultured mammalian cells occur at concentrations of fluoride considerably in excess of the plasma concentrations resulting from *in vivo* exposure to fluoride in water at 1 mg/l. All well-conducted *in vivo* mutagenicity tests are negative.

The Committee considers that there is sufficient evidence from the available data to conclude that the consumption of fluoridated water would not constitute a mutagenic hazard to man through the induction of heritable abnormalities in the gene cells.

The Committee has noted that the direct and extensive studies of human populations reviewed by the DHSS Working Party on Fluoridation and Cancer provide no sound evidence at all of an effect of fluoridation on cancer mortality and incidence rates, whether for cancer as a whole or for cancer at a large number of specific sites."

Cash Limits

Mr. Stern asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether there has been any change in the cash limits for his Department.

Mr. Scott: The latest provisional outturn for 1986-87 on class XV, vote 5 (Departmental Administration and Miscellaneous Services) is £1,178·698 million compared with a cash limit of £1,174·414 million. The overspend arose on capital expenditure on the Department's computerisation programme. The cash limit for 1987-88 will accordingly be reduced by £4·284 million from £1,347·252 million to £1,342·968 million. Improvements in expenditure control are being introduced as necessary.

Supplementary Benefit and Residential Care

Mr. Malins asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when the report of the Second Joint Working Party on supplementary benefit and residential care will be published.

Mr. Newton: The joint working party's report is being published today, as is the report of the associated pilot studies conducted by the university of York into the assessment of residents' care needs and of the reasonableness of the charges levied in homes. Copies have been placed in the Library.

The Government will not be seeking to reach conclusions on the joint working party's report in isolation, but will be considering it in the context of other studies, including te work of Lady Wagner's group on the role of residential care and Sir Roy Griffiths' wider examination of the use of resources in relation to community care. Meanwhile, we will welcome views from interested parties and the public about the options identified by the working party.

Research (Priorities)

Mrs. Gillian Shephard asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what are his Department's priorities for research in the fields of health, personal social services and social security; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moore: The research programmes supported by the Department contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the health and social services by promoting improvements in organisation, operation and administration.

Bearing in mind the primary responsibility of the Medical Research Council for biomedical research, I have concluded that the health and personal social services programme should be concentrated on the following areas, which are set out in order of priority:

- acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS);
- the demands on, and effectiveness of, acute sector services;
- the transition to community care;
- consumer attitudes to the health and personal social services;
- the influencing of lifestyles, for example in relation to drug abuse;
- professional manpower.

Social security research will concentrate on the transition to community care; evaluation of the effectiveness of social programmes.

These priorities will govern the commissioning of research projects in 1987-88 and the continuation of some existing projects. They will be kept under review.

Severe Weather Payments

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many claimants received exceptionally severe weather payments at each benefit office in each constituency of Scotland in the winter of 1986-87; and how much was paid out at each office.

Mr. Scott [*pursuant to his reply*, 10 July 1987, c. *313*]: The information is not available in the precise form requested. Figures are available on the number of £5 payments but not the number of individuals receiving payment. The great majority of successful claimants will have received £5 in respect of each week for which help was available in their area.

Local offices where help was available for 4 weeks

Local office with constituencies wholly or partly covered within the area covered by the office	*No. of £5 payments*	*Total amount paid £*
Galashiels Roxburgh and Berwickshire, Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale	4,657	23,285

Local offices where help was available for three weeks

Local office with constituencies wholly or partly within the area covered by the office	*Number of £5 payments*	*Total amount paid £*
Airdrie Monklands East	4,157	20,785
Bellshill Motherwell North	5,342	26,710
Clydebank Clydebank and Milngavie	4,258	21,290
Coatbridge Monklands East Monklands West	5,374	26,870
Cumbernauld Cumbernauld and Kilsyth Monklands West Strathkelvin and Bearsden	9,569	47,845
Dumbarton Argyle and Bute Dumbarton	6,423	32,115
East Kilbride East Kilbride	4,231	21,155
Glasgow: Anniesland Glasgow Garscadden Glasgow Hillhead	5,293	26,465
Bridgeton Glasgow Central Glasgow Shettleston Glasgow Springburn	5,750	28,750
City Glasgow Hillhead Glasgow Maryhill Glasgow Springburn Glasgow Central	5,925	29,625

Local office with constituencies wholly or partly within the area covered by the office	Number of £5 payments	Total amount paid £
Craigton Glasgow Central Glasgow Govan Paisley South	6,545	32,725
Laurieston Glasgow Cathcart Glasgow Central Glasgow Rutherglen	9,988	49,940
Maryhill Clydebank and Milngavie Glasgow Hillhead Glasgow Maryhill Glasgow Springburn Strathkelvin and Bearsden	6,786	33,930
Parkhead Glasgow Central Glasgow Provan Glasgow Shettleston Glasgow Springburn	9,206	46,030
Partick Glasgow Garscadden Glasgow Hillhead Glasgow Maryhill	4,891	24,455
Provan Glasgow Provan Glasgow Springburn	12,057	60,285
Rutherglen Glasgow Cathcart Glasgow Rutherglen Glasgow Central	10,687	53,435
South Side Glasgow Cathcart Glasgow Central Glasgow Govan Glasgow Pollock Eastwood	12,090	64,545
Springburn Glasgow Maryhill Glasgow Springburn Monklands West	7,101	35,505
Greenock Argyle and Bute Cunninghame North Greenock and Port Glasgow Renfrew West and Inverclyde	7,891	39,455
Hamilton Clydesdale Hamilton Motherwell North Motherwell South	12,311	61,555
Johnstone Paisley North Paisley South Renfrew West and Inverclyde	5,621	28,105
Motherwell Motherwell North Motherwell South	9,627	48,135
Paisley Paisley North Paisley South Renfrew West and Inverclyde	10,369	51,845
Port Glasgow Greenock and Port Glasgow Renfrew West and Inverclyde	10,163	50,815

Local offices where help was available for two weeks

Local office with constituencies wholly or partly within the area covered by the office	Number of £5 payments	Total amount paid £
Aberdeen (North) Aberdeen North Aberdeen South Gordon	1,767	8,835
Aberdeen (South) Aberdeen North Aberdeen South Kincardine and Deeside	3,092	15,460
Arbroath Angus East Tayside North	1,913	9,565
Ayr Ayr Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley Clydesdale	6,284	31,420
Bathgate Linlithgow Livingston Motherwell North	10,361	51,805
Campbeltown Argyle and Bute	631	3,155
Cowdenbeath Dunfermline East Fife Central	1,702	8,510
Dumfries Dumfries Clydesdale	2,592	12,960
Dundee (East) Angus East Dundee East Dundee West Fife North-East	3,478	17,390
Dundee (West) Angus East Dundee East Dundee West Perth and Kinross Tayside North	4,982	24,910
Dunfermline Dunfermline East Dunfermline West	1,984	9,920
Edinburgh: City Edinburgh Central Edinburgh East Edinburgh Leith Edinburgh Pentlands Edinburgh South Edinburgh West	2,380	11,900
Edinburgh: East Edinburgh East East Lothian	2,572	12,860

Local office with constituencies wholly or partly within the area covered by the office	*Number of £5 payments*	*Total amount paid £*
Edinburgh: North Edinburgh East Edinburgh Leith	2,137	10,685
Edinburgh: South Edinburgh Pentlands Edinburgh South Midlothian	3,638	18,190
Edinburgh: West Edinburgh Central Edinburgh West Linlithgow Livingston	1,577	7,885
Elgin Banff and Buchan Moray	2,018	10,090
Falkirk Clackmannan Falkirk East Falkirk West	7,936	39,680
Fort William Ross, Cromarty and Skye Inverness Nairn and Lochaber	624	3,120
Inverness Caithness and Sutherland Inverness Nairn and Lochaber Ross, Cromarty and Skye	2,846	14,230
Irvine Cunninghame North Cunninghame South	3,992	19,960
Kilmarnock Ayr Kilmarnock and Loudon	6,044	30,220
Kirkcaldy Fife Central Kirkcaldy	4,310	21,550
Lerwick Orkney and Shetland	168	840
Leven Fife Central	1,995	9,975
Oban Argyle and Bute	627	3,135
Perth Fife North-East Tayside North Perth and Kinross	2,285	11,425
Peterhead Banff and Buchan Moray	1,763	8,815
Stirling Clackmannan Stirling	4,154	20,770
Stornoway Western Isles	1,630	8,150
Stranraer Galloway and Upper Nithsdale	1,154	5,770
Wick Caithness and Sutherland Orkney and Shetland	1,410	7,050

SCOTLAND

Sea Angling

12. **Mr. Lambie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what he is doing to encourage sea angling as a tourist attraction in the Firth of Clyde; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The Government encourage sea angling as a tourist attraction in the Clyde and elsewhere through the Scottish Tourist Board and the Highlands and Islands Development Board. Assistance includes grants towards the purchase of vessels and equipment and annual publications giving sea angling information.

Rate Support Grant

13. **Mr. Ingram** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he intends to increase the percentage level of rate support grant paid by his Department to Scottish local authorities in the next financial year.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend hopes to make an announcement very soon about expenditure provision and grant for Scottish local authorities in 1988-89.

40. **Mr. O'Neill** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he will be meeting the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to discuss the rate support grant settlement for next year.

Mr. Rifkind: I will be meeting the convention on Monday 12 October and Friday 4 December to complete my consultations with it on rate support grant for 1988-89.

Scottish Assembly

14. **Mr. Douglas** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any proposals for constitutional changes in Scotland arising from the result of the June 1987 general election.

15. **Mr. Canavan** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will now introduce legislation to create a directly elected Scottish Assembly.

19. **Mrs. Ray Michie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what proposals he is considering on the reform of the structure of Scottish government.

38. **Mr. Graham** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will hold discussions with a view to setting up a Scottish Assembly with legislative powers.

53. **Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will hold discussions with a view to setting up a Scottish Assembly with legislative powers.

Mr. Rifkind: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I have today given to the hon. Member for Aberdeen, South (Mr. Doran).

35. **Mr. Bill Walker** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of the number of representations he has received regarding the setting up of an Assembly in Edinburgh.

47. **Mr. McAllion** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many representations he has received in the past month urging him to establish a directly elected Scottish Assembly.

Mr. Rifkind: Over the last month there have been just over 50 letters, almost all from members of the public, on this subject. Slightly more than half of them urge me to set up a Scottish Assembly; just under half urge me not to do so.

36. **Mr. McKelvey** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will appoint a commission consisting of representatives of all the Scottish political parties together with the Scottish Trades Union Congress, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Confederation of British Industry, and so on, to consider the case for the creation of a directly elected Scottish Assembly.

Mr. Rifkind: No.

44. **Mr. Galloway** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to take steps to ascertain the level of public support in Scotland for the creation of a directly elected Scottish Assembly.

46. **Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to make arrangements to ascertain the level of public support in Scotland for the creation of a directly elected Scottish Assembly.

Mr. Rifkind: I have no plans to take any such steps. During the election campaign I formed a clear impression of the priority which the people of Scotland attach to this issue.

Industrial Support

16. **Mr. Fallon** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been spent on industrial support in Scotland since 1983.

Mr. Lang: Expenditure on regional assistance in Scotland between 1983-84 and 1986-87 was £854 million. Industry also received support, either directly or indirectly, from other Government programmes.

Caterpillar Tractor Working Party

18. **Mr. Robertson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what meetings his officials have had with the Caterpillar Tractor working party; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: Senior officials of the Industry Department have attended all the meetings of the working party. I myself had a helpful meeting with representatives of the working party last week.

Efforts are continuing to seek alternative employment opportunities for the Caterpillar work force. The help and support of all those on the working party are likely to prove most valuable.

Economic Prospects

20. **Sir Hector Monro** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will state the fall in unemployment in Scotland over the last three months and its effect on the Scottish economy.

Mr. Rifkind: Over the last three months, seasonally adjusted unemployment in Scotland has fallen by 10,200 and is now at its lowest level since the end of 1985. More generally, survey evidence suggests rising economic activity in Scotland this year.

48. **Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to make an official visit to Greenock and Port Glasgow in the near future to discuss the prospects for the local economy.

Mr. Rifkind: I have no plans for such a visit at present.

Highlands and Islands Development Board

21. **Sir Russell Johnston** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether in considering the appointment of a new member of the Highlands and Islands Development Board, he will give particular weight to knowledge and experience of, and connection with, the area.

Mr. Lang: The prime requirements for the appointment are managerial, financial and presentational skills, my right hon. and learned Friend will give particular consideration to candidates for board membership who combine these skills with a knowledge and understanding of the area. A varied experience of rural and small business would also be considered to be helpful.

Extradition

22. **Mr. Rees** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what criteria the Lord Advocate uses in deciding whether to accede to a formal request for assistance in procuring the extradition from Scotland of a suspected criminal; and whether any different criteria apply to suspected war criminals.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The criteria applied in all extradition cases are those provided in the Extradition Acts 1870 to 1935 and the Fugitive Offenders Act 1967.

Universities Funding Council

23. **Mr. Buchanan-Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what consultations he has had with educational bodies in Scotland regarding the membership of the Scottish committee of the proposed Universities Funding Council; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education and Science, has issued a consultation paper on the Universities Funding Council. I have seen the responses made by the Standing Committee of the Scottish Universities on behalf of all the Scottish universities, by the Joint Committee of Principals of Colleges of Education and the Principals and Directors of Central Institutions, and by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.

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"Scottish Homes" (Consultation Period)

24. **Mr. Nigel Griffiths** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will extend the consultation period for consideration of his Department's document "Scottish Homes"; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No. We have allowed nearly four months, to 31 August, for comments to be offered on our proposals for Scottish homes and we wish to make early progress, taking account of such comments.

Forestry

25. **Mr. Hardy** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what changes he expects to make in regard to forestry policy in the United Kingdom during the next five years.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Forestry policy will continue to be reviewed from time to time. However, I cannot anticipate the outcome of any future reviews.

34. **Mr. Key** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he is taking to increase afforestation in the United Kingdom in order to reduce reliance on imported timber and encourage diversification in the rural economy.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: As announced to the House by my right hon. Friend, the Member for Westmorland and Lonsdale (Mr. Jopling), on 9 February 1987, at column 70, the target for new forestry planting has been raised to 33,000 hectares a year, and planting is being encouraged through the grant schemes administered by the Forestry Commission and the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland. My right hon. Friend also announced the intention to introduce a farm woodland scheme to encourage farmers to plant trees on some of their land.

Rating Reform

26. **Mrs. Margaret Ewing** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on current progress being made towards the implementation of the community charge in 1989.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend will shortly make a commencement order bringing into force the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987. Regulations will then be made covering the detailed operation of the new system in good time for the necessary preparatory work to be undertaken by local authorities for the introduction of the system on 1 April 1989.

27. **Mr. McAvoy** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what he expects will be the cost to Scottish local authorities in compiling the community charge register in the first year in which it will be operational.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend estimates that expenditure of up to £9 million will be necessary in 1988-89 on the establishment of the register and the preparation of new billing and collection systems.

Mr. McFall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what will be the maximum level of rebate available to the unemployed and to the low paid under the community charge system.

Mr. Lang: The community charge rebate scheme will follow closely the revised arrangements for rate rebates which will be introduced in April 1988 under the provisions of the Social Security Act 1986. The draft housing benefit regulations recently circulated to local authorities confirm that, to promote accountability, the Government expect everyone who is liable to pay domestic rates to make a minimum contribution of 20 per cent. of their rates bill: the maximum rebate will therefore be 80 per cent.

In setting income support levels from 1 April 1988 under the new social security arrangements, the Government will take the minimum contribution to rates into account. Similar principles will apply to the community charge.

31. **Mr. Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will delay introduction of the poll tax until such time as parallel legislation is on the statute book for England and Wales.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend expects that the legislation establishing a community charge system for England and Wales will have been passed by Parliament well before the system is introduced in Scotland on 1 April 1989.

49. **Mr. Strang** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to meet representatives of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to discuss the setting up of arrangements to collect the community charge; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: I have consistently made clear my willingness to have consultations with the convention about the legislation.

54. **Mr. Hood** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many representations he has received from Scottish local authorities *(a)* supporting and *(b)* opposing the introduction of the community charge as a replacement for domestic rates.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has received representations from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and from 39 individual local authorities on rating reform since the publication of the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" (Cmnd. 9714). While most local authorities oppose the community charge system in principle, many representations include comments in favour of some of the proposals and against others. It is not therefore possible to provide the information in precisely the form requested.

55. **Mr. Macdonald** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the impact of the Abolition of Domestic Rates, Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987 on crofters and peripheral rural areas.

Mr. Lang: The impact of our proposals will depend on individual and household circumstances. It is not therefore appropriate to make any general assessment of their impact on these groups whose circumstances will vary widely. Rebates will be available for those on low incomes who would otherwise have difficulty in meeting their full community charge liability.

Mr. Worthington asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many extra staff he estimates local authorities will need to employ to implement the poll tax legislation in 1989; and at what cost.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend estimates that expenditure of up to £9 million will be necessary in

1988-89 on the establishment of the register and preparation of new billing and collection systems for the community charge in Scotland. He also estimates that the total additional cost to local authorities in running the system from 1 April 1989 onwards will be in the range of £17 to £22 million per year. It will be for individual local authorities to consider the manpower implications of the plans for their own areas.

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next plans to meet the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to discuss the administrative and financial arrangements for the implementation of the Abolition of Domestic Rates etc. (Scotland) Act.

Mr. Rifkind: I have consistently made clear my willingness to have consultations with the convention about the legislation.

Scottish Development Agency

30. **Mr. McLeish** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will take steps to increase the budget of the Scottish Development Agency.

Mr. Lang: The agency's gross provision for 1987-88 is expected to be £136 million which continues the real terms increase trend in the agency's budget since this Government came to office. This is a sizeable budget and one which reflects the Government"s commitment to the agency as its main instrument of economic and environmental regeneration in Scotland.

Scottish Rural Development Agency

32. **Mr. Steel** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received proposing a Scottish Rural Development Agency.

Mr. Rifkind: None. The Scottish Development Agency and the Highlands and Islands Development Board already have a wide range or powers to assist the development of rural areas throughout Scotland.

NHS (Expenditure)

33. **Mr. Forth** asked the Secretaty of State for Scotland if he will give the figures of National Health Service per capita expenditure for Scotland for the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: In the current financial year gross expenditure of £2,307 million is planned on the National Health Service in Scotland; this represents per capita expenditure of £450, a figure 23 per cent. higher than that for England. Scotland has 39 per cent. more health staff and 59 per cent. more hospital beds measured by population.

Ravenscraig Steelworks

37. **Mr. Michael Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the future of Ravenscraig steelworks.

Mr. Lang: Ravenscraig's assured operation up to at least August 1988 is part of the strategy for the British Steel Corporation agreed in 1985. The future of Ravenscraig cannot be considered in isolation from the determination of future strategy for BSC as a whole, and it is too early to reach decisions on this.

Woodilee Hospital

39. **Mr. Galbraith** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the cost to date of the recent emergency evacuation of Woodilee hospital; and if he will hold a public inquiry into this matter.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Costs of £110,000 were incurred during the evacuation of the main block at Woodilee hospital in March. Since then the Greater Glasgow health board has incurred additional revenue expenditure of about £16,000 per week in providing in-patient services at the hospitals to which the patients have been transferred, where the board has already incurred capital expenditure of £170,000 on improvements and has decided to spend another £260,000 on further upgrading work. The board is currently considering the options for the longer term. I see no need for a public inquiry.

Trunk Roads

41. **Mr. Allan Stewart** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the proposed trunk road construction projects which will affect traffic in the Eastwood constituency; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend is responsible only for trunk road projects. The one such project which will directly affect traffic in the Eastwood constituency is the section of the proposed Ayr road route (A77) between the former Glasgow city boundary and Malletsheugh.

Court of Session and High Court of Justiciary

42. **Mr. Menzies Campbell** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what proposals he has for the more speedy conduct of business in the Court of Session and the High Court of Justiciary.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The report of the review body on the use of judicial time in the superior courts in Scotland, chaired by Lord Maxwell, which was published on 18 July 1986, made a number of recommendations aimed at securing the speedy disposal of business in the supreme courts. The recommendations mainly fell within the responsibility of the Lord President of the Court of Session, and must have been or are being implemented. The Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1987 introduces a simplified procedure for arranging sittings of the High Court of Justiciary and increases the sentencing powers of a sheriff in solemn proceedings. In addition, the Maximum Number of Judges (Scotland) Order 1986 increased the number of judges from 23 to 24. All of these measures should help to improve the disposal of business in the supreme courts.

Borders Region

45. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will now undertake a review of the development status of the Borders region.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans at present to review the assisted area status of Borders region.

Employment Prospects

50. **Mr. Darling** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on employment prospects in Edinburgh over the next five years.

Mr. Lang: Employment prospects in Edinburgh, as elsewhere, are dependent upon continued economic growth, industrial competitiveness and pay restraint. Unemployment in the Edinburgh travel-to-work area is well below the Scottish level for both males and females and is falling. I note the importance for Edinburgh of developments in electronics and other manufacturing sectors and also the service sector, in particular financial and business services, and tourism.

Housing Associations

51. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many houses have been built or acquired by housing associations in Gordon and Aberdeen districts over the past five years.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Over the five years to 31 March 1987, 535 houses have been acquired by housing associations in Aberdeen district and 60 in Gordon district. Over the same period, 603 homes have been completed (either by new construction or by rehabilitation) in Aberdeen district and 182 in Gordon district.

School Meals

52. **Mrs. Fyfe** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he intends to take to protect the nutritional standards of school meals in the event of the service being taken over by private contractors.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The nutritional content of school meals is a matter for the individual education authority. Under the Government's proposals for competitive tendering, education authorities would be obliged to submit their in-house operation to outside competition, on a comparable basis. It would be for the authority to stipulate, in the tendering process, the nature and quality of the service it wished to maintain and to monitor the performance of the chosen contractor.

Fish Farming

28. **Mr. Wallace** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what measures he proposes to take further to promote the development of fish farming in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The industry has grown spectacularly in recent years with for example the added value of farmed salmon to the economy in 1987 estimated at £60 million. Government assistance at 1986 prices amounts to some £26 million to date and is continuing.

Orthopaedic Waiting Lists

Mr. Galbraith asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) to what factors he attributes the difference in orthopaedic waiting lists between 494 days in Fife and 53 days in Argyll and Clyde; and what action he is taking to reduce these differences;

(2) to what factors he attributes the large variation in orthopaedic waiting times in the same health boards in Scotland; and what action he is taking to reduce these differences.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Waiting times in different areas and specialties will inevitably vary, for a wide variety of reasons. Because of this it is difficult to reach any firm conclusion when comparing the waiting times of patients in different board areas particularly in respect of one single specialty taken in isolation. Health boards are ultimately responsible for managing waiting lists and from their knowledge of local needs, they decide on priorities in the provision of services. I am exploring possible courses of action to assist in the reduction of waiting times.

NHS Expenditure

Mr. Galbraith asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the National Health Service per capita expenditure for each of the health boards in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information for 1985-86 is as follows:

Health Board	*Per capita (£)*
Argyll and Clyde	296·98
Ayrshire and Arran	274·41
Borders	284·82
Dumfries and Galloway	328·70
Fife	269·02
Forth Valley	321·47
Grampian	319·26
Greater Glasgow	460·55
Highland	347·89
Lanarkshire	275·16
Lothian	373·51
Orkney	279·26
Shetland	274·83
Tayside	409·10
Western Isles	313·36
Scotland	347·64

Note:
The expenditure figures used are taken from the annual accounts submitted to the Department by health boards and are net of charges retained by family practitioners.

Surgical Operations (Statistics)

Mr. Galbraith asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing the number of operations done in each surgical specialty in each hospital in Scotland in 1985.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information is set out in the tables:

DEFECTIVE PRINTING

Hospital	Operations by surgical specialty											
	General	Ortho-paedic	Ear, nose and throat	Op-hthal-mology	Urology	Neuro-surgery	Cardio-thoracic	Plastic	Oral	Paedia-tric	Gynae-cology	Total
Ayrshire and Arran Health Board												
Crosshouse	3,659	2,182	1,496	—	—	—	—	—	434	—	1,511	9,282
Ayr County	962	1,708	671	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	3,342
Heathfield	—	—	—	1,056	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,056
Seafield, Sick Children	420	216	494	—	109	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,239
Ballochmyle	1,429	14	163	—	1,694	—	—	—	229	—	1,856	5,385
Borders Health Board												
Peel	1,773	961	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,734
Argyll and Clyde Health Board												
Dunoon and District General	43	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	9	54
Victoria, Rothesay	91	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	32	123
West Highland	569	1	26	—	—	—	—	—	273	—	—	869
Vale of Leven District General	1,057	26	31	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	453	1,567
Victoria Infirmary, Helensburgh	180	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	35	215
Inverclyde Royal	3,677	914	831	519	—	—	—	—	14	—	1,259	7,214
Hawkhead	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,039	1,039
Royal Alexandra Infirmary	1,743	516	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,259
Royal Alexandra Annexe	—	268	1,340	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,608
Royal Victoria Eye Infirmary	—	—	—	699	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	699
Thorn	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,170	1,170
Fife Health Board												
Victoria, Kirkcaldy	2,949	1,921	1,819	1,019	1,714	—	—	—	291	376	2,390	12,479
Adamson	96	117	—	—	—	—	—	—	212	—	89	514
St. Andrews	150	4	—	—	95	—	—	—	—	—	590	839
Randolph Wemyss Memorial	130	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	130
Dunfermline and West Fife	2,832	1,235	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	852	4,926
Milesmark	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Maternity Hospital, Dunfermline	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	21	21
Greater Glasgow Health Board												
Belvidere	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Canniesburn	—	—	—	647	—	—	—	3,292	—	—	—	3,939
Glasgow Royal Infirmary	6,697	2,066	1,647	—	1,534	—	1,064	71	281	—	3,114	16,474
Stobhill	2,912	603	1,079	678	2,840	—	—	—	458	—	3,272	11,842
Mearnskirk General	1	—	848	—	2	—	—	—	89	—	—	940
Philipshill	—	1,289	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,289
Royal Samaritan Hospital for Women	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3,635	3,635
Victoria Infirmary	3,725	—	1,545	—	1,381	—	—	—	332	—	1,322	8,305
David Elder Infirmary	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,063	1,063
Southern General	2,720	960	—	905	1,692	935	—	—	136	—	480	7,828
Gartnavel District General	2,401	1,480	1,246	1,424	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6,551
RHSC Drumchapel	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
RHSC Yorkhill	4	1,000	768	207	—	—	212	—	—	3,562	—	5,753
Western Infirmary	2,371	697	—	795	1,494	—	959	—	232	—	2,390	8,938
Highland Health Board												
Dunbar Hospital, Thurso	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	389	389
Bignold	1,191	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,191
Lawson Memorial	201	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	201
RNI, Inverness	788	12	449	207	—	—	—	9	—	—	—	1,465
Raigmore	3,359	1,668	904	415	—	—	—	30	451	—	1,947	8,774
Belford	978	—	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	983
MacKinnon Memorial	743	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	743
Ross Memorial	147	68	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	222
Lanarkshire Health Board												
Monklands District General	2,471	1,461	1,122	—	1,236	—	—	83	478	—	1,999	8,850
Cleland	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Law	3,715	1,597	1,234	—	805	—	—	—	—	387	1,281	9,019
Hairmyres	4,436	538	—	—	1,201	—	774	—	1	—	1,452	8,402
Stonehouse	2,002	589	1,080	704	260	—	—	—	—	—	752	5,387
Grampion Health Board												
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary	4,870	1,889	1,943	1	3,518	429	896	—	1,677	—	3,263	18,486
Woodend	1,724	827	—	1,094	—	—	—	1,405	—	—	3,223	8,273
Royal Aberdeen Children's	—	489	1,570	253	—	—	—	510	111	1,191	—	4,124
Aberdeen Maternity	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	79	79
Huntley Jubilee	115	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	24	139
Chalmers	136	38	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	37	211
Dr. Gray's	2,143	—	—	275	—	—	—	—	131	—	—	2,549
Turner	14	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	14
Leanchoil	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	28	28
Orkney Health Board												
Balfour	859	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	53	—	—	912
Lothian Health Board												
Eastern General	1,479	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,158	3,637
Leith	1,102	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	420	—	1,522
Roodlands General	1,286	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	246	1,532

Hospital	Operations by surgical specialty											
	General	Ortho-paedic	Ear, nose and throat	Op-hthal-mology	Urology	Neuro-surgery	Cardio-thoracic	Plastic	Oral	Paedia-tric	Gynae-cology	Total
Western General	1,989	832	—	—	2,166	786	—	—	—	724	1,454	7,951
Bruntsfield	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	407	1,616	2,023
Chalmers	1,105	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,105
City, Edinburgh	1	—	5,118	—	—	—	955	—	—	—	—	6,074
Deaconess	772	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	772
Longmore	1,428	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,428
PMR Orthopaedic	—	3,568	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3,568
RHSC, Edinburgh	—	—	1,503	—	—	—	—	837	—	1,274	—	3,614
Royal Infirmary	5,733	2,169	—	1,747	3,426	178	653	1	802	—	4,633	19,342
Simpson's Memorial Maternity Pavilion	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	20	20
Bangour	3,895	845	1,239	—	—	—	—	1,642	1	—	1,828	9,450
Tayside Health Board												
Ninewells	5,737	—	2,299	2,081	177	—	—	—	1	373	3,000	13,668
Dundee Royal Infirmary	—	2,556	—	—	1,978	745	—	869	562	—	—	6,710
Bridge of Earn	10	1,668	628	—	—	—	—	1,248	—	—	—	3,554
Perth Royal Infirmary	3,538	—	—	1	—	—	—	82	463	—	1,332	5,416
Blairgowrie and Rattray Cottage	167	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	167
Meigle Cottage	29	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	29
Arbroath Infirmary	316	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	71	387
Forfar Infirmary	440	18	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	98	557
Stracathro	2,004	1,779	8	—	—	—	—	—	7	—	202	4,000
Forth Valley Health Board												
Falkirk Royal Infirmary	2,702	1,483	910	313	1,412	—	—	—	—	—	1,872	8,692
Stirling Royal Infirmary	2,059	876	1,136	450	1,356	—	—	—	—	101	1,393	7,371
Clackmannan County	1,070	142	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	209	1,421
Western Isles Health Board												
Lewis	808	—	21	—	—	—	—	1	34	23	295	1,182
Daliburgh	109	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	109
Dumfries and Galloway Health Board												
Cresswell Maternity	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	30	30
Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary	3,279	1,064	887	266	—	—	—	—	370	308	1,649	7,823
Garrick	675	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	675
Shetland Health Board												
Gilbert Bain	1,110	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,110
Total	115,328	44,357	36,068	15,756	30,090	3,073	5,513	10,080	8,123	9,154	63,163	340,705

Out-patients

Mr. Galbraith asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing the total average waiting time for a new out-patient attendance in each surgical specialty in each hospital in Scotland in 1985.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: This information is not available centrally.

NHS (Consultants)

Mr. Galbraith asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing the number of whole-time and the number of part-time consultants in each surgical specialty in each hospital in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The precise current distribution of consultant staff in each surgical specialty in each hospital in Scotland is not known centrally. Information about consultant manpower by speciality and health board is published in "Scottish Health Statistics" a copy of which is held in the Library.

Women

Mrs. Fyfe asked the Secretary of State for Scotland who is his Department's representative on the transdepartmental group set up by the Prime Minister to look at the forward-looking strategies which came out of the United Nations decade for women; and when this group will report.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I represent the Scottish Office on the ministerial group on women's issues. The group has reviewed the Nairobi forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women. A copy of the review, which was published on 30 April, has been placed in the Library.

Machinery of Government

Mr. Salmond asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to consult bodies in Scotland on the machinery of government.

Mr. Rifkind: I have no plans at present.

Regional Councils

Mr. Worthington asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide figures to show the trend in real terms over the last five years of Strathclyde's share of the resources allocated to regional councils; if he will also provide a table showing regional councils in descending order according to their level of deprivation, as measured by his Department's criteria; and if he will indicate how deprivation levels influence decisions on the allocation of resources to individual regional councils.

Mr. Lang: Strathclyde's share of the resources available to regional councils over the last five years is set out in table A below. Table B shows the ranking of the regional councils in terms of area deprivation. Aspects of social deprivation are taken into account in the assessment of authorities' relative expenditure need, which is undertaken in consultation with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, and which underlies the calculation of current expenditure guidelines.

Table A
Strathclyde's current expenditure guideline as a percentage of all regional councils' guidelines

	Per cent.
1983-84	49·4
1984-85	49·3
1985-86	49·1
1986-87	48·5
1987-88	48·3

Table B
Ranking of regional councils in terms of area deprivation

1. Strathclyde
2. Tayside
3. Central
4. Lothian
5. Fife
6. Dumfries and Galloway
7. Highland
8. Grampian
9. Borders

Mr. Worthington asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what criteria are used to determine the allocation of capital funds to Scottish regional councils; what amount Strathclyde regional council has received in each of the last five years; and how these figures compare pro rata with other regional councils.

Mr. Lang: In determining the allocation of resources for capital expenditure by local authorities, careful consideration is given to the relative needs of authorities, as expressed in their financial plans. In assessing relative needs, account is taken of a number of factors, which may vary according to the nature of the proposed expenditure. The figures requested are set out in the table.

£ million

	1983-1984	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*
Regional/Islands Council					
Borders	5·507	5·904	6·970	8·497	8·842
Central	11·948	12·413	12·813	13·893	15·240
Dumfries and Galloway	8·430	8·260	9·220	9·607	10·567
Fife	15·880	17·220	19·930	22·958	21·383
Grampian	36·636	37·875	43·740	42·668	40·250
Highland	16·645	17·521	21·990	21·775	23·150
Lothian	44·963	40·552	50·332	49·810	46·776
(A) Strathclyde	139·362	134·460	144·813	139·940	140·190
Tayside	21·279	23·008	25·100	24·540	25·940
Orkney	3·235	2·900	3·885	4·875	4·160
Shetland	9·570	8·160	6·445	7·000	6·700
Western Isles	6·280	6·350	7·315	11·087	10·500
Joint Police Boards	0·777	1·260	3·479	5·110	6·140

	1983-1984	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88
(B) Total	320·512	315·883	356·032	361·760	359·838
(A) as a percentage of (B)	43·48	42·56	40·67	38·68	38·95

Notes:
(1) The table is based on final allocations, plus any supplementary allocations, and specific consents (eg urban programme, civil defence) but does not take account of enhancements/abatements to allocations as a result of underspends/overspends in the previous year.
(2) The figures for 1983-84 and 1984-85 do not include an allowance for capital financed from current revenue.
(3) The table covers allocations for the roads and transport, water and sewerage, social work, education, general services, police, urban aid and civil defence programmes. In the case of police, account has been taken of allocations to joint police boards.

Regional Services (Strathclyde)

Mr. Worthington asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide figures to show for each regional service what account is taken in the calculation of *(a)* rate support grant and *(b)* his guideline figures for Strathclyde of its obligations to provide services to meet national and European Economic Community standards as well as national pay awards and agreements.

Mr. Lang: Each local authority's guideline is constructed on the basis of assessments of its relative expenditure need for each service. These assessments are based on total provision for local authority current expenditure and the allocation of that provision to services. These are determined taking account of all relevant factors, including nationally or internationally determined standards of service where they apply, and the costs including wage costs of providing the service. It is not possible to identify elements of provision or of assessed need attributable directly to these factors. Rate support grant is paid in support of a local authority's expenditure generally, and is not attributable to particular items of expenditure.

Ambulance Service

Mr. Worthington asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the percentage share of National Health Service costs allocated to the Scottish ambulance service; and how this compares with percentage expenditure in England and Wales.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Scottish Special Housing Association

Mr. Graham asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is proposed for the future of the Scottish Special Housing Association housing in Renfrew, West and Inverclyde constituency.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Insofar as the proposals contained in the consultative document "Scottish Homes: A New Agency for Housing in Scotland" concern Scottish Special Housing Association housing, they include such houses in the hon. Member's constituency.

Mr. Graham asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the purpose of the public meetings organised by the Scottish Special Housing Association for its tenants; and what say the tenants will have on the future of their houses when the consultation is completed.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I understand that the association has arranged some meetings with tenants in response to their inquiries about the proposals in the consultative document "Scottish Homes: A New Agency for Housing in Scotland". The association is holding a conference on this subject for representatives of tenants' associations on 15 August. The chairman of the association wrote on 14 July to all tenants and said that the association would receive and let the Government know about views expressed by tenants. My right hon. and learned Friend will, of course, take full account of all comments submitted to him.

Mr. Graham asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if the Scottish Special Housing Association will be meeting the Renfrew district council and the Inverclyde district council to discuss what will happen to the Association's local agreement in relation to housing local people.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: It is for the bodies themselves to determine whether they hold any meetings. The association's agreement with these and other district councils about the allocation of the association's houses will be taken into account in our consideration of the proposals for "Scottish Homes".

Mr. Graham asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if the Scottish Special Housing Association will be informing hon. Members with Scottish Special Housing Association houses in their constituencies about the consultations that are taking place with local groups about the proposals entitled "Scottish Homes".

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This is a matter for the Scottish Special Housing Association to decide.

Mr. Graham asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if the tenants of the Scottish Special Housing Association will be balloted on whether they want their district council to take them over; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if the tenants of the Scottish Special Housing Association will be asked whether they want their local district councils to take over and run their houses as district council houses; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No. Our proposals for the future of Scottish Special Housing Association houses are contained in the consultative document "Scottish Homes: A New Agency for Housing in Scotland" and we shall take full account of comments made by association tenants on these proposals.

Mr. Graham asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if the local hon. Members and district councillors who have Scottish Special Housing Association houses in their areas will be consulted about the proposals to abolish the Scottish Special Housing Association.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Copies of the consultation document "Scottish Homes: A New Agency for

Housing in Scotland" were placed in the Library and sent to all district councils on 7 May. It is for hon. Members and district councillors to decide whether they wish to comment on the proposals which include the replacement of the association by the new agency.

Mr. Graham asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many Scottish Special Housing Association houses there are in the Renfrew, West and Inverclyde constituency.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This information is not held centrally. At 30 September 1986, there were 7,429 and 3,288 SSHA dwellings in Renfrew and Inverclyde district council areas respectively.

Mr. Graham asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what has been the level of rent rises in Scottish Special Housing Association houses in each year since 1979;

(2) what information he has about the average rent of a four-apartment, three-apartment and five-apartment terraced house and flat, respectively, owned by the Scottish Special Housing Association in the Renfrew, West and Inverclyde constituency; and what is the average rent in Scotland as a whole for Scottish Special Housing Association houses;

(3) what information he has about the average rents of Renfrew district council's five, four and three apartment terraced houses and flats, respectively; and what are the figures for Inverclyde district council.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Separate information on average rents for terraced houses and for flats is not collected centrally. Average annual rents for local authority and SSHA dwellings by apartment size at 30 September 1986 and rent increases nationally are detailed in Scottish Development Department statistical bulletin HSIU No. 29: "Public Sector Rents 1986-87," a copy of which has recently been sent to all hon. Members with Scottish constituencies.

War Criminals (Extradition)

Mr. Sumberg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many requests have been received by the Lord Advocate since 1957 for assistance in procuring the extradition from Scotland of suspected war criminals; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: None, so far as can be ascertained. Any such request would be treated on its merits in accordance with extradition law.

Prison Statistics

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will state *(a)* the number and grades of staff in post and *(b)* the (i) sentence, (ii) security and (iii) offence categories of prisoners held at Her Majesty's prison Peterhead on 31 December 1986.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: *(a)* The number and grades of staff in post at Her Majesty's prison Peterhead on 1 January 1987 are given in the table. 1 January is the nearest date to that requested for which the information is available.

Grade	*Number*
Governor I	1
Governor III	1
Governor IV	1
Assistant Governor	2
Chief Officer I (Discipline)	1
Chief Officer II (Discipline)	2
Principal Officer (Discipline)	17
Senior Officer (Discipline)	23
Officer (Discipline)	154
Principal Nurse Officer	1
Senior Nurse Officer	1
Nurse Officer	4
Principal Officer (Catering)	1
Senior Officer (Catering)	1
Officer (Catering)	2
Chief Workers Officer I	1
Principal Works Officer	2
Senior Works Officer	3
Works Officer	10
Chief Clerk Officer	1
Principal Clerk Officer	3
Clerk Officer	2
Principal Officer (Instructor)	2
Officer (Instructor)	2
Civilian Instructional Officer III	4
Civilian Instructional Officer IV	2
Typists	3
Civilian Tradesmen	2
Total	249

(b) (i) The *average* sentence categories for the month of December 1986 (this information is not available on a daily basis).

	Average Sentence categories
More than 18 months but less than 2 years	1
2 years but less than 3 years	8
3 years but less than 4 years	11
4 years but less than 5 years	18
5 years	28
More than 5 years but less than 10 years	41
10 years or more	39
Life	28

(ii) The security categories of prisoners at Peterhead on 30 December 1986 (the nearest date at which figures are available).

	Security categories
Category 'A'	6
Category 'B'	145
Category 'C'	21

(iii) Information is not readily available on offence categories.

Teachers

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate the number of newly qualified secondary teachers who will not be able to find teaching jobs in the forthcoming school year.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information on which such an estimate would be based is not held centrally.

Gary MacGregor (Death)

Mr. Ron Brown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has received recent representations seeking an inquiry into the death of Gary MacGregor; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamiliton: I have received a request for an inquiry from Mr. David Martin, MEP. The circumstances of this death were fully investigated by the procurator fiscal and reported to Crown counsel, who instructed criminal proceedings against the driver of the police vehicle involved for a contravention of section 3 of the Road Traffic Act 1972. All relevant available evidence concerning the accident was placed before the court in the criminal trial on 11 March 1985 when the driver was acquitted. Since the circumstances of the death have been sufficiently established in the course of the trial, Crown counsel did not consider it appropriate or necessary in the public interest to hold a fatal accident inquiry.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Management Agreements)

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Scotland, if, in relation to the operation in Scotland of the guidelines for management agreements under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, he will list the recommendations and proposals made by the Government's consultants for the avoidance of over-compensation; and if he will specify in each case the action taken to implement them.

Mr. Moynihan: I have been asked to reply.

Details of the consultant's recommendations and proposals designed to improve the accuracy and reliability of payments under management agreements may be found on pages 60-64 and 102-106 of the consultant's report, a copy of which has been deposited in the Library. The Government's preliminary views on these are set out in full in the consultation paper published on 8 Aprl 1987, which has also been deposited in the Library and distributed to interested parties.

We are currently considering the responses to the consultation exercise and will make an announcement in due course.

ENVIRONMENT

Litter

Sir Anthony Grant asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will report on the progress of the anti-litter campaign and in particular on the work of Mr. Richard Branson in this respect.

Mr. Trippier: UK2000, under Mr. Richard Branson's chairmanship, is now undertaking practical work to improve the environment. A part of this work involves action to tackle litter, but it includes many other types of project.

At the end of June UK2000 had 214 projects under way. A total of 3,900 community programme workers and 7,000 volunteers worked on these projects. Nearly £750,000 private sector sponsorship in cash and kind has been attracted. UK2000 seeks to ensure that projects are of high quality and that goood training and work experience is offered to participants.

The priorities for UK2000 as it enters its second year are to develop more innovative and major environmental projects and to explore the potential for creating new enterprises from environmental improvement.

Rating Reform

Sir David Price asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how the Government intend to adapt to the proposed community charge in the principle of rate relief for disabled people who have special provisions in their homes on account of their disabilities.

Mr. Howard: Under the domestic rating system rateable values are increased to take account of extensions and alterations of property. Rate relief is granted to disabled people to ensure that they do not have to pay high bills as a result of modifications needed to their homes as a result of their disabilities.

This problem will not arise with the community charge, because improvements to people's homes will not affect the level of the charge.

Flats (Disabled People)

Mr. Hannam asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans exist to introduce common parts grants for adaptations to the communal areas of blocks of flats to meet the needs of disabled residents.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Housing and Planning Act 1986 includes provisions for a new discretionary grant for the common parts of blocks of flats, including work required to make them suitable for use by a disabled occupant of a dwelling. The local authority associations are now being consulted about the subordinate legislation needed to implement the grant provisions. I expect the necessary statutory instruments to be laid before Parliament later this year.

Disabled People (Housing)

Mr. Hannam asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what advice or guidance is available from his Department to local authorities on considering the requirements of disabled people when modernising old council housing.

Mrs. Roe: The Department has published a number of circulars and other forms of guidance on the housing requirements of disabled people. These include:

- Circular 74/74 "Housing for People who are Physically handicapped";
- Circular 59/78 "Adaptations of Housing for People who are Physically handicapped";
- design guidance on mobility housing and wheelchair housing (Housing Development Directorate Occasional Papers 2/74 and 2/75);
- advice on housing services for disabled people (HDD Occasional Paper 3/78);
- 1984 guidance manual on advice booklets produced by local authorities for disabled people;
- a comprehensive film and information pack "Housing for the Disabled" (1981); and
- a manual on house adaptations for disabled people to be published soon by HMSO.

Empty Houses and Flats

Mr. Redwood asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the 10 district or borough councils with the largest number of empty houses and flats, including on the list the total number of houses and flats in each council's ownership and the proportion unoccupied.

Mr. Waldegrave: The 10 English local authorities reporting most vacant dwellings at April 1986 provided the following information in their 1986 housing investment programme returns.

Local Authority Stock[1] at 1 April 1986

	Vacant[2] dwellings	*Total stock*	*Percentage vacant*
Liverpool	7,704	64,836	11·9
Manchester	4,939	79,499	6·2
Sheffield	3,277	89,994	3·6
Tower Hamlets	3,200	48,700	6·6
Hackney	3,111	45,730	6·8
Birmingham	3,106	120,955	2·6
Sandwell	2,751	55,787	4·9
Newham	2,420	31,110	7·8
Islington	2,271	41,261	5·5
Bradford	2,117	37,082	5·7

[1] Housing owned by the local authority within its own area.
[2] Includes dwellings awaiting demolition.

Derelict and Unused Land

Mr. Redwood asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the 10 largest public owners of derelict and unused land by acreage, together with the acreage held by each.

Mr. Trippier: The registers of unused and under-used land owned by public bodies compiled under part X of the Local Government Planning Land Act 1980 contain details of parcels of land larger than one acre in size (a few sites smaller than this have been entered at public request). The 10 public bodies with the largest areas of land currently entered on the registers are:

	Acreage
1. British Rail	9,339
2. Central Electricity Generating Board	3,258
3. Warrington Development Corporation	2,123
4. National Coal Board	2,011
5. Telford Development Corporation	1,989
6. Commission for New Towns	1,712
7. British Steel Corporation	1,358
8. Kent County Council	1,345
9. Tyne and Wear County Council	1,319
10. Leeds City Council	1,233

Council Housing (Rehabilitation)

Mr. Redwood asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the four most extensive council flats rehabilitation projects that have used private capital, along with the amounts of money invested, the number of units improved, and the ultimate form of tenure of the rehabilitated houses.

Mr. Waldegrave: We do not have this information. My Department assembles details about the numbers of empty local authority dwellings disposed of to the private sector and I included the most recent list in our answer to the hon. Member for Bootle on 13 July 1987 at column 387. This list is not necessarily comprehensive however, since local authorities are not required to seek the Secretary of State's consent or to inform the Department when they are disposing of empty housing at the best price.

My Department's estate action team has produced a booklet "New Homes from Old" which gives details of a range of schemes whereby empty rundown council housing has been successfully transformed by using private capital. I have written to my hon. Friend enclosing a copy.

Richmond Dock Shipyard Site, Appledore

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received in respect of alleged irregularities in the granting of planning consent for the redevelopment of the Richmond dock shipyard site, Appledore, Devon; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: A number of telephone calls from a local councillor have been received by my Department's regional office. I understand the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission has received correspondence from the same councillor. It is for the local planning authority to make a decision about the applications.

Warrington and Runcorn Development Corporation

Mr. Butler asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will now set a target date for the winding-up of Warrington and Runcorn development corporation.

Mrs. Roe: In December last year the relevant local authorities were consulted on a proposal to wind up the Warrington and Runcorn development corporation on 30 September 1989. I have considered the responses to that consultation and I have decided to confirm that date as the target for wind-up. The final decision and formal order will be made in the usual way nearer the time, after the statutory consultations required under the New Towns Act 1981 have been undertaken. I am still considering what further development the development corporation should promote before September 1989.

Banqueting House, Whitehall

Mrs. Gorman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make the banqueting house, Whitehall, available more widely for functions.

Mr. Moynihan: We have recently reviewed the criteria for the use of the banqueting house and have decided to extend the privilege of holding functions there to a wider group of suitable organisations, including for a trial period reputable private companies. Any function must be in keeping with the dignity and traditions of the banqueting house, which has the status of a royal palace, and will not interfere with the normal daytime admission of the public. Applications will now be considered in respect of:

(a) *Receptions and dinners held by the Government*, Government agencies, local government organisations, individual local authorities and other reputable public bodies; Foreign and Commonwealth Government receptions and dinners.
(b) *Registered charities of a national character*, normally on distinctive occasions, for fund-raising or other appropriate activities.
(c) Receptions or dinners, by non-profit making commercial and industrial organisations for the promotion of export trade or other suitable purposes.
(d) Functions organised by professional institutions.
(e) Cultural and learned events, such as lectures and concerts.
(f) Receptions and dinners given by reputable private companies, but not to promote products or services.

(g) Functions associated with bookings at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre.

Permission to use the banqueting house will be at the absolute discretion of the Department of the Environment. All functions will take place in the evenings except concerts and lectures which may be permitted in the day-time provided that the banqueting house can remain open to the general public.

Appropriate charges for the use of the hall will be preferred.

The following events will still not be acceptable:

(i) dances
(ii) party political or politically controversial gatherings
(iii) use by private individuals, except in very exceptional circumstances.

Local Authority Fees and Charges

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the outcome of the review of local authority fees and charges.

Mr. Ridley: In the light of the review, the Government have decided to provide an enabling power in primary legislation, allowing new or amended charging powers to be introduced by order. The Government consider that allowing new charging powers to be introduced in secondary legislation in this way will give central and local government more flexibility to respond to changing circumstances.

The enabling power will also allow the level of fees and charges under existing, new or amended charging powers to be prescribed or varied.

The enabling power will not be exercisable in respect of certain functions and services, including school education, policing, firefighting and elections. In addition there are many areas in respect of which the enabling power will formally be exercisable, but to which the Department has no plans to introduce or extend charging powers. These include basic public library services and household waste collection.

Albert Memorial

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has of the likely cost of restoring the Albert Memorial; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan [*pursuant to his answer*, 21 July 1987]: The cost of restoration or other treatment will depend on the option chosen. So far no decision about this has been made.

St. George's Hospital Building

Mr. Chapman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how long the St. George's hospital building, Hyde Park corner, has been unoccupied; what initiatives he will take to ensure this grade II building is adequately protected from any further deterioration which might necessitate its demolition; and what further initiatives he will take to ensure this building will be restored to its original design.

Mr. Moynihan [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 July 1987]: The former St. George's hospital consists of a group of early 19th century Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings which were vacated by DHSS in mid-1980. Following an approach by Westminster city council, which has powers to serve a repairs notice on the owners, stabilisation work is being carried out. The city council is monitoring this work and the Secretary of State is satisfied that this aspect can safely be left in their hands.

Proposals for development are currently under consideration. If any demolition of a listed building is involved, the applications will be referred to the Secretary of State to decide whether to intervene.

Mersey Basin Programme

Mr. David Young asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will approach the European Commission to seek a change in the financing of environmental improvement works under the Mersey basin programme.

Mr. Trippier: The Department has recently negotiated a more flexible interpretation of the rules relating to environmental improvement works within national programmes of community interest. This will be of benefit to the Mersey basin programme.

Mr. Stott asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will now take steps to consult relevant local authorities about Her Majesty's Government's submission to the European Commission of phase 2 of the Mersey basin programme; why no consultation has taken place so far; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: Consultation had in fact been under way since November 1986 through the three local authority-led Project Groups of the Mersey Basin Campaign, though the Department has receved only 15 responses from individual local authorities and other public bodies, including Wigan MBC. This together with information held centrally, has been sufficient to build up a satisfactory submission to the European Commission. I hope for a favourable response at about the end of this year.

Defence Materials and Equipment (Bolton)

Mr. David Young asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information is given by his Department to local authorities and police; and what is the required notification to him of cargoes of defence materials and equipment parked overnight in Bolton.

Mr. Trippier: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him today by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces, the hon. Member for Kettering (Mr. Freeman).

Non-domestic Rates

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for each local authority the amount to be received from non-domestic rates in 1987-88, showing also what each authority would receive in 1987-88 from a national non-domestic rate poundage of 224·1 pence.

Mr. Ridley: I have today placed in the Library figures showing the estimated non-domestic rates to be received by rating authorities in 1987-88.

The hon. Gentleman is seeking to make a false comparison. Under the proposals in Cmnd. 9714 authorities would receive £233·1 per adult as a result of a uniform domestic rate of 224·1p. This figures is not

comparable with the income from non-domestic rates under the present arrangements which provide for inequalities in rateable value to be mitigated by adjustments to block grant.

Land and Buildings (Sales)

Mrs. Gorman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the total sales, in pounds sterling, of land and buildings disposed of by local and central Government in the years: 1978-79, 1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82, 1982-83, 1983-84, 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87.

Mr. Waldegrave: Information about receipts from the sale by local government of land and buildings is not separately available. Receipts from the sale of fixed assets (including land and buildings) are as follows:

	£ million
1978-79	194·659
1979-80	304·030
1980-81	406·322
1981-82	866·650
1982-83	1,461·861
1983-84	1,412·817
1984-85	1,447·617
1985-86	1,628·624
1986-87	[1]1,950·000

[1] Estimated figure.

The Property Services Agency falls within my responsibility. Sales of land and buildings by it for the defence and common user civil estates are as follows:

£ million

Year	*Defence*	*Civil*
1978-79	33·0	5
1979-80	50·0	8
1980-81	65·0	18
1981-82	54·6	9
1982-83	41·0	20
1983-84	42·0	10
1984-85	28·0	14
1985-86	60·0	29
1986-87	75·0	41

Fire Engines and Ambulances (Hooters)

Mr. Summerson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the typical decibel level of hooters on fire engines and ambulances; and what assessment his Department has made as to whether they can be made less noisy while remaining effective in clearing the road.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I have been asked to reply.

About 115 decibels at 2m. Chief fire officers and chief ambulance officers decide what type of signal best suits their operational needs. The Department has made no assessment of the kind described.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 23rd July 1987

TRANSPORT

Roads

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will state total expenditure on roads *(a)* in England and *(b)* in Scotland, for each of the last eight years; and how much per head of population this represents in each case.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information requested is a follows:

Roads Expenditure (£ million cash)

	England		*Scotland*	
	[1]*Total*	[2]*Per Capita*	[1]*Total*	[2]*Per Capita*
1979-80	1,322	28	261	52
1980-81	1,560	33	286	57
1981-82	1,744	37	329	66
1982-83	1,985	42	358	72
1983-84	2,039	43	367	73
1984-85	2,171	46	370	74
1985-86	2,286	49	397	79
1986-87[3]	2,449	52	392	78

[1] To nearest £ million.
[2] To nearest £.
[3] (Provisional)

Comparable figures have been given for Scotland as requested. Expenditure on roads in Scotland is the responsibility of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport is responsible for roads in England.

Woodford-Barking Relief Road

Mr. William Powell asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he now expects the Woodford-Barking relief road to be opened.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The relief road should be fully open to traffic by early next year.

Departmental Staff

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Transport what was the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men employed within each grade in his Department in each year since 1979.

Mr. Channon: Figures are not available for industrial staff. A full answer for non-industrials would be excessively long, so it has been summarised into standard groups of grades as follows:

Category	*December 1979*		*December 1980*		*December 1982*		*December 1983*		*December 1984*		*December 1985*		*December 1986*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Open Structure	19	1	21	1	19	1	51	1	53	1	54	1	51	1
Admin EO and above	1,191	433	1,177	486	1,192	501	1,374	569	1,530	661	1,572	715	1,560	743
Admin Clerical	1,201	4,040	1,126	4,540	1,178	4,277	1,232	4,355	1,402	4,630	1,552	4,880	1,691	4,886
General Category	23	9	31	11	55	14	60	19	75	15	76	17	75	20
Science Category	420	51	395	47	357	36	346	33	332	35	327	40	329	49
PTO Category	1,340	7	1,327	7	1,364	7	1,626	9	1,619	6	1,675	9	1,701	9
Secretarial Category	4	331	4	330	4	343	3	406	2	425	2	477	2	579
General Service Category	377	682	365	821	335	741	363	621	345	907	319	934	317	802
Departmental Grades	1,712	23	1,813	30	1,704	33	1,868	39	2,190	41	2,330	65	2,370	77

Explanatory Note

Types of Grades included in Grade Groups listed

Open Structure
Senior staff from Grade 1
(Permanent Secretary to Grade 4).

Administration EO and Above
Administrative Grades 5, 6, 7
Senior Executive Officer, Higher Executive Officer and Executive Officers, plus higher grades in PSA tables.

Administration Clerical
Administrative Officers and Administrative Assistants.

General Category
Includes Economists, Statisticians and Information Officer grades.

Science Category
Scientists.

PTO Category
Professional and Technical Officers including Mechanical, Electrical and Civil Engineers.

Secretarial Category
Secretaries and Typists.

General Service Category
Includes Planners, Research Officers, Lawyers and Office Service grades such as Messengers.

Departmental Category
Grades unique to the Department including Royal Parks Police, Housing Inspectors, Warders and Museum staff.

A1-M1 (Thrapston Bypass)

Mr. William Powell asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects construction work on the A1-M1 link Thrapston bypass to begin.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Subject to the satisfactory completion of the remaining statutory procedures, in the late spring or early summer of next year.

East London River Crossing

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to receive the report of the

inspector who conducted the public inquiry into the proposed east London river crossing; and when he plans to publish the report.

Mr. Channon: I hope to receive the inspector's report early in 1988. The report will be published at the time Ministers announce the decisions they have taken in the light of the inspector's findings. Given the exceptional length and complexity of this inquiry and the volume of evidence which will need to be considered, this is bound to take some time.

Motorways (Lighting)

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Transport when it is planned to install total lighting between junctions 1 to 7 of the M6 motorway; and whether he will estimate the cost of doing so.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: There are no plans to install further lighting on these sections of M6.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Transport by what criteria he decides on the priority for providing additional lighting on motorways.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Following a review of policy for the provision of lighting on motorways and all-purpose trunk roads in 1986, I made a statement in the House on 24 July 1986, at column *453*, introducing a new procedure for the assessment of lighting proposals on these roads. Details of the assessment technique are given in departmental advice note TA 49/86 "Appraisal of New and Replacement Lighting on Trunk Roads and Trunk Road Motorways". A copy is available in the Library.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Transport when it is planned to install additional lighting between the end of the present lighting near Newport Pagnell and the Buckinghamshire-Northamptonshire boundary of the M1 motorway; and at what estimated cost.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: This lighting will be installed in the early stages of a major maintenance contract and should be completed by the end of September. The estimated cost is £260,000.

Northampton (Relief Road)

Mr. Marlow asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give consideration to a northern relief road for Northampton; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: A north-west bypass for Northampton is a local authority road proposal for which Northamptonshire county council is responsible. I understand that planning is at an early stage. Support by transport supplementary grant will be considered at the appropriate time.

M6 (Roadworks)

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Transport what roadworks are currently being undertaken on the M6 motorway between its junction with the M1 and junction 7; how long they are scheduled to last; what is the cost of each contract and by whom it is being carried out; and what further roadworks are planned for this section of the M6 and at what estimated cost.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The details of the major contracts are:

Date	*Location*	*Type of work*	*Contractor*	*Value £ million*	*Estimated value £ million*	*Duration*
	Part J4-4A	Resurfacing	Redlands Aggregates	2·9		7 weeks
Planned						
1988	Thornbridge viaduct	Resurfacing and joint replacement			1·0	
1990	J6-J7 (part including Queslett viaduct)	Resurfacing and joint replacement			1·5	
1991	J6-J7 (part)	Resurfacing			1·0	

All these contracts will be subject to the lane rental procedure. Additionally the construction of the M1-A1 link will involve lane closures on the M6 near its junction with the M1. These will last a few weeks during 1988 but exact timing is not yet known.

Minor repairs and maintenance activities are also carried out on a regular basis.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will list the roadworks carried out on the M6 motorway between junctions 5 and 7 since it was opened, giving their duration, cost, purpose and by whom they were completed.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Details of minor repairs could not be listed except at disproportionate cost. The major roadworks contracts have been as follows:

Year and location	*Type of work*	*Contractor*	*Contract period weeks*	*Cost £ million*
1978				
Witton Viaduct	Resurfacing and new joints	R. M. Douglas	16	0·4
1980				
Thornbridge Viaduct	Resurfacing and new joints	R. M. Douglas	12	0·6
Queslett Viaduct				

Year and location	Type of work	Contractor	Contract period weeks	Cost £ million
1982				
Bromford Viaduct, Stage 1	Resurfacing and new joints	R. M. Douglas	15	1·1
1983				
Bromford Viaduct, Stage 2	Resurfacing and new joints	Wrekin Construction	16	1·1
1984				
Gravelly Hill Viaduct	Resurfacing and new joints	R. M. Douglas	12	1·0
Witton Viaduct				

M6 (Traffic Count)

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the latest count of traffic, by class and weight, using the M6 motorway between junctions 5 and 7; how this compares with estimates and counts since the motorway was opened; and what is the latest forecast of traffic use.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Civil Aviation (Safety)

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if his Department monitors the certification standards of foreign authorities granting certificates to civil air transport aircraft which come on to the British register; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he is satisfied that the certification standards of foreign authorities for aircraft coming on to the British register are comparable with those required in Britain to obtain a British civil airworthiness certificate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Safety regulation of civil air transport is a matter for the Civil Aviation Authority. The Department does not monitor either the standard it applies or the standards applied by foreign authorities.

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will consider whether the ditching capability certification requirements should include limitations on sea states in which helicopters can operate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Civil aviation safety regulation is the statutory responsibility of the Civil Aviation Authority. I will ask the chairman of the Authority to write to my hon. Friend.

Air Miss (Cumbria)

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has on the circumstances surrounding the reported near miss involving British Airways flight 328 and a Royal Air Force Hercules on 15 July and as to what details of the British Airways airplane's flight plans were transmitted to air traffic controllers in Prestwick; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Civil Aviation Authority through the national air traffic services is responsible for all matters concerning air traffic control.

The full circumstances surrounding the incident to which my hon. Friend refers are currently being investigated and will be subject to examination by the joint airmiss working group (JAWG) whose members comprise independent representatives of the aviation community.

Creditor Bypass

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the latest information which he has as to the date when construction of the Crediton bypass will commence.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I understand that Devon county council, which is the highway authority for the A377 through Crediton, has programmed the bypass for a start of construction in 1992-93. The priority and timing accorded to this scheme are matters for the county council.

Slow Vehicles (Amber Beacons)

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has for the use of amber beacons on slow vehicles using high speed roads.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I have today made amendments to the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1984 so as to require, from the end of this year, slow-moving vehicles to use amber warning beacons when travelling on unrestricted dual carriageway roads. Experience has shown the value of these beacons in warning other road users of the presence of a slow-moving vehicle. Although the new legal requirement applies only to fast dual carriageway roads, I would recommend owners of farm tractors or similar slow-moving vehicles to fit the beacons for use on any main road, even it it is not a dual carriageway.

Roads Programme

Mr. Rowe asked the Secretary of State for Transport what actions he proposes to take following the recent review of his Department's road programme procedures.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The review made a number of recommendations and identified a large number of possible areas in which procedures might be further investigated. These have been examined very fully. Changes to procedures and practice are being made and some further investigations will be carried out internally.

The changes in procedures are as follows:

(i.) A new system of monthly slippage reports to headquarters and regional office management is to be set up to provide a basis for more rapid action to reduce delays. It will be based on a new computerised management information system being introduced this summer. Responsibility for

progress will remain with the established management line but the new arrangements will provide for earlier recognition of, and attention to, problems.

(ii.) In reviewing the road programme, the Department will consider whether certain schemes merit continued preparation or should be dropped; this change was introduced in the recent review of the road programme.

(iii.) At public consultation stage, regional offices will set out more fully in published documents the basis on which route options are rejected; they will also aim to limit the number of alternative routes to be worked up to detail where such alternatives are clearly unsuitable.

(iv.) Regional offices will aim to allocate a single member of staff to concentrate exclusively on drafting each decision letter; in exceptional cases, the Department will consider bringing in staff from outside the regional office to assist. The Department will also review the scope for keeping the length of decision letters to a minimum.

(v.) The Department will aim to maintain a flexible approach to staff postings in relation to peaks and troughs of work in regional offices.

Items to be the subject of further review are:

(i.) Ways of accelerating preparation of submissions to the Treasury on schemes outside its delegation;

(ii.) The scope for further use of whole-route assessments where a scheme or schemes within a route are likely to prove negative or marginal in economic terms;

(iii.) Means by which the Highways Manual, the Department's comprehensive internal manual of procedure and practice, might be most effectively revised in preparation for a full revision.

The changes are expected to reduce delay. We shall continue to keep all aspects of our procedures under review.

Light Rapid Transit System (Manchester)

Mr. Burt asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has considered the applications from the Greater Manchester passenger transport executive for a grant towards the cost of the proposed light rapid transit system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Channon: I have considered these proposals very carefully and sympathetically. The passenger transport executive has undertaken a substantial amount of work in preparing economic and financial appraisals and the results appear very promising. The forecast effects on public expenditure are nevertheless significant and I need to consider these further before taking a decision. In particular, I have asked my Department to explore with the PTA and PTE the scope for reducing the projected burden on the public purse through the involvement of private finance. I have asked for the necessary work to take place quickly and will make a further announcement as soon as possible.

Level Crossings (Report)

Mr. Moss asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to receive Professor Stott's report on the safety of open level crossings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: Professor Stott submitted his report on 17 July. I am very grateful to him for his careful and detailed work following his appointment, announced by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Department of Transport, on 16 October 1986, to conduct a review of the safety record of automatic open level crossings. I am arranging for the report to be published as soon as possible.

Professor Stott has found that there are few accidents at open level crossings (on average eight a year) and that collisions are almost always due to failure of vehicle drivers to observe the signals. There is no evidence that accidents have been caused by the failure of the equipment. Although the number of road vehicles and trains using automatic open crossings is lower than at other crossings, Professor Stott finds that collisions are 20 times more frequent in relation to traffic density than at the more heavily used automatic half-barrier crossings. Nevertheless, the report concludes that 70 per cent. of the existing open crossings constitute an appropriate modern replacement of manned crossings. At the remainder, traffic loading combined with train speed makes open crossings inappropriate. For the latter, the report recommends that there should be a five-year programme of alterations to open crossings, either by conversion to automatic half barriers or by reducing train speeds.

I accept in principle the central recommendation of Professor Stott's report and am consulting British Rail urgently on its implementation. I shall consult more widely with local highway authorities and others when the full report is published.

Passenger Transport Authorities

Mr. Kirkhope asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has determined expenditure levels for the passenger transport authorities for 1988-89.

Mr. Channon: I have today notified the authorities of my determinations as follows:

	£ million
Greater Manchester	80·0
Merseyside	58·5
South Yorkshire	41·5
Tyne and Wear	53·5
West Midlands	59·5
West Yorkshire	57·0

Under section 3(4) of the Rates Act 1984 any authority may apply for a redetermination of its expenditure level at a greater amount. I have invited such applications to be submitted by 16 October, and before reaching decisions on them will carefully consider any representations made or information provided.

Highways Work Contracts (Consulting Engineer)

Mr. Jack asked the Secretary of State for Transport if any decision has been reached concerning proposals to remove the independent authority of the consulting engineer in his Department's highways work contracts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Channon: Having carefully considered the comments and views of all concerned I have decided to introduce on a trial basis new arrangements which modify the position of the consultant engineer in any motorway and trunk road contracts. The aim of these changes is to

strengthen the Department's control over the projects within its responsibility and the large public expenditure involved.

Under the new arrangements consulting engineers will continue to be retained to design and supervise construction; but the position of the consultant engineer will be modified so that in the contracts to which the new arrangements will apply he loses the independent role of the engineer as defined in the Institution of Civil Engineers' conditions of contract. Instead, he will act in the role of adviser and agent of the Department. The changes will be effected by appropriate amendments to the institution's conditions of contract when used by the Department, and all matters which currently fall to the engineer to decide will in future fall to the Department.

These changes will be introduced gradually so as to avoid disruption of projects, and give opportunity for monitoring the effects. I intend to start with three or four schemes in the next 12 months and then, in the light of experience to extend the changes more widely.

These changes should be seen as one of a variety of measures being taken to strengthen control over highway projects and ensure value for money. They should not in any way be seen as a reflection on the capability of the civil engineering profession which has made a major contribution to British exports and enjoys a justifiably high reputation both at home and overseas for the quality of its work. I look forward to the continuing co-operation of the profession in carrying forward the road programme in the years ahead.

British Transport Advertising

Mr. Curry asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about the future of British Transport Advertising.

Mr. David Mitchell: I am pleased to announce that, following a recommendation from the British Railways Board, the Secretary of State has given his consent under section 1(2) of the Transport Act 1981 to the board's sale of British Transport Advertising Limited to a new company formed by the BTA management group.

The board's choice of the BTA management group follows an extensive competitive tender exercise. The management group will be making a payment for the net assets of the BTA business. In addition, it will make guaranteed revenue payments to the board throughout the five-year concession for the commercial advertising rights on the board's stations and properties. The new owners will take over the business towards the end of August, subject to the completion of legal arrangements.

This is another welcome step towards increasing the role of the private sector in supplying services to the railway, in line with the objectives which we have asked the board to pursue. I wish the management and staff of British Transport Advertising every success as they enter the private sector.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Authorised Access

Mr. Dykes asked the Lord Privy Seal (1) if he will list those persons officially authorised and entitled to use the Ways and Means Corridor between the Library and the Members' Lobby;

(2) if he will list those persons officially authorised and entitled to use the corridor leading from the Members' Lobby to the stairway leading down to the Members' Cloakroom.

Mr. Wakeham: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Annunciators

Mr. Corbett asked the Lord Privy Seal whether he will institute a review of the use of the 12-hour and 24-hour clocks on television monitors in the House.

Mr. Wakeham: I will refer the hon. Gentleman's point to the Services Committee, once the members of that Committee have been nominated by the House.

Mr. Corbett asked the Lord Privy Seal whether he will bring forward proposals for the use of television monitors in the House to show messages for hon. Members at suitable intervals.

Mr. Wakeham: This would not be practicable with the existing annunciator system, and I do not consider that a separate network for this purpose would be justifiable. I understand that the Parliamentary Works Office of PSA, in conjunction with the relevant Sub-Committee of the Services Committee, will be reviewing the future of the annunciator system during the coming months, and I will draw the hon. Gentleman's suggestion to its attention.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Crown Prosecutors

Mr. Amess asked the Attorney-General how many Crown prosecutors are employed at present; and how many were employed before the formation of the Crown Prosecution Service in England and Wales.

The Attorney-General: On 1 June 1987 there were 1,263 lawyers employed within the Crown Prosecution Service. Of these, 626 were in the Crown prosecutor grade. Prior to the establishment of the Crown Prosecution Service in 1986, the majority of prosecuting lawyers were employed by local rather than central Government. Accurate information as to their numbers is not available.

Departmental Staff

Ms. Richardson asked the Attorney-General what was the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men employed within each grade in the Lord Chancellor's Department and the Law Officers Department in each year since 1979.

The Attorney-General: The relevant information in relation to the Lord Chancellor's Department is given in the tables. The Law Officers' Department keeps no separate record of this information as its staff are all seconded from other Government Departments.

Staff in Post at 1 January 1979-1987
in Lord Chancellor's Department
1979

Grade	*Women*	*Men*
Senior management 1	—	1·0
Senior management 2	—	6·0
Senior management 3	1·5	25·0
Grade 5	5·0	168·5

Grade	Women	Men
Grade 6	5·0	43·0
Grade 7	5·0	89·0
Senior executive officer	37·0	289·0
Higher executive officer	153·0	722·0
Executive officer	724·0	1,019·0
Administrative officer	2,683·5	2,491·0
Administrative assistant	1,315·0	291·0
Obsolete departmental grades	115·0	82·0
Total	5,044·0	5,226·5

Staff in Post at 1 January 1979-1987 in Lord Chancellor's Department 1980

Grade	Women	Men
Senior management 1	—	1·0
Senior management 2	—	6·0
Senior management 3	0·5	26·0
Grade 5	5·0	171·5
Grade 6	8·0	49·0
Grade 7	4·0	86·0
Senior executive officer	39·0	287·0
Higher executive officer	168·0	759·0
Executive officer	714·0	963·0
Administrative officer	2,605·0	2,362·5
Administrative assistant	1,409·0	287·5
Obsolete departmental grades	22·0	10·0
Total	4,974·5	5,008·5

Staff in Post at 1 January 1979-1987 in Lord Chancellor's Department 1981

Grade	Women	Men
Senior management 1	—	1·0
Senior management 2	—	7·0
Senior management 3	0·5	26·0
Grade 5	4·0	175·5
Grade 6	7·0	49·0
Grade 7	7·0	93·0
Senior executive officer	39·0	297·0
Higher executive officer	189·0	750·0
Executive officer	724·5	937·0
Administrative officer	2,669·5	2,331·0
Administrative assistant	1,447·0	305·5
Obsolete departmental grades	1·0	6·0
Total	5,088·5	4,978·0

Staff in Post at 1 January 1979-1987 in Lord Chancellor's Department 1982

Grade	Women	Men
Senior management 1	—	1·0
Senior management 2	—	5·0
Senior management 3	0·5	26·5
Grade 5	4·0	182·0
Grade 6	8·0	49·5
Grade 7	8·0	99·0
Senior executive officer	40·0	307·0
Higher executive officer	200·0	749·0
Executive officer	766·5	955·0
Administrative officer	2,706·5	2,276·0
Administrative assistant	1,471·0	314·5
Obsolete departmental grades	1·0	8·0
Total	5,205·5	4,972·5

Staff in Post at 1 January 1979-1987 in Lord Chancellor's Department 1983

Grade	Women	Men
Senior management 1	—	1·0
Senior management 2	—	4·0
Senior management 3	2·0	26·0
Grade 5	1·0	34·5
Grade 6	12·5	55·0
Grade 7	8·0	97·0
Senior executive officer	38·5	295·0
Higher executive officer	225·0	745·0
Executive officer	837·5	938·0
Administrative officer	2,789·5	2,356·0
Administrative assistant	1,448·0	292·0
Total	5,362·0	4,843·5

Staff in Post at 1 January 1979-1987 in Lord Chancellor's Department 1984

Grade	Women	Men
Senior management 1	—	1·0
Senior management 2	—	3·0
Senior management 3	2·5	29·0
Grade 5	—	27·5
Grade 6	14·0	55·5
Grade 7	7·5	97·0
Senior executive officer	33·5	286·0
Higher executive officer	247·0	706·0
Executive officer	872·5	941·0
Administrative officer	2,782·0	2,306·5
Administrative assistant	1,401·5	284·5
Total	5,360·5	4,737·0

Staff in Post at 1 January 1979-1987 in Lord Chancellor's Department 1985

Grade	Women	Men
Senior management 1	—	1·0
Senior management 2	—	2·0
Senior management 3	0·5	16·0
Grade 5	1·0	25·0
Grade 6	15·5	59·0
Grade 7	8·0	97·0
Senior executive officer	36·0	268·0
Higher executive officer	268·0	584·0
Executive officer	878·0	894·0
Administrative officer	2,906·0	2,160·0
Administrative assistant	1,424·5	295·5
Total	5,537·5	4,501·5

Staff in Post at 1 January 1979-1987 in Lord Chancellor's Department 1986

Grade	Women	Men
Senior management 1	—	1·0
Senior management 2	—	2·0
Senior management 3	0·5	16·5
Grade 5	2·0	23·0
Grade 6	20·5	63·0
Grade 7	9·5	97·0
Senior executive officer	35·0	246·0
Higher executive officer	265·0	640·0
Executive officer	929·5	890·0
Administrative officer	2,979·0	2,034·5
Administrative assistant	1,417·0	293·0
Obsolete departmental grades	1·0	1·0
Total	5,659·0	4,307·0

Staff in Post at 1 January 1979-1987 in Lord Chancellor's Department 1987

Grade	*Women*	*Men*
Senior management 1	—	1·0
Senior management 2	1·0	16·0
Senior management 3	—	19·5
Grade 5	2·0	26·0
Grade 6	11·0	49·0
Grade 7	22·0	116·0
Senior executive officer	53·0	250·0
Higher executive officer	283·0	622·0
Executive officer	1,003·0	872·0
Administrative officer	3,048·5	2,193·5
Administrative assistant	1,398·5	282.0
Total	5,822·0	4,447.0

Retired Judges

Mr. Parry asked the Attorney-General how many judges now on the Bench have previously retired.

The Attorney-General: Forty-eight judges who have previously retired as full-time members of the judiciary are authorised by the Lord Chancellor to sit part-time in the Supreme Court and county court as deputies, as required.

Mr. Parry asked the Attorney-General if he will list the number of judges over the age of 70 years; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: By virtue of section 11 of the Supreme Court Act 1981 a judge of the Supreme Court is obliged to vacate his office at the age of 75. Fourteen judges of the Supreme Court are over the age of 70 out of a total complement of 102. By virtue of section 17 of the Courts Act 1971 a circuit judge is obliged to vacate his office at the end of the completed year of service in which he attains the age of 72 unless authorised by the Lord Chancellor in the public interest to continue in office until he attains the age of 75. Twenty-six circuit judges are over the age of 70 out of a total current complement of 389.

Social Security Commissioner for Wales

Mr. Thomas asked the Attorney-General whether he has yet come to a decision on the future of the post of social security commissioner for Wales; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given to the hon. Gentleman, the Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths) on 16 July at column *567*.

Family Low Reform Act 1987

Mr. Corbett asked the Attorney-General what his latest estimate is of the full cost of bringing the Family Law Reform Act 1987 into force.

The Attorney-General: The latest estimate of the annual cost in current prices of implementing part II of this Act is about £3·5 million. The rest of the Act does not require significant resources.

Crown Prosecution Service

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Attorney-General if he has received the Director of Public Prosecution's report on the Crown Prosecution Service for the year 1986-87; and when this report will be laid before Parliament.

The Attorney-General: I have received the proof of this report and a copy of the proof has been placed in the Journal Office today. The report will be published later this summer and copies will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Devon County Council (Official Appointment)

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop asked the Attorney-General whether he will apply ex officio to the High Court for a judicial review into the circumstances in which Mrs. Baron was appointed by Devon county council to a post at Burlescombe primary school without the vacancy having been advertised and in a manner allegedly incompatible with the officially stated procedures for making such appointments.

The Attorney-General: The matter is under consideration.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Council of Europe and Western European Union

Sir Anthony Grant asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will set out in the *Official Report* the tasks he envisages for the British delegation to the Council of Europe and the Western European Union countries in the next five years.

Mrs. Chalker: We expect the British parliamentary delegation to continue to play a full and active role in the assemblies and committees of the Council of Europe and WEU in furtherance of the aims of these organisations.

Departmental Staff

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men employed within each grade in his Department in each year since 1979.

Mr. Eggar: The information requested is not held centrally for all grades employed in the diplomatic wing and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Information readily available for Diplomatic Service grades only (excluding Home Civil Service grades in the diplomatic wing) since 1984 is set out in the tables.

The information for the aid wing is not readily available and will be provided in due course.

	Women	*Men*
1984		
Senior Grade	2	154
DS 4	13	275
DS 5	27	405
DS 6	16	275
DS 7E	67	400
DS 7D	9	54
DS 8	7	36
DS 9	240	546
DS 10	261	279
Research Grades	17	38
Legal Advisers	4	20
Secretarial Grades	696	—
1985		
Senior Grade	2	156
DS 4	13	277
DS 5	26	399

	Women	Men
DS 6	19	286
DS 7E	69	389
DS 7D	11	64
DS 8	7	35
DS 9	254	536
DS 10	287	266
Research Grades	18	34
Legal Advisers	5	21
Secretarial Grades	695	—
1986		
Senior Grade	2	153
DS 4	12	270
DS 5	26	411
DS 6	23	270
DS 7E	75	394
DS 7D	21	75
DS 8	8	24
DS 9	252	455
DS 10	285	245
Research Grades	21	35
Legal Advisers	4	18
Secretarial Grades	624	—
1987		
Senior Grade	2	148
DS 4	16	277
DS 5	33	392
DS 6	28	275
DS 7E	73	389
DS 7D	19	78
DS 8	6	34
DS 9	263	493
DS 10	266	254
Research Grades	21	37
Legal Advisers	3	18
Secretarial Grades	635	—

The total numbers of female and male officers in all grades (Diplomatic Service and Home Civil Service) in the diplomatic wing for the same period was as follows:

	Women	Men
1984	2,399	5,376
1985	2,909	5,329
1986	2,914	5,130
1987	2,847	5,198

BMEWS, Fylingdales

Mr. Denzil Davies asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his latest advice concerning the implications for the compliance with the anti-ballistic missile treaty of the conversion work at BMEWS, Fylingdales.

Mr. Mellor: We are satisfied that the modernisation of RAF Fylingdales will be in full conformity with United States obligations under the ABM treaty. There was a ballistic missile early warning system installation at Fylingdales before the treaty was signed in 1972. The treaty does not prohibit modernisation of BMEWS radars already in existence when the treaty provisions came into force.

Mr. Denzil Davies asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the large phased array radar under construction at the BMEWS, Fylingdales, will be *(a)* within the agreed anti-ballistic missile deployment area, *(b)* at an agreed anti-ballistic missile test range, *(c)* used for the sole purpose of arms control verification, *(d)* used for the sole purpose of tracking space objects or *(e)* for early warning of attack.

Mr. Mellor: RAF Fylingdales is, and after modernisation is still planned to be, an early warning radar not an anti-ballistic missile control facility. Its primary role is to give early warning of ballistic missiles and it has a secondary role as a space tracking facility. RAF Fylingdales currently has no arms control verification role.

Pershing Missiles (Conversions)

Mr. Denzil Davies asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has made any representations to the United States concerning the planned conversion of Pershing II missiles into Pershing 1B.

Mr. Mellor: The details of the United States/Soviet intermediate nuclear force negotiations are confidential and, as the right hon. Member knows, a matter of close consultation between the United States and her NATO allies.

Zero-zero Agreement

Mr. Denzil Davies asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which North Atlantic Treaty Organisation short range intermediate nuclear force missiles will be eliminated following a zero-zero agreement.

Mr. Mellor: The United States/Soviet intermediate nuclear force negotiations in Geneva cover United States and Soviet longer and shorter range intermediate missiles. The United States does not have any shorter range intermediate missiles in Europe.

Mr. Denzil Davies asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what assessment his Department has made as to the Soviet response in the event of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation deciding to deploy more nuclear capable bombers and SLCM equipped submarines following a zero-zero agreement;

(2) whether he has had any discussions with European North Atlantic Treaty Organisation allies concerning the possible basing of United States SLCM equipped submarines and more nuclear capable bombers following in intermediate nuclear force agreement.

Mr. Mellor: There are continuing discussions within the North Atlantic Alliance on all relevant factors concerning the maintenance of deterrence with a minimum number of weapons. These discussions are confidential.

Outer Space Treaty

Mr. Denzil Davies asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has had any recent discussions with his United States counterpart concerning the outer space treaty.

Mr. Mellor: We are in close and regular contact with the United States Administration on the full range of arms control issues including those concerning space.

INF Agreement

Mr. Denzil Davies asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will outline his proposals for the verification of an intermediate nuclear force agreement;

(2) what is his policy towards the United States proposal for on-site inspection of the dismantling of Soviet intermediate range missiles;

(3) what is his policy towards the United States proposal that the Soviets should grant United States inspectors 24 hour access to Soviet plants and facilities concerned with intermediate nuclear force in the wake of an agreement.

Mr. Mellor: The details of the verification regime to be applied in an intermediate nuclear force agreement are still being negotiated between the United States and the Soviet Union. The details of the negotiations are confidential. The United States is consulting the United Kingdom and other basing countries closely.

Chemical Weapons

Mr. Denzil Davies asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will outline his proposals for the verification of a chemical weapons agreement.

Mr. Mellor: We believe there must be an agreed and reliable system of information exchange and on-site inspections on a routine basis at, for example, facilities where chemical weapons are to be destroyed; and civil chemical plants where industrial chemicals posing a risk to the convention are manufactured or used. In addition, there will need to be a stringent challenge inspection regime intended to deter any state from breaching the convention.

A new international organisation would be created to conduct verification activities. I tabled a new paper setting out the arrangements needed to bring this body into operation when I visited the conference on disarmament on 14 July. Copies of the paper and of my speech to the conference will be deposited in the Libraries of the House.

Radar Installations

Mr. Denzil Davies asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has discussed or intends to discuss with his Soviet counterpart the possibility of their dismantling the large phased array radar at Krasnoyarsk in return for the cancellation of the United States air force large phased array radar as Fylingdales.

Mr. Mellor: No. The facilities at Krasnoyarsk and Fylingdales are not comparable. A trade-off would not be acceptable and therefore I see no purpose to be served by the kind of discussions the right hon. Member suggests.

Diego Garcia

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the future administration of the island of Diego Garcia.

Mrs. Chalker: The island of Diego Garcia is the largest island in the British Indian Ocean Territory, which will continue to be administered by a commissioner, who is assisted by the officer in charge of the Royal Navy complement on Diego Garcia.

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions Her Majesty's Government have conducted with the United States of America's Government concerning the deployment of nuclear weapons on the island of Diego Garcia; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: None. The 1976 exchange of notes between the United States of America and the United Kingdom requires both Governments to consult periodically on joint objectives, policies and activities in the British Indian Ocean Territory. As is well known, it is not the policy of the United States or the United Kingdom to confirm or deny the deployment of nuclear weapons in any place at any time.

Defence Exports (Iran-Iraq)

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will further define those categories of non-lethal defence equipment which may be exported from the United Kingdom to Iran and Iraq.

Mr. Mellor: Such exports are not categorised. I refer the hon. Member to the guidelines on defence sales to Iran and Iraq that my right hon. and learned Friend announced to the House on 29 October 1985, at column 454, in his answer to the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel). We prohibit the sale of any defence-related equipment that could significantly enhance the capability of either side to prolong or exacerbate the conflict.

Persian Gulf

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has received requests from the United States Government on making available docking and logistical support for the United States navy in the Gulf under the United Kingdom security agreement with the Sultanate of Oman.

Mr. Mellor: No.

"Spycatcher"

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the United Kingdom embassy in Washington has bought any copies of Spycatcher.

Mr. Mellor: Yes.

Disarmament Resolutions

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how the United Kingdom voted on the following disarmament resolutions: *(a)* 41/46 cessation all nuclear tests A and B, *(b)* 41/47 urgent need for a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty and *(c)* 41/54 implementation of General Assembly resolution 40/88 on the immediate cessation and prohibition of nuclear weapon tests and *(d)* 4/59 (N) notification of nuclear tests, in the 41st United Nations General Assembly; and how many other nations voted with the United Kingdom in each case.

Mr. Mellor: The United Kingdom voted against resolutions 41/46A, 41/46B and 41/54, and abstained on resolutions 41/47 and 41/59N. Fourteen other countries abstained on resolution 41/47 and 21 on 41/59N. In the case of resolutions 41/46A, 41/46B and 41/54, the United Kingdom voted in the company of two other Western nuclear weapons states.

Warhead Testing Moratorium

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate his Department has made of the implications the Congressional House resolution 12, on mutual warhead testing moratorium, of 6 January, will have on the continued United Kingdom nuclear warhead testing programme in Nevada.

Mr. Mellor: House resolution 12 does not reflect the policy of the United States Administration, which conducts nuclear tests in accordance with the 150 Kt limit of the unratified threshold test ban treaty. Although not a signatory to the treaty, the United Kingdom conducts its nuclear tests in accordance with this limit.

We note that House resolution 12 makes "in-country reciprocal monitoring arrangements" a condition for prohibiting tests above 1 Kt. We also note that the Russians have not yet accepted United States proposals for measures of this type with respect to the 150 Kt threshold treaty.

South Africa

Mr. Caborn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what procedures Her Majesty's Government have established to monitor the measures which have been imposed against South Africa; and what have been the conclusions of such monitoring.

Mrs. Chalker: We are satisfied that we have fully implemented our international obligations on restrictive measures against South Africa.

Namibia

Mr. Caborn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the statement made by Her Majesty's ambassador to South Africa on a visit to Windhoek, Namibia, on 2 June, that the South African administration in Namibia is a meaningful development on the road to independence provided that it becomes a means of obtaining internationally recognised independence for the region, represents Government policy.

Mrs. Chalker: Her Majesty's ambassador to South Africa was misquoted. There has been no change in our policy on Namibia or towards the so-called "transitional Government of national unity".

British Council

Mr. Key asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what importance his Department places on the role of the British Council in promoting British interests abroad; how his Department sees this role developing; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: This Department attaches great importance to the continuing role of the British council as one of the main agencies for executing Britain's cultural activities overseas.

Consular Services (Fees)

Mr. Kirkhope asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to increase fees for consular services.

Mr. Eggar: Yes. An Order in Council (the Consular Fees Order 1987) was made on 21 July 1987, the first opportunity following the new Session of Parliament. It provides for increases in certain consular fees with effect from Tuesday, 1 September 1987. Passport and visa fees are not included in the increases. Subject to the effects of exchange rate movements and overseas inflation, the new fee levels should reduce the deficit on consular fee-bearing services to about £500,000 in 1988-89.

The increases will be the first since November 1983. Since then costs, particularly overseas, have increased substantially. It has been the policy of this and previous Governments that the cost of consular services should as far as possible be borne by the users.

Falkland Islands (Fishing Licences)

Mr. Couchman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the latest estimate of revenue from fishing licences in the Falklands.

Mr. Eggar: By 1 July the Falkland Islands Government had received approximately £12·5 million from fishing licences. The Falkland Islands Government estimate that licence revenue for 1987 will be £13·5 million and receipts from trans-shipment fees £800,000. The costs of implementation of the Falkland Islands interim conservation and management zone (FICZ) are estimated at approximately £4 million for a full 12 months.

Territorial Sea Act 1987

Mr. Robert B. Jones asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the Territorial Sea Act 1987 will come into force.

Mr. Eggar: The Territorial Sea Act 1987 will come into force in respect of the United Kingdom on 1 October 1987.

BBC (World Television News)

Mr. Lester asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his statement on 13 July, *Official Report*, column *774*, when he expects to receive the British Broadcasting Corporation's revised proposal for a world television news service.

Mr. Eggar: We now understand that we can expect to receive the proposal during the latter half of August.

Overseas Students

Mr. Key asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what moves are being taken by his Department or under the auspices of his Department to encourage overseas students to study in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: We attach great importance to encouraging overseas students to come to Britain, and the numbers doing so are increasing year by year. In 1986-87 we provided over £87 million to bring 17,500 students to the United Kingdom. A quarter of all overseas students here receive some help from us.

In addition to our regular scholarship schemes, we are developing shared funding scholarships in co-operation with the universities, industry and bodies such as the British Council of Churches and the Royal Society.

We have also recently established with the Victoria League "Hosting for Overseas Students" (HOST) which

will co-ordinate hospitality for foreign students and help to make them feel welcome in this country, and to enjoy their stay here.

North Atlantic Assembly

Mr. Page asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list in the *Official Report* the United Kingdom parliamentary delegation to the North Atlantic Assembly.

Mr. Mellor: The following represent the United Kingdom at the North Atlantic Assembly:

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith MP *(Leader)*
Mr. Robert Banks MP
Mr. John Browne MP
Sir Peter Emery MP
Sir Philip Goodhart MP
Mr. Robert McCrindle MP
Sir Julian Ridsdale MP
Mr. Jerry Wiggin MP
Rt. Hon. Michael Jopling MP
Earl of Kimberley
Earl de la Warr
Dr. David Clark MP
Mr. Patrick Duffy MP
Mr. Bruce George MP
Mr. Kevin McNamara MP
Lord Ardwick
Mr. John Cartwright MP
Mr. Alan Beith MP

My hon. Friend the Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates) is a substitute member of the delegation.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Grange Precinct, Birkenhead

Mr. Frank Field asked the hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners, when he expects the Church Commissioners to enter into the partnership agreement between themselves, the Wirral council and the Shell pension fund in respect to phase 2 of the Grange precinct, Birkenhead.

Mr. Alison: The variation of the existing development agreement between themselves, the Wirral borough council and the Shell pension fund, for which terms have been agreed and which will enable this imaginative further investment in this inner city area to proceed, will be entered into as soon as the legal formalities have been completed. The Commissioners know of no reason why this should not be in the near future.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Departmental Staff

Ms. Richardson asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men employed within each grade in the Department of Trade and Industry in each year since 1979.

Mr. Butcher: The information for the Department of Trade and Industry and its predecessor Departments based on data derived from personnel records which in some cases differ from published manpower totals is as follows:

Grade level	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
1 January 1979			
Grade 1	3·0	—	3·0
Grade 2	13·0	1·0	14·0
Grade 3	61·0	2·0	63·0
Grade 4	26·0	—	26·0
Grade 5	286·0	13·0	299·0
Grade 6	222·0	10·0	232·0
Grade 7	1,209·0	81·0	1,290·0
SEO	1,098·0	71·0	1,169·0
HEO	1,663·0	290·5	1,953·5
EO	2,318·5	978·0	3,296·5
CO/AO	1,515·5	2,427·0	3,942·5
CA/AA	732·5	2,741·5	3,474·0
Obsolete Grades	66·5	357·5	424·0
Total	9,214·0	6,972·5	16,186·5
1 January 1980			
Grade 1	3·0	—	3·0
Grade 2	14·0	1·0	15·0
Grade 3	63·0	2·0	65·0
Grade 4	24·0	—	24·0
Grade 5	288·0	11·0	299·0
Grade 6	221·0	11·0	232·0
Grade 7	1,227·0	85·0	1,312·0
SEO	1,049·0	73·0	1,122·0
HEO	1,642·0	291·0	1,933·0
EO	2,272·5	980·5	3,253·0
CO/AO	1,455·5	2,299·5	3,755·0
CA/AA	701·0	2,788·0	3,489·0
Obsolete Grades	43·0	87·5	130·5
Total	9,003·0	6,629·5	15,632·5
1 January 1981			
Grade 1	3·0	—	3·0
Grade 2	13·0	1·0	14·0
Grade 3	58·0	3·0	61·0
Grade 4	25·0	—	25·0
Grade 5	292·0	10·0	302·0
Grade 6	215·0	11·0	226·0
Grade 7	1,238·5	83·0	1,321·5
SEO	1,012·5	83·5	1,096·0
HEO	1,577·0	282·5	1,859·5
EO	2,195·5	991·0	3,186·5
CO/AO	1,392·0	2,340·0	3,732·0
CA/AA	716·5	2,678·0	3,394·5
Obsolete Grades	36·0	23·5	59·5
Total	8,774·0	6,506·5	15,280·5
1 January 1982			
Grade 1	3·0	—	3·0
Grade 2	14·0	1·0	15·0
Grade 3	56·0	3·0	59·0
Grade 4	24·0	—	24·0
Grade 5	263·0	9·0	272·0
Grade 6	207·0	9·0	216·0
Grade 7	1,185·0	85·0	1,270·0
SEO	984·5	90·5	1,075·0
HEO	1,523·5	267·5	1,791·0
EO	2,117·0	960·0	3,077·0
CO/AO	1,295·0	2,193·0	3,488·0
CA/AA	706·5	2,551·0	3,257·5
Obsolete Grades	13·0	7·0	20·0
Total	8,391·5	6,176·0	14,567·5
1 January 1983			
Grade 1	3·0	—	3·0
Grade 2	12·0	1·0	13·0
Grade 3	56·0	2·0	58·0
Grade 4	23·0	—	23·0
Grade 5	255·0	9·0	264·0
Grade 6	183·0	11·0	194·0
Grade 7	1,143·5	81·5	1,225·0
SEO	939·0	88·0	1,027·0
HEO	1,472·0	254·0	1,726·0
EO	2,063·0	929·0	2,992·0

Grade level	Male	Female	Total
CO/AO	1,230·5	2,176·0	3,406·5
CA/AA	722·5	2,403·0	3,125·5
Obsolete Grades	11·0	2·0	13·0
Total	8,113·5	5,956·5	14,070·0
1 January 1984			
Grade 1	2·0	—	2·0
Grade 2	12·0	1·0	13·0
Grade 3	56·0	2·0	58·0
Grade 4	11·0	—	11·0
Grade 5	239·0	10·0	249·0
Grade 6	216·0	8·0	224·0
Grade 7	1,149·5	77·0	1,226·5
SEO	949·0	79·0	1,028·0
HEO	1,476·0	254·0	1,730·0
EO	2,041·0	914·5	2,955·5
CO/AO	1,171·0	2,118·0	3,289·0
CA/AA	715·0	2,329·0	3,044·0
Obsolete Grades	1·0	—	1·0
Total	8,038·5	5,792·5	13,831·0
1 January 1985			
Grade 1	2·0	—	2·0
Grade 2	11·0	—	11·0
Grade 3	51·0	2·0	53·0
Grade 4	8·0	—	8·0
Grade 5	205·0	12·0	217·0
Grade 6	177·0	10·0	187·0
Grade 7	985·0	76·5	1,061·5
SEO	778·0	75·0	853·0
HEO	1,298·5	249·0	1,547·5
EO	1,433·5	886·0	2,319·5
CO/AO	1,078·5	1,985·5	3,064·0
CA/AA	705·0	2,110·5	2,815·5
Obsolete Grades	—	—	—
Total	6,732·5	5,406·5	12,139·0
1 January 1986			
Grade 1	1·0	—	1·0
Grade 2	10·0	1·0	11·0
Grade 3	54·0	1·0	55·0
Grade 4	8·0	—	8·0
Grade 5	208·0	16·5	224·5
Grade 6	174·5	12·0	186·5
Grade 7	1,030·0	92·0	1,122·0
SEO	825·0	84·0	909·0
HEO	1,344·0	277·5	1,621·5
EO	1,640·5	968·5	2,609·0
CO/AO	1,094·0	2,010·5	3,104·5
CA/AA	748·0	2,037·5	2,785·5
Obsolete Grades	9·0	13·5	22·5
Total	7,146·0	5,514·0	12,660·0
1 January 1987			
Grade 1	1·0	—	1·0
Grade 2	12·0	—	12·0
Grade 3	48·0	2·0	50·0
Grade 4	9·0	—	9·0
Grade 5	201·0	13·5	214·5
Grade 6	155·0	10·0	165·0
Grade 7	980·0	85·5	1,065·5
SEO	766·0	85·0	851·0
HEO	1,430·0	297·0	1,727·0
EO	1,483·0	955·0	2,438·0
CO/AO	1,066·5	1,872·0	2,938·5
CA/AA	753·0	1,934·5	2,687·5
Obsolete Grades	1·0	—	1·0
Total	6,905·5	5,254·5	12,160·0

Credit Card Franchise Services

Sir William Clark asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what account was taken, in deciding to refer credit card franchise services to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, of the time taken by, and the results of, the earlier and similar reference.

Mr. Maude: The Director General of Fair Trading made the monopoly reference, which covers services to cardholders as well as franchise services to traders, as a direct result of his monitoring of the market following the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's 1980 report. In that report the Commission recommended that the Director General should keep the market under review, and should consider whether to make a further reference. The Director General took fully into account all the considerations set out by the Commission in its report.

Sir William Clark asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will include within the terms of reference of the recent reference of credit card franchise services to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission consideration of all credit card and storecard services.

Mr. Maude: The terms of a monopoly reference made by the Director General of Fair Trading under the provisions of the Fair Trading Act 1973 can only be varied by the Director General. The Director General has made it clear that he gave careful consideration to the question of whether to include storecard services in the reference. I understand that the Director General concluded that the Commission should focus on credit cards, which may be used in a wide variety of outlets.

Sir William Clark asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the considerations which led to the reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission by the Director General of Fair Trading on 27 May of credit card franchise services.

Mr. Maude: I understand that the Director General of Fair Trading considered that in the context of the substantial growth of widely issued cards such as Barclaycard and Access the following factors, among others, were important:

(i) the profitability of banks issuing credit cards appears to be high;

(ii) the monopoly position of the established banks found by the Commission does not appear to have been seriously challenged;

(iii) the rates charged to cardholders by Barclaycard and by the Access banks appear to have remained high in relation to the level of and movements in bank base rates.

Bankruptcies

Mr. Battle asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what has been the number of bankruptcies in businesses employing fewer than 50 people in Leeds, West constituency for each of the past five years; and in each case how many redundancies occured.

Mr. Butcher: The information that is available is given in the table. Bankruptcies cover individuals and partnerships: in England and Wales as a whole between 70 and 75 per cent. of bankruptcies are unincorporated businesses. No records are kept of the numbers of employees of unincorporated businesses declared bankrupt and no regional analysis is made of company liquidations.

Numbers of Bankruptcies in the Leeds county court 1982-86:

	Number
1982	44
1983	61
1984	72
1985	83
1986[1]	71

[1] Provisional.

Monopolies and Mergers Commission

Mr. Corbett asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has as to the average number of hours devoted by each member of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to its business in each of the past four years.

Mr. Maude: The precise information requested is not available. The chairmanship of the Commission is a full time appointment and those of the three deputy chairmen are half time. The regular members of the commission are expected to devote an average of 1½ days per week to the Commission's work.

Research (Costs)

Mr. Corbett asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the cost of funding, through the British National Space Centre, of research in the field of high technology thermoplastics polymers for space structures; and over what period funding has been provided.

Mr. Butcher: Funding of £79,222 (excluding VAT) has so far been provided through the British National Space Centre, and its predecessors, for research in the field of high technology thermoplastics polymers for space structures. This work commenced on 1 November 1984.

Cash Cards

Mr. McCrindle asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received calling for a statutory code covering the use of cash cards; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: I have received no such representations, although I understand that the idea of a statutory code for card issuers has been put forward in recent evidence to the review committee on banking services law.

Mr. McCrindle asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has any plans to seek to ban card issuers mailing unsolicited cash cards; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: I have no plans to introduce legislation to control the way in which cash cards are issued. Unsolicited mailing of credit cards is already prohibited under section 51 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974.

Birds (Imports)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of the Lancaster if he will specify by type, country of origin and quantity the birds imported into the United Kingdom in each of the past five years; and how many birds were dead on arrival in the United Kingom.

Mr. Alan Clark: Information on species imported into the United Kingdom for each of the past five years, as identified within the Overseas Trades Statistics, is in the following tables. For information on imports of controlled species imported into the United Kingdom, I refer the hon. Member to the annual reports for the years 1982 to 1984, published by the Department of the Environment, on the "Implementation in the United Kingdom of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna", copies of which are in the Library. Information on the number of birds dead on arrival in the United Kingdom is not available.

United Kingdom imports of live birds—1982 to 1986: Numbers

Country of origin	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
TTCN: 0105 2000: Turkeys and geese not exceeding 185 grammes in weight					
Total imports	174,343	220,089	294,513	302,989	439,295
of which:					
Irish Republic	163,343	204,989	272,513	265,239	395,441
Denmark	11,000	500	9,400	19,550	21,754
USA	—	14,600	12,600	18,200	19,600
Canada	—	—	—	—	2,500
TTCN: 0105 3010: Day old chicks					
Total imports	1,070,824	978,826	1,572,989	2,184,386	2,378,995
of which:					
Irish Republic	884,789	916,281	1,300,404	2,045,824	2,278,569
USA	56,581	4,000	38,173	48,198	38,288
Netherlands	48,626	20,785	19,810	21,990	4,880
Canada	41,600	22,110	35,210	41,199	34,860
France	14,620	15,650	35,925	20,175	18,450
Denmark	12,000	—	134,211	7,000	3,948
TTCN: 0105 3099: other					
Total imports	261,580	633,627	667,967	746,017	848,283
of which:					

Country of origin	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Denmark	249,850	621,420	629,915	727,297	811,406
Irish Republic	7,600	12,207	29,400	9,000	24,665
USA	—	—	3,060	9,720	12,212
France	—	—	5,592	—	—
TTCN: 0105 9100: Fowls					
Total imports	229,884	231,206	319,980	566,607	743,820
of which:					
Irish Republic	229,772	231,206	319,980	566,607	743,820
USA	112	—	—	—	—
TTCN: 0105 9300: Ducks					
Total imports	10,350	No trade	No trade	No trade	No trade
of which:					
Denmark	10,350	—	—	—	—
TTCN: 0105 9500: Geese					
Total imports of which:	No trade	No trade	No trade	No trade	No trade
TTCN: 0105 9700: Turkeys					
Total imports	1,800	12,285	12,124	9,479	36,410
of which:					
Irish Republic	1,800	12,285	12,124	9,479	33,410
F.R. Germany	—	—	—	—	3,000
TTCN: 0105 9800: Guinea fowls					
Total imports	24	No trade	No trade	No trade	No trade
of which:					
Tanzania	24	—	—	—	—
TTCN: 0106 3000: Pigeons					
Total imports	4,877	10,936	9,759	5,032	5,902
of which:					
USA	2,406	54	—	6	20
Belgium/Luxembourg	1,733	2,335	2,844	3,499	2,802
Netherlands	554	468	815	1,346	1,690
F.R. Germany	110	79	—	160	365
France	74	—	—	—	60
Irish Republic	—	8,000	—	—	—
Italy	—	—	113	—	—
TTCN: 0106 9920: Birds not elsewhere specified					
Total imports	214,065	293,264	87,365	193,753	188,598
of which:					
Senegal	85,790	168,880	45,399	97,310	88,338
Netherlands	40,830	7,912	977	3,644	1,271
Belgium/Luxembourg	29,631	12,538	14,108	13,147	15,858
Tanzania	12,265	25,231	6,452	25,509	26,043
Singapore	10,533	7,843	—	—	2
Taiwan	2,360	14,528	—	—	—
Hong Kong	4,595	14,044	7,248	15,097	7,448
Guyana	2,338	3,037	3,062	1,086	1,518
Malaysia	—	2,836	—	8,235	—
India	6,559	6,154	2,310	1,484	9,231
Indonesia	1,619	6,716	2,087	2,809	8,544

Note TTCN = United Kingdom tariff and trade classification number. 1986 figures are provisional.
Source: Overseas Trade Statistics.

South Africa

Mr. Cohen asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will outline the actions taken by Her Majesty's Government to implement the voluntary ban on new investment in South Africa, as agreed by the Prime

Minister at the Commonwealth review meeting in August 1986; and whether any mechanisms have been established to monitor this voluntary ban.

Mr. Alan Clark: My right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry wrote to the Chairman of the CBI, the British Industry Committee on South Africa and the United Kingdom South Africa Trade Association asking them to urge their members to comply with the voluntary ban on new investment in South Africa, the implementation of which was announced on 30 October 1986. In addition, officials of this Department wrote to companies identified as having interests in South Africa to draw their attention to this measure. The ban was also widely reported in the press.

No mechanism has been established to monitor this voluntary ban.

Mr. Cabom asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will take steps to extend the voluntary ban on new investment in South Africa to include new investment in Namibia.

Mr. Alan Clark: No.

Development Area Status (Reviews)

Mr. Foulkes asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list all occasions on which there have been general reviews of development area status and any changes to the status of particular areas between the reviews in each case.

Mr. Atkins: Development areas were designated under the Distribution of Industry Act 1945. Since then, several general reviews have taken place, the two most recent being in 1979 and 1984. Details of changes in the status of particular areas between these most recent reviews are set out in the following statutory instruments which can be found in the House of Commons Library:

1. 1979 No. 1642 Industrial Development: The Assisted Areas (Amendment) Order 1979.
2. 1980 No. 1110 Industrial Development: The Assisted Areas (Amendment) Order 1980.
3. 1982 No. 934 Industrial Development: The Assisted Areas (Amendment) Order 1982.

"Today" (Takeover)

Mr. Fisher asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will deposit in the Library a memorandum of the financial and other material upon which he formed his judgment not to refer the takeover of the *Today* newspaper to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke [*pursuant to his reply*, 9 July 1987, c *272*]: The material in question has now been deposited in the Library.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Departmental Staff

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men employed within each grade in his Department in each year since 1979.

Mrs. Rumbold: This information is given in the table. The numbers shown include Her Majesty's Inspectorate. The data derive from personnel records and relates to 1 January each year; there are some differences from published manpower totals which are calculated as at 1 April.

Number[1] of male and female staff[2] employed 1979 to 1987[3]

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
Grade 1[4]									
Male	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Grade 2									
Male	5	5	4	4	3	3	4	4	4
Female	1	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	—
Grade 3									
Male	15	16	14	11	14	13	13	13	12
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Grade 4									
Male	5	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7
Female	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Grade 5									
Male	109	112	108	104	102	85	93	92	95
Female	9	10	11	7	8	10	12	13	15
Grade 6									
Male	274	287	282	271	261	278	300	320	311
Female	71	76	75	68	62	65	73	88	92
Grade 7									
Male	131	129	124	108	115	109	108	102	102
Female	25	20	28	31	32	29	32	28	30
SEO									
Male	65	65	73	65	62	60	66	58	64
Female	23	23	23	20	24	24	22	22	20

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
HEO									
Male	191	179	178	162	168	155	151	149	145
Female	67	69	73	73	68	79	79	89	92
EO									
Male	202	206	196	180	168	167	177	171	168
Female	202	194	195	193	188	177	185	181	178
AO									
Male	191	169	161	156	139	149	149	131	129
Female	488	455	447	432	449	428	425	409	400
AA									
Male	123	121	117	107	104	107	111	111	108
Female	446	512	514	483	460	456	455	432	426
(OG)									
Male	46	37	3	1	—	—	—	—	—
Female	106	33	6	0	—	—	—	—	—

[1] Totals shown have been rounded down to nearest full number.
[2] Numbers shown include broadly equivalent grades based on comparative salary scales. These are: Grades 1 to 7 (Open Structure), Senior Executive Officer, Higher Executive Officer, Executive Officer, Administrative Officer, Administrative Assistant, plus obsolete grades (OG).
[3] Staff in post as at 1 January each year.
[4] Includes the chairman of the University Grants Committee.

General Certificate of Secondary Education Examination

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he is satisfied that the city of Birmingham local education authority has complete guidance from general certificate of secondary education examining boards about introducing the new system of examinations from September.

Mrs. Rumbold: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) in which subjects textbooks have *(a)* been issued and *(b)* not been issued in support of the new general certificate of secondary education system of national examinations;

(2) whether he will list those general certificate of secondary education examining boards which have completed work and issued the results on the mode of attendance and assessment, syllabuses, textbooks and staff training ready for the start of the new scheme in September;

(3) whether he will list those general certificate of secondary education examining boards which have yet to agree and issue examination syllabuses; and when he expects textbooks in support of them to be available.

Mrs. Rumbold: A wide choice of GCSE syllabuses in the 20 main subjects have been available in schools for over a year. The GCSE examining groups have continued to produce further syllabuses, including additional choices for mature students who will begin their first GCSE courses this September.

The GCSE does not call for the wholesale replacement of textbooks; the need is rather for these to be supplemented and updated over time. The GCSE groups have given the Educational Publishers Council every assistance to enable a full range of GCSE textbooks to be produced, and many have already been published. The Government are continuing to provide substantial resources to enable the purchase of additional books for the GCSE.

Introductory in-service training for GCSE was completed in 1986. This year and next, further training continues for teachers in schools and further education, supported by Government as a national priority.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he is satisfied that regulations drawn up by general certificate of secondary education examining boards are compatible where schools enter students for two or more board examinations.

Mrs. Rumbold: The GCSE examining groups have themselves established a joint council to consider such matters of common concern. I look to the joint council to ensure compatability in arrangements so that schools may exercise freedom of choice of syllabus.

School Meals and Transport

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will estimate the cost of extending free school meals to all pupils in primary schools, to all pupils in secondary schools and to all pupils in special schools.

Mr. Dunn: The additional cost of providing free school meals for all pupils in maintained schools is estimated to be about £600 million. It is not possible to give separate figures for each sector.

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will publish a table showing the amount spent by local authorities on *(a)* school transport and *(b)* school meals in the latest year for which figures are available; and what are the comparable figures for each year since 1978-79 in cash terms and real terms using 1986-87 prices and using an index of 100 for 1978-79.

Mr. Dunn: The information requested is as follows:

	School transport			School meals		
	Cash terms £ million	Real terms £ million	Index £ million	Cash terms £ million	Real terms £ million	Index
1978-79	109·8	213·5	100	376·0	731·0	100
1979-80	126·3	210·2	98	409·2	680·8	93
1980-81	149·7	210·0	98	391·2	548·7	75
1981-82	159·2	203·3	95	391·1	499·5	68
1982-83	168·1	200·2	94	411·3	489·8	67
1983-84	177·1	201·9	95	426·6	486·3	67
1984-85	179·3	196·0	92	431·7	471·9	65
1985-86	187·4	193·0	90	434·9	448·0	61

Note The cash figures have been repriced to 1986-87 real terms using the gross domestic product (market prices) deflator.

School Books and Equipment

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the latest figure for expenditure per pupil on books and on equipment in *(a)* primary schools, *(b)* secondary schools and *(c)* special schools; and what are the comparable figures for each of the years since 1978-79, in cash terms and real terms using 1986-87 prices and using an index of 100 for 1978-79.

Mr. Dunn: The information requested is as follows:

	Books			Equipment		
	Cash terms (£)	Real terms (£)	Index	Cash terms (£)	Real terms (£)	Index
(a) Primary schools						
1978-79	4·3	8·3	100	8·6	16·7	100
1979-80	4·7	7·8	94	9·7	16·1	96
1980-81	5·3	7·5	90	10·7	15·0	90
1981-82	5·9	7·5	91	12·3	15·6	94
1982-83	7·0	8·3	101	13·9	16·6	99
1983-84	7·1	8·1	99	15·7	17·8	107
1984-85	7·1	8·0	96	16·3	17·8	106
1985-86	7·5	7·7	93	17·4	17·9	107
(b) Secondary schools						
1978-79	7·2	13·9	100	17·2	33·5	100
1979-80	7·8	13·0	93	18·8	31·3	93
1980-81	8·1	11·3	81	21·2	29·7	89
1981-82	8·6	11·0	79	23·6	30·1	90
1982-83	9·9	11·8	85	26·7	31·7	95
1983-84	10·1	11·5	83	29·1	33·2	99
1984-85	10·2	11·1	80	32·4	35·4	106
1985-86	10·7	11·0	79	34·2	35·2	105
(c) Special schools						
1978-79	6·0	11·6	100	31·3	60·9	100
1979-80	6·7	11·2	97	35·1	58·3	96
1980-81	6·9	9·7	84	39·8	55·9	92
1981-82	7·1	9·0	78	44·0	56·1	92
1982-83	8·7	10·3	89	52·4	62·3	102
1983-84	8·7	9·9	86	59·6	67·9	111
1984-85	9·1	10·0	86	61·3	67·0	110
1985-86	11·5	11·8	102	77·4	79·7	131

Note:
The cash figures have been repriced to 1986-87 real terms using the gross domestic product (market prices) deflator.

Mrs. Suzana Caine

Mr. Jessel asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he intends to validate the teaching application of Mrs. Suzana Caine.

Mrs. Rumbold: Mrs. Caine has been notified today that she is a qualified teacher.

National Curriculum

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what assessment he has made of the problems for special education caused by proposals for a national curriculum framework; and what methods are to be used to monitor individual progress at the ages of seven, 11 and 14 years of age for children with special educational needs.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend is shortly to issue a consultation document on his proposal for the national curriculum. Copies of that document will be placed in the Library. My right hon. Friend is aware of the need to pay close attention to the implications of those proposals for children with special educational needs, and he will be giving careful consideration to the comments he receives on his proposals from organisations with particular concerns for such pupils.

Special Education

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he plans to undertake a study of the Education Act 1981 procedures in the pre-school period in consultation with local education authorities;

(2) what is his policy towards the allocation of teaching time in primary and secondary school staffing ratios to meet the wider range of special educational needs;

(3) if he intends to create a national advisory committee for special educational needs;

(4) if he intends to issue national guidance on the statutory provision of special education in general terms under the Education Act 1981.

Mr. Dunn: I refer the hon. Member to the answer which I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Exeter (Mr. Hannam) on 10 July 1987, at column 283.

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* of information available to him showing expenditure on special educational provision, the number of children with special educational needs and the percentage of children with special educational needs in ordinary schools for each country in the Council of Europe for the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Dunn: The limited information available to the Department on this subject is not fully comparable between countries. It would therefore be misleading to show such a table in the *Official Report*. I shall write to the hon. Member with details.

Initial Teacher Training

Mr. Morgan asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what are the criteria on which the University Grants Committee bases its closure proposals for initial teacher training at university education faculties; whether the criteria differ as between England and Wales; and what account they take of faculties of education which have received high commendations from Her Majesty's inspectors in the relevant specialism.

Mr. Jackson: The recommendations adopted by the University Grants Committee for initial teacher training in Wales are based on a detailed study undertaken by a joint working group of the UGC and the Wales Advisory Body for Local Authority Higher Education. The proposals are intended to produce strong and well-resourced centres of teaching and research; detailed plans will now be developed in collaboration with the WAB and in consultation with the institutions concerned. The criteria employed draw not only on reports of Her Majesty's inspectors, but also on the research and recruitment record of institutions, and on the working group's own visits to all the centres of initial teacher training in Wales. No comparable exercise has been conducted in England.

11-plus Selection

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list those local education authorities which still retain selection at the age of 11 years.

Mr. Dunn: The following are those LEAs which at June 1987 maintained one or more grammar schools with selection at age 11 or 12.

Barnet
Bexley
Bromley
Enfield
Kingston upon Thames
Redbridge
Sutton
Birmingham
Wallsall
Wolverhampton
Wirral
Trafford
Calderdale
Kirklees
Avon
Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Devon
Dorset
Essex
Gloucestershire
Kent
Lancashire
Lincolnshire
North Yorkshire
Salop
Warwickshire
Wiltshire

Core Curriculum

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science by what date a core curriculum in secondary education will begin to be introduced; by what date it is expected to be fully implemented; and which subjects will be included.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend intends to issue a consultation document shortly containing his proposals on all these matters. I shall arrange for a copy to be sent to the hon. Member.

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he had to introduce a core curriculum in CTCs; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: City technology colleges will be required as a condition of grant to implement the substance of the national curriculum. This will give CTCs, like maintained schools, enough flexibility to put a special emphasis on science and technology and to develop or experiment with new approaches.

Class Sizes

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what are the average sizes in each of the local education authorities for primary and secondary classes for each of the past three years.

Mr. Dunn: The information requested for maintained primary and secondary schools for each local education authority in England for each of the past three years is given in the following table. The average class sizes relate to classes taught by one teacher on a selected period on the day of the census count in January of each year and may not, therefore, be representative of the pattern of classes over the academic year as a whole.

Average Class sizes in maintained Primary and Secondary schools, January each year.

	Primary			*Secondary*		
	1984	*1985*	*1986*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Barking	24·0	23·7	23·9	19·8	19·4	19·9
Barnet	22·5	22·6	23·4	18·2	18·5	18·4
Bexley	27·1	25·9	26·3	20·8	20·5	20·5
Brent	21·1	21·9	22·8	17·5	17·3	16·8
Bromley	25·8	26·2	26·3	19·6	19·8	20·1
Croydon	24·8	24·3	25·6	19·9	20·5	19·7
Ealing	22·4	22·9	23·7	19·1	19·3	18·5
Enfield	25·4	25·5	26·8	19·5	19·1	19·7
Haringey	21·9	22·0	22·0	18·5	18·2	17·8
Harrow	23·9	24·1	24·8	18·6	19·3	19·3
Havering	25·7	25·6	25·8	19·4	20·1	19·3
Hillingdon	25·0	25·5	25·7	19·8	19·6	20·6
Hounslow	22·2	22·7	24·3	18·9	19·5	19·7
Kingston upon Thames	24·8	24·6	25·1	20·0	19·9	18·8
Merton	24·6	24·1	25·4	21·6	20·9	21·4

	Primary			Secondary		
	1984	1985	1986	1984	1985	1986
Newham	23·6	23·5	24·0	19·5	19·5	19·0
Redbridge	25·4	25·9	27·0	19·8	19·5	20·5
Richmond Upon Thames	23·6	24·7	24·6	21·3	21·6	20·9
Sutton	27·2	26·9	27·7	20·8	20·5	20·9
Waltham Forest	23·6	24·0	25·0	18·1	18·0	18·5
Birmingham	25·7	25·8	26·6	21·3	21·3	21·5
Coventry	25·2	25·6	25·6	21·5	20·8	20·7
Dudley	24·8	24·8	25·4	20·1	19·6	19·6
Sandwell	24·7	24·2	24·8	20·1	19·6	19·3
Solihull	25·5	25·7	26·0	21·4	20·9	20·8
Walsall	22·0	21·8	22·7	18·9	19·0	18·8
Wolverhampton	21·1	21·3	22·8	19·6	19·2	19·3
Knowsley	24·8	24·8	25·0	20·1	19·4	19·3
Liverpool	23·8	23·7	23·8	20·4	20·5	20·1
St. Helens	25·1	24·7	25·8	20·3	20·1	19·4
Sefton	25·4	25·9	26·5	20·6	20·8	20·9
Wirall	25·4	26·4	26·9	20·3	20·0	20·4
Bolton	26·5	26·6	27·6	21·0	20·6	20·2
Bury	25·0	24·7	25·7	20·3	19·6	20·2
Manchester	25·0	24·7	25·2	19·6	19·4	19·2
Oldham	25·5	25·5	27·0	21·3	20·7	20·4
Rochdale	24·9	25·3	26·6	19·2	19·6	19·6
Salford	23·8	24·0	24·4	19·8	19·4	19·7
Stockport	26·3	26·2	26·4	20·6	20·2	20·4
Tameside	25·9	25·6	26·6	19·7	20·2	19·7
Trafford	25·2	25·6	26·3	20·5	21·0	20·8
Wigan	24·6	24·8	25·5	20·3	20·1	19·9
Barnsley	23·8	23·8	24·5	20·6	20·4	19·9
Doncaster	23·2	23·7	24·6	20·8	21·2	21·1
Rotheram	24·6	24·5	24·6	20·7	20·7	20·3
Sheffield	23·0	22·8	23·8	20·4	20·0	19·9
Bradford	23·7	24·3	25·4	21·4	20·9	20·7
Calderdale	23·9	24·7	25·0	20·9	20·2	20·5
Kirklees	25·1	24·4	25·2	20·9	20·4	20·1
Leeds	25·3	25·2	25·5	20·7	20·4	20·3
Wakefield	24·6	24·4	25·2	21·1	20·9	20·4
Gateshead	21·6	21·6	22·7	19·6	19·7	19·8
Newcastle Upon Tyne	21·0	22·5	23·9	18·9	19·0	18·8
North Tyneside	20·7	21·1	20·6	18·3	18·4	18·1
South Tyneside	23·0	23·4	23·4	19·6	18·4	19·1
Sunderland	24·3	24·3	24·4	20·5	19·7	19·4
Inner London	20·4	20·6	21·8	18·3	18·4	18·6
Avon	26·9	27·3	28·0	20·8	21·1	21·1
Bedfordshire	25·5	25·3	25·5	21·4	21·2	21·7
Berkshire	25·8	25·8	26·6	20·1	20·0	19·9
Buckinghamshire	26·5	26·7	27·6	19·9	20·1	20·0
Cambridgeshire	26·1	25·9	26·4	20·9	21·2	20·9
Cheshire	25·6	25·8	26·4	20·7	20·9	21·2
Cleveland	24·5	24·5	25·4	20·3	20·5	20·3
Cornwall	25·6	25·4	25·7	21·0	20·8	20·6
Cumbria	23·0	23·2	23·8	19·5	19·8	19·4
Derbyshire	24·7	25·0	25·3	21·0	21·1	20·8
Devon	25·5	25·8	26·1	21·4	21·3	21·4
Dorset	26·1	26·5	26·6	21·1	21·1	20·9
Durham	24·9	25·1	25·7	21·2	21·1	20·8
East Sussex	24·6	25·8	26·3	21·1	20·6	21·0
Essex	26·5	26·6	27·1	21·1	21·3	21·1
Gloucestershire	25·5	25·7	26·1	20·9	20·5	20·7
Hampshire	26·9	27·1	26·9	21·3	21·4	21·1
Hereford and Worcester	26·8	25·9	25·9	21·2	21·0	20·9
Hertfordshire	25·0	24·9	25·6	19·4	19·5	19·6
Humberside	23·3	23·6	24·3	20·0	20·3	19·9
Isle of Wight	26·1	26·3	27·2	21·1	21·2	21·8
Kent	27·0	27·0	27·1	20·9	21·1	20·9
Lancashire	25·9	26·5	26·9	20·8	21·1	20·8
Leicestershire	24·2	24·7	25·4	20·5	20·7	20·5
Lincolnshire	26·0	26·5	27·0	20·4	21·0	20·9
Norfolk	24·3	24·0	24·8	20·6	20·7	20·5
North Yorkshire	23·9	24·2	24·6	20·3	20·8	20·9
Northamptonshire	24·3	24·5	25·2	20·3	20·1	20·0
Northumberland	25·4	25·4	25·1	21·2	21·1	20·7
Nottinghamshire	23·6	23·7	24·6	20·0	20·0	19·5
Oxfordshire	26·4	26·5	26·2	20·9	20·7	21·0
Salop	23·5	23·7	24·3	20·0	19·9	20·0
Somerset	26·6	27·2	27·1	22·0	22·2	21·9
Staffordshire	24·1	24·2	25·3	20·6	20·7	20·8

	Primary			Secondary		
	1984	1985	1986	1984	1985	1986
Suffolk	23·9	23·9	24·6	20·8	21·0	21·1
Surrey	25·1	25·0	25·2	19·7	20·2	19·9
Warwickshire	25·1	25·3	26·2	20·8	21·1	20·9
West Sussex	25·9	26·1	26·2	20·8	21·1	20·5
Wiltshire	25·8	25·8	25·6	20·8	21·1	21·4

Tertiary Education

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list those local education authorities where tertiary education has been approved by his Department under sections 12 to 15 of the Education Act 1980; and what is the number of students involved.

Mr. Dunn: The table shows the local education authorities whose proposals under sections 12 to 15 of the Education Act 1980 involving the establishment of tertiary colleges for all or part of the authority's area have been approved by my right hon. Friend or his predecessors, the colleges involved, and the number of FTE students on roll at November 1986.

Established at September

Local education authority	*College*	*Number on roll*[1]
1982		
Dudley	Halesowen	1,642
1983		
Hampshire	Alton	845
Lancashire	Runshaw	1,659
1984		
Durham	Peterlee	857
Essex	Harlow	1,840
Hampshire	Fareham	1,768
Hampshire	Brockenhurst	1,031
Knowsley	Huyton/Prescot	1,158
Lancashire	Blackburn	3,300
Lancashire	Skelmersdale	869
North Yorkshire	Selby	750
Wolverhampton	Bilston	2,248
1985		
Dorset	Portland and Weymouth	1,568
Gloucestershire	Forest of Dean	787
1986		
Durham	Derwentside	628
Staffordshire	Newcastle under Lyme	1,021
Manchester	North Manchester	2,575
Manchester	South Manchester	2,996
Cambridgeshire	Isle College	n/a
Opening in 1987		
Harrow	3 colleges	
Bury	1 college	
Kirklees	1 college	
Oxfordshire	1 college	
Opening in 1989		
South Tyneside	1 college	
Sunderland	2 colleges	
Sheffield	6 colleges	

[1] FTE at November 1986.

Educational Achievements

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the percentage of pupils obtaining in 1985-86 five or more O-level passes by local education authority, and the number obtaining two or more A-level passes, by local education authority.

Mr. Dunn: The proportions of English maintained school leavers achieving the requested CSE/GCE qualification are as follows:

Leavers from Maintained Schools
Numbers and percentage achieving 5 or more Higher grade (1) passes at GCE O level or CSE and 2 or more A level passes.
Data averaged over the academic years 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86

	5 or more Higher grade[1] *passes*		*2 or more A level passes*	
	(000s)	*per cent.*	*(000s)*	*per cent.*
Barking	0·22	9·8	0·11	4·7
Barnet	1·40	39·9	0·83	23·6
Bexley	0·98	26·9	0·46	12·6
Brent	0·53	18·0	0·31	10·4
Bromley	1·15	30·2	0·58	15·3
Croydon	1·08	24·8	0·49	11·2
Ealing	0·66	19·9	0·33	10·1
Enfield	0·90	24·3	0·498	13·4
Haringey	0·36	17·0	0·16	7·6
Harrow	0·91	29·0	0·52	22·5
Havering	1·02	26·3	0·49	12·6
Hillingdon	0·72	22·8	0·32	10·1
Hounslow	0·60	20·9	0·30	10·3
Kingston-upon-Thames	0·61	35·8	0·27	15·7
Merton	0·54	26·1	0·25	12·2
Newham	0·36	11·7	0·12	3·8
Redbridge	0·69	25·3	0·36	13·2
Richmond-upon-Thames	0·33	24·0	—	—
Sutton	0·69	31·3	0·41	18·8

	5 or more Higher grade[1] passes		2 or more A level passes	
	(000s)	per cent.	(000s)	per cent.
Waltham Forest	0·38	13·7	0·19	6·7
ILEA	3·98	15·5	1·93	7·5
Birmingham	3·03	18·4	1·38	8·4
Coventry	0·99	19·4	0·44	8·5
Dudley	1·05	21·5	0·37	7·6
Sandwell	0·69	13·6	0·26	5·1
Solihull	1·07	28·9	0·59	16·0
Walsall	0·93	18·5	0·51	10·1
Wolverhampton	0·68	15·4	0·32	7·3
Knowsley	0·35	12·1	0·14	4·8
Liverpool	1·26	17·3	0·65	8·9
St. Helens	0·77	23·9	0·33	10·4
Sefton	1·26	27·9	0·75	16·6
Wirral	1·23	24·7	0·61	12·3
Bolton	1·09	25·5	0·56	13·0
Bury	0·66	24·8	0·36	13·4
Manchester	1·39	18·2	0·70	9·2
Oldham	0·59	17·8	0·23	6·8
Rochdale	0·65	20·9	0·25	8·2
Salford	0·72	18·7	0·37	9·6
Stockport	1·14	26·2	0·65	14·9
Tameside	0·93	23·7	0·34	8·6
Trafford	0·93	30·6	0·43	14·1
Wigan	1·53	25·9	0·46	7·7
Barnsley	0·56	15·0	0·23	6·2
Doncaster	0·87	19·1	0·44	9·6
Rotherham	0·86	18·5	0·44	9·6
Sheffield	1·67	19·7	0·90	10·6
Bradford	1·31	17·3	0·65	8·6
Calderdale	0·61	19·8	0·30	9·8
Kirklees	1·44	23·2	0·69	11·1
Leeds	2·33	22·3	1·25	12·0
Wakefield	0·74	13·5	0·24	4·3
Gateshead	0·61	18·8	0·23	7·2
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	0·66	18·2	0·32	9·0
North Tyneside	0·64	22·6	0·29	10·3
South Tyneside	0·53	20·2	0·20	7·8
Sunderland	0·96	19·4	0·34	7·0
Avon	3·18	25·0	1·51	11·9
Bedfordshire	1·93	24·9	0·92	11·9
Berkshire	2·67	27·3	1·42	14·5
Buckinghamshire	2·69	31·9	1·39	16·5
Cambridgeshire	2·03	25·2	0·86	10·7
Cheshire	3·95	26·6	2·05	13·8
Cleveland	2·65	26·4	1·24	12·3
Cornwall	1·68	25·0	0·73	10·8
Cumbria	1·66	23·1	0·83	11·5
Derbyshire	3·19	22·1	1·34	9·3
Devon	3·09	23·9	1·10	8·5
Dorset	2·48	29·0	1·00	11·7
Durham	1·86	19·6	0·81	8·5
East Sussex	2·13	27·5	1·08	14·0
Essex	5·86	26·1	2·60	11·5
Gloucestershire	2·01	27·5	0·93	12·7
Hampshire	5·86	25·9	2·31	10·2
Hereford and Worcester	2·36	25·5	1·12	12·1
Hertfordshire	4·37	29·2	2·27	15·1
Humberside	2·91	21·0	1·40	10·1
Isle of Wight	0·33	19·5	0·15	8·9
Kent	6·21	27·5	3·20	14·8
Lancashire	5·23	24·9	1·69	8·0
Leicestershire	2·93	22·5	1·74	13·4
Lincolnshire	1·99	24·3	0·93	11·4
Norfolk	2·41	22·8	0·92	8·7
North Yorkshire	3·19	32·8	1·64	16·9
Northamptonshire	1·91	21·6	0·91	10·3
Northumberland	1·29	29·3	0·66	15·1
Nottinghamshire	3·06	19·1	1·50	9·4
Oxfordshire	2·14	27·3	1·13	14·4
Shropshire	1·64	25·9	0·72	11·3
Somerset	1·33	22·3	0·44	7·3
Staffordshire	3·80	23·5	1·81	11·2
Suffolk	1·91	22·2	0·91	10·6
Surrey	4·24	32·9	2·20	17·1
Warwickshire	1·99	27·5	0·93	12·9

	5 or more Higher grade[1] passes		2 or more A level passes	
	(000s)	per cent.	(000s)	per cent.
West Sussex	2·84	31·5	1·34	14·9
Wiltshire	1·73	23·6	0·71	9·6
Total England	163·55	23·7	76·58	11·1

Source: School leavers sample survey.
Data subject to sampling error.
[1]O level grades A-C, CSE grade 1.

16 and 17-year-olds

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the total number of pupils remaining in education after *(a)* 16 years and *(b)* 17 years but under the age of 19 years, in each local education authority in England, for the latest date available; and what was the amount granted in discretionary awards by each local education authority.

Mr. Dunn: The available information is given in the following table. Expenditure is not collected by students' age, but practically all lesser-value awards are for students aged under 19. Student numbers have been given for 16 and 17-year-olds in full time education at school and in non-advanced further education. Figures for 18-year-olds are not readily available.

Expenditure on Lesser Value Discretionary Awards and full time student numbers by LEA: Academic Year 1985-86

	Academic Year 1985-86		
	Expenditure on Lesser Value Discretionary Awards	Persons in full-time education[1]	
		16-year-olds	17-year-olds
	(£000)	(thousands)	(thousands)
Barking	148·3	0·7	0·3
Barnet	19·7	2·3	1·7
Bexley	37·6	1·6	1·0
Brent	22·4	1·7	1·3
Bromley	28·4	1·9	1·2
Croydon	206·6	2·1	1·3
Ealing	263·8	1·8	1·2
Enfield	136·4	1·8	1·2
Haringey	194·1	1·3	0·9
Harrow	16·8	1·6	1·1
Havering	182·8	1·6	1·0
Hillingdon	37·1	1·4	0·8
Hounslow	29·0	1·5	0·9
Kingston upon Thames	19·2	0·9	0·6
Merton	47·3	1·1	0·7
Newham	194·7	1·4	0·9
Redbridge	31·1	1·4	1·1
Richmond upon Thames	33·6	0·8	0·5
Sutton	41·7	1·2	0·8
Waltham Forest	267·1	1·4	0·9
Inner London[2]	..	11·3	7·0
Birmingham[2]	..	6·8	4·4
Coventry	155·0	2·1	1·4
Dudley	161·3	2·1	1·4
Sandwell	46·3	1·8	1·1
Solihull	2·5	1·7	1·2
Walsall	316·6	1·7	1·2
Wolverhampton	0·0	1·9	1·1
Knowsley	114·1	1·0	0·5
Liverpool	1,340·8	3·1	2·0
St. Helens	209·5	1·3	0·9
Sefton	11·3	2·5	1·7
Wirral	200·9	2·4	1·6
Bolton	421·4	1·6	1·3
Bury	251·0	1·3	1·0
Manchester	712·6	2·8	2·0
Oldham	406·6	1·2	0·8
Rochdale	143·2	1·2	0·9
Salford	223·3	1·5	1·0
Stockport	202·9	2·0	1·5
Tameside	102·4	1·2	0·9
Trafford	192·4	1·3	1·1
Wigan	549·3	2·4	1·7
Barnsley	167·6	1·4	0·8
Doncaster	16·6	1·6	1·2
Rotherham	234·4	1·6	1·1
Sheffield	851·3	3·6	2·2
Bradford	98·8	2·8	1·7
Calderdale	49·6	1·3	0·8
Kirklees	496·4	2·7	1·8
Leeds	461·6	4·4	2·7
Wakefield	180·1	2·0	1·2
Gateshead	139·7	0·9	0·7
Newcastle upon Tyne	175·3	1·3	0·9
North Tyneside	282·1	1·2	0·8
South Tyneside	210·3	0·8	0·6
Sunderland	279·6	1·6	1·0
Isles of Scilly	31·7	0·0	0·0
Avon	756·0	5·8	3·7
Bedfordshire	956·9	3·6	2·2
Berkshire	136·2	5·2	3·5
Buckinghamshire	133·6	4·4	3·3
Cambridgeshire	1·8	3·9	2·7
Cheshire	0·0	6·8	5·0
Cleveland	293·4	4·1	2·6
Cornwall	655·1	3·4	2·2
Cumbria	565·5	3·0	1·9
Derbyshire	1,624·9	6·2	4·1
Devon	374·4	6·5	4·2
Dorset	291·9	3·6	2·6
Durham	318·1	3·4	2·3
East Sussex	651·3	4·0	2·8
Essex	2,265·4	9·2	6·2
Gloucestershire	514·1	3·3	2·2
Hampshire	3,031·0	10·6	7·1
Hereford and Worcester	0·0	4·4	3·0
Hertfordshire	523·2	7·8	5·1
Humberside	1,014·2	5·5	3·4
Isle of Wight	47·2	0·8	0·5
Kent	425·5	10·6	7·0
Lancashire	1,515·8	8·5	6·2
Leicestershire	312·8	6·1	4·2
Lincolnshire	131·2	3·8	2·5
Norfolk	653·9	4·1	2·7

	Academic Year 1985-86		
	Expenditure on Lesser Value Discretionary Awards	Persons in full-time education[1]	
		16-year-olds	17-year-olds
	(£000)	(thousands)	(thousands)
North Yorkshire	913·9	5·1	3·7
Northamptonshire	53·3	3·6	2·3
Northumberland	528·5	2·0	1·3
Nottinghamshire	1,200·7	5·9	4·0
Oxfordshire	0·0	3·8	2·4
Salop	101·0	2·8	1·9
Somerset	29·6	3·0	1·9
Staffordshire	269·4	6·8	4·5
Suffolk	89·2	3·3	2·1
Surrey	135·8	6·9	5·1
Warwickshire	50·1	3·7	2·5
West Sussex	201·0	4·5	3·1
Wiltshire	245·4	3·7	2·4

[1] Including some sandwich students.
[2] These authorities made no return on their lesser-value discretionary awards for 1985-86.

Foreign Nationals

Mr. Key asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list *(a)* the number of foreign nationals who have studied in Britain from 1979 to 1987 inclusive and *(b)* the cost per annum in real terms to the United Kingdom.

Mr. Jackson: Information is available only for students whose normal domicile is outside the United Kingdom and who were attending full-time and sandwich courses at further and higher education establishments in Great Britain. This information is as follows for the years asked for (statistics for 1986 are provisional, and data for 1987 are not yet available):

	Thousands
1979	85·3
1980	75·0
1981	64·3
1982	56·6
1983	55·4
1984	55·5
1985	62·7
1986	67·2

Apart from students from European Community countries and students supported under one of the Government awards schemes, all have been expected since 1980 to pay fees at a level which reflects the full cost of tuition and avoids subsidy by the British taxpayer.

Inner London Education Authority

Mr. Harry Greenway asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what expenditure level he proposes to determine for the Inner London education authority in respect of 1988-89.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1985 the Inner London education authorirty is automatically subject to designation under part I of the Rates Act 1984 for three years from 1 April 1986. For the year beginning 1 April 1988 have decided to determine an expenditure levell of £955 million; this represents a cash standstill on the implied expenditure level for 1987-88, plus allowance for the cost in a full year of the 1987 school teachers' pay settlement. The ILEA has today been notified of this determination.

Technical and Vocational Education Initiative

Mr. Tredinnick asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how his proposals for a national foundation curriculum will affect the operation of the technical and vocational education initiative.

Mrs. Rumbold: TVEI will continue to be available to fund programmes of curriculum development and enrichment in schools and colleges in all LEAs along the lines set out in the White Paper "Working Together—Education and Training" (Cmnd. 9823). In considering proposals for extension of TVEI, the Department will ensure that those accepted are consistent with the published TVEI curricular criteria and with the proposed requirements of the national curriculum.

Education Bill

Mr. Brandon-Bravo asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether the forthcoming Education Bill will contain any provisions on local authority maintained further education.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Yes, the Government intend that the forthcoming Bill should contain provisions on maintained further education in England and Wales. We propose that, as with schools, local education authorities should be placed under a duty to delegate financial powers to colleges. We also propose to reform the composition and role of college governing boldies. And in order to provide a secure foundation for these changes, we propose to reform the legal basis of further education, in particular by restating the duty to provide further education and by repealing the provisions in the Education Act 1944 on FE schemes.

The Government will be issuing shortly a consultation paper setting out our proposals in more detail.

Science Budget

Mr. Brandon-Bravo asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has received advice from the Advisory Board for the Research Councils on science budget expenditures.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The ABRC submitted advice last month in connection with this year's public expenditure survey. I have arranged for it to be published today. The board's advice will be considered carefully by the Government in the context of the survey and I shall inform the board and the House of our conclusions in the autumn.

Academic Tenure

Mr. Brandon-Bravo asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he intends to introduce legislation to restrict academic tenure.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Yes. The Government's intention to legislate in this area at a suitable opportunity has been known for some time and our Bill will contain relevant provisions. My Department will be consulting representatives of those most closely concerned and I have today placed in the Library a document which forms the basis of those consultations.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Technical Training Programme

Mr. Key asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the number of foreign nationals who have come to Britain under the Overseas Development Administration technical co-operation training programme in each year of its operation and the cost per annum in real terms to the United Kingdom.

Mr. Chris Patten: The information is given in the following table. Figures on a consistent basis are available from 1976 to 1986. Expenditure in each year covers new arrivals and those still on course from previous year(s).

Year	*Arrivals in Britain*	*Expenditure (£ million)*	*Expenditure at 1986 prices (£ million)*
1976	[1]3,500	12	30
1977	[1]3,800	13	28
1978	[1]5,500	16	31
1979	[1]5,600	23	40
1980	[1]3,800	37	53
1981	[1]4,300	27	35
1982	4,311	37	45
1983	4,932	39	44
1984	5,387	41	45
1985	[1]5,100	54	55
1986	5,447	51	51

[1] Estimates.

EMPLOYMENT

Community Programme

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on his plans for the community programme.

Mr. Fowler: We plan to improve the community programme by making it full time and paying a premium over and above social security entitlements. This will make the programme much more attractive to long-term unemployed people with families. We also propose to enhance significantly the training content of the programme.

Job Training Scheme

Ms. Armstrong asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will outline his plans for the job training scheme.

Mr. Cope: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, North-East (Mrs. Hicks) on Thursday 16 July 1987, at column *592*.

Mr. Leighton asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are on the job training scheme.

Mr. Cope: At 10 July 1987 14,371 people were receiving training on the new job training scheme.

Mr. Rees asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many people have taken up places on the job training scheme since it began; how many are currently in training; and how many have left the scheme.

Mr. Cope: By 10 July 1987, 22,979 people had joined the new job training scheme; 14,371 are currently in training and 8,608 have left the scheme.

Mr. Rees asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the breakdown of people in training on the job training scheme by geographical location and the occupation for which they are being trained.

Mr. Cope: The table gives a breakdown of the number in training on the new job training scheme, by Manpower Services Commission vocational education and training group area as at 3 July, the latest date for which the area information is available.

Details of the occupational areas in which training is taking place are not yet available. This information will be collected by means of a sample survey to be conducted late in the autumn.

MSC area	*Numbers in training at 3 July*
Renfrew Dumbarton and Argyll	170
Glasgow city	456
Grampian and Tayside	268
Lothian and Borders	141
Highlands and Islands	—
Central and Fife	140
Lanarkshire	113
Ayrshire Dumfries and Galloway	103
Newcastle	187
Cleveland	223
South Tyne	181
Durham	194
Cheshire	153
Cumbria	92
Lancashire	653
Manchester Central	416
Manchester East	124
Manchester North	144
Merseyside Inner	419
Merseyside Outer	75
Birmingham	348
Coventry	217
Dudley	280
Staffs	372
The Marches	283
Wolverhamptom	239
Humberside	643
Leeds	258
Bradford	329
Wakefield	340
Sheffield	236
Derby	59
Norfolk and Suffolk	346
Leicestershire and Northants	369
Lincs	93
Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire	95
Nottinghamshire	393
Cardiff	223
Wrexham	122
Gwent	63
Swansea	231
Avon	272
Gloucestershire-Wiltshire	76
Somerset-Dorset	101
Devon-Cornwall	556
Chatham	253
Chelmsford	226
Fareham	433
High Wycombe	168
Horsham	214
Reading	33
Woking	29
North London	224
East London	236
South London	138
Inner London North	311
Inner London South	463

Training Schemes

Mr. Rowe asked the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he takes to ensure that training schemes for which his Department is responsible ensure that the United Kingdom has sufficient skills available to it to meet industry's needs for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Cope: Employers are primarily responsible for meeting the skill needs of industry. Nevertheless, the Government make a significant contribution. The main emphasis is on helping young people and the unemployed through YTS and the new job training scheme. These programmes are designed to provide people with the opportunity to acquire qualifications and job-related skills to standards set by industry.

The mix of training provision in any particular area is dictated by the needs of the local labour market. The Manpower Services Commission is working with others to provide this information. It has recently introduced a computerised system to collect local labour market information and has set up a skills unit which monitors trends in the supply of and demand for skills.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Pike asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many people there are on youth training schemes in the constituencies of *(a)* Burnley, *(b)* Pendle, *(c)* Hyndburn and *(d)* Rossendale and Darwen.

Mr. Lee: The information is shown in the table.

Number of young people on youth training scheme at 30 June 1987[2]

Local authority district[1]	*Number*
Burnley	389
Pendle	688
Hyndburn	834
Rossendale and Darwen[3]	1,264

[1] As the Manpower Services Commission's computerised management information system does not collect information by constituency, figures have been given for local authority districts.

[2] This is the latest date for which figures are available.

[3] Statistics for Darwen are not readily available. The figure given represents Rossendale local authority district and Blackburn local authority district, which includes Darwen.

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the number of those without work who have never had a paid job.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. On 11 June 1987, the number of unemployed claimants in the United Kingdom who had not entered employment since leaving full-time education was 243,782.

YTS

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the availability of YTS schemes in rural areas.

Mr. Cope: The number of YTS places available is generally ahead of demand in all parts of the country, including rural areas. For trainees in particularly remote areas assistance is available with travel and lodging costs.

Mr. Battle asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many YTS places have been lost due to bankruptcies in businesses employing fewer than 50 people in Leeds, West constituency in each of the past five years; and how many of these YTS places have been replaced.

Mr. Cope: I regret that the information requested is not readily available, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Sheltered Placements Scheme

Mr. Hannam asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will consider increasing the resources available to the sheltered placements scheme; and if he will indicate how many additional places will be made available before 31 March 1988.

Mr. Lee: The sheltered placement scheme is set to increase by around 1,200 places in 1987-88 — an expansion of over 40 per cent. in a single year. I have no plans to increase the resource available for the scheme during the remainder of this financial year.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have acquired qualifications, listed by category, under the YTS, by region, since its inception.

Mr. Cope: The table shows the percentage of leavers by region gaining qualifications in the most recent full year, April 1985 to March 1986. Information is not available for previous years and not yet available for 1986-87.

Per cent.

Region	*'A' levels SCE Higher grades, B Tec*		*'O' Level A,B,C, RSA/Pitmans/LCC, Scotvec City and Guilds*		*CSE grade 1's*		*CSE not grade 1's, 'O' Levels D, E*		*Other qualifications*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Scotland	0·5	0·6	12·2	12·5	—	—	0·5	1·0	0·6	0·5
Northern	2·0	2·4	8·1	5·8	0·1	0·2	0·7	0·9	1·9	1·6
North West	1·9	2·9	10·8	12·1	0·1	0·3	0·6	1·0	0·9	1·3
Yorkshire and Humberside	1·4	1·7	8·7	8·5	0·2	0·4	1·3	0·7	1·0	2·0
Midlands	2·1	2·2	11·1	11·8	0·2	—	0·8	0·9	1·2	1·9
Wales	1·7	1·2	6·9	9·5	0·3	0·5	0·8	1·4	0·6	0·9
South West	1·6	1·6	17·0	16·9	—	—	0·7	0·7	0·9	2·4
South East	3·4	2·8	14·1	12·8	—	0·1	0·3	1·3	0·7	1·0
London	4·1	1·2	12·0	8·3	0·2	—	0·5	—	0·7	1·2

For the purposes of this table, leavers who gained more than one type of qualification were counted once only, according to the highest category of qualification gained during their YTS training. The percentage in all but the first column may therefore understate the proportion of leavers who gained a qualification in that category.

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he now has final figures for the number of entrants to YTS in 1985-86; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: The Manpower Services Commission has released figures today which show that there were 406,332 starts to YTS in 1985-86.

Cumulative figures at the end of each month were as follows:

	Number
1985	
April	14,729
May	27,265
June	89,424
July	171,648
August	228,072
September	324,677
October	348,609
November	363,611
December	371,024
1986	
January	387,213
February	396,372
March	406,332
Total for year	406,332

The figures represent the actual number of scheme "starts" including second and subsequent starts where trainees have transferred between schemes. We estimate that the number of individuals entering YTS is some 10 per cent. lower than the figures for starts in the table.

These figures differ from those published during 1985-86 because they include notifications of starts which had not been received by the time that the monthly statistics were announced.

Enterprise Agencies

Mr. Speller asked the Secretary of State for Employment what support he will give to the North Devon enterprise agency.

Mr. Cope: I welcome the recent launch of the North Devon enterprise agency, which was formed through the merger of two small local enterprise agencies in the area; its formation will assist in the consolidation of the local enterprise agency network in the area. In support of the agency I am pleased to be able to announce that it has been awarded a grant of £20,000 under the Department of Employment's local enterprise agency grant scheme.

Departmental Staff

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Employment what was the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men employed within each grade in his Department in each year since 1979.

Mr. Cope: The information requested is in the table. The data used in compiling the figures derive from central service-wide personnel records and there are some differences from published manpower totals.

Number[1] of male and female staff employed 1979 to 1987[2]

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
Grade 1									
Male	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Grade 2									
Male	9·0	9·0	9·0	6·0	6·0	7·0	6·0	8·0	8·0
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Grade 3									
Male	25·5	23·0	25·0	24·0	21·0	26·0	52·0	57·0	61·0
Female	1·0	3·0	1·0	1·0	—	1·0	1·0	2·0	—
Grade 4									
Male	19·0	21·0	19·5	20·0	19·0	17·0	66·0	57·0	57·0
Female	1·0	1·0	—	—	—	—	—	1·0	1·0
Grade 5									
Male	238·5	234·5	237·0	234·0	232·5	140·5	132·5	136·5	140·0
Female	21·5	20·5	22·5	18·0	21·0	12·5	11·5	12·5	17·5
Grade 6									
Male	194·0	187·0	178·0	181·0	174·0	288·0	221·0	216·5	219·5
Female	6·0	10·0	6·0	7·5	6·5	18·5	21·5	25·5	27·0
Grade 7									
Male	824·0	849·5	830·0	796·0	824·0	788·0	785·0	823·5	897·0
Female	65·0	64·5	64·5	73·5	75·0	70·5	62·5	68·5	87·0
SEO									
Male	1,739·0	1,797·0	1,705·0	1,706·0	1,647·0	1,614·0	1,512·0	1,543·0	1,553·5
Female	171·5	171·0	149·5	159·5	169·5	177·0	172·0	213·0	238·5
HEO									
Male	3,267·5	3,364·5	3,305·0	3,291·0	3,367·5	3,426·0	3,350·0	3,317·5	3,387·5
Female	570·0	592·0	595·5	661·0	765·0	863·5	984·0	1,110·0	1,355·5

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
EO									
Male	7,308·5	7,867·0	7,50[illegible]	7,432·0	7,373·0	7,263·0	6,859·0	6,632·5	6,964·0
Female	4,728·0	5,056·5	4,783·5	5,101·0	5,488·5	5,669·5	5,462·5	5,661·5	7,359·5
AO									
Male	6,815·0	6,009·0	6,261·0	7,688·5	7,518·5	7,401·5	6,779·5	6,846·5	7,307·5
Female	15,176·0	13,823·0	15,341·0	19,188·0	19,298·5	19,341·0	17,956·0	18,646·0	20,006·5
AA									
Male	1,839·5	1,590·5	1,633·0	1,885·5	1,733·0	1,733·0	1,613·0	1,732·5	1,794·0
Female	6,872·5	7,107·0	7,624·0	7,990·0	7,494·0	7,315·5	6,681·5	6,908·0	6,872·5
(OG)									
Male	190·0	67·5	24·0	19·0	23·0	8·0	7·0	—	4·0
Female	819·5	144·5	50·0	12·0	25·5	4·0	3·0	4·0	1·0

[1] Figures as at 11 January each year.
[2] During 1983 approximately 100 staff were re-categorised from Grade 5 equivalent to Grade 6 equivalent.

Disabled People

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will require the Manpower Services Commission to monitor, record and publish by area the number of disabled people who *(a)* apply for and *(b)* secure places on the job training scheme.

Mr. Cope: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

New Workers Scheme

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones asked the Secretary of State for employment if he will publish information showing the total number of jobs covered so far by the new workers scheme together with average wages paid; and if he will also provide a breakdown by sector of this information indicating, in particular, the number of new workers scheme jobs in *(a)* hotel and catering and *(b)* hairdressing.

Mr. Lee: Since the new workers scheme began in April last year 41,863 applications have been approved. The average weekly wage paid to employees under the scheme is not available. However, to qualify for support employers must pay young people no more than a gross weekly average of £60 if aged under 20, or £65 if aged 20, on the day they start the job to be supported.

A breakdown of the number of applications approved since the scheme began, by standard industrial classification division, is provided in the table. The hotel and catering sector is included in division No. 6, and the hairdressing sector in division No. 9. A more detailed breakdown is not available.

Applications approved April 1986 to end June 1987

Division with SIC Division Number	*Number*
0. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	1,048
1. Energy and Water Supply Industries	46
2. Extraction of Minerals and Ores other than Fuels; Manufacture of Metals, Mineral Products and Chemicals	524
3. Metal Goods, Engineering and Vehicles Industries	3,120
4. Other Manufacturing Industries	5,520
5. Construction	5,068
6. Distribution, Hotels and Catering; Repairs	11,164
7. Transport and Communication	1,092
8. Banking, Finance, Insurance, Business Services and Leasing	3,690
9. Other Services	10,591
TOTAL	41,863

Job Creation

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Employment if, pursuant to his answer of 13 July, *Official Report*, column *347*, he will publish evidence, or place it in the Library, that current employment protection legislation deters employers from creating new jobs; whether he will estimate how many potential jobs have not been created because of this; and what plans he has to seek to amend such legislation.

Mr. Nicholls: Results of two studies by the Department of Employment were published as research papers 6 and 53, and were placed in the Library. It is not possible to estimate the effect on job opportunities, since the employment legislation is one of many factors to be considered by an employer. The White Paper "Building Businesses . . . Not Barriers" contained several proposals to amend the legislation, but these are still being considered.

Hairdressing Industry

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will provide data from the 1986 "New Earnings Survey" showing what proportion of workers in the hairdressing occupational category received incentive payments; and what was the average weekly value of those payments per worker.

Mr. Lee: Estimates from the "New Earnings Survey" indicate that in April 1986 in Great Britain just over a third of full-time adults employed as hairdressers and whose earnings were not affected by absence received payment-by-results or similar payments. These averaged £25·50 per week gross for each employee receiving such payments.

YOP and YTS

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will detail the number and percentage of YOP and YTS graduates who *(a)* gain unemployment, *(b)* go on to further training and *(c)* return to (i) full-time and (ii) part-time education, *(d)* become unemployed and *(e)* went on to other destinations for each of the last 10 years; and if these dates can be further analysed by social class of the graduates' parents.

Mr. Cope: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Women (Earnings)

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the latest figures showing how many women in paid work earned below the national insurance threshold.

Mr. Lee: It is estimated from the latest "New Earnings Survey" results that only about one fifth of 1 per cent. of full-time female employees have gross weekly earnings below the national insurance threshold. The survey results do not cover all part-time employees but, taken with other data, it is estimated that in April 1986 about 2 million female part-time employees in Great Britain had gross weekly earnings below the limit for national insurance purposes.

South Africa

Mr. Cabom asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will take steps to extend the voluntary ban on the promotion of tourism to South Africa to include Namibia.

Mr. Lee: We have no plans to do so. The issues surrounding Namibia and South Africa are quite separate.

Mr. Cabom asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will outline the actions taken by Her Majesty's Government to implement the voluntary ban on tourism to South Africa as agreed by the Prime Minister at the Commonwealth review meeting in August 1986; and whether any mechanisms have been established to monitor this voluntary ban.

Mr. Lee: The action we have taken to implement the Government's voluntary ban on promotion of tourism to South Africa was set out by my hon. Friend, the previous Minister with responsibility for tourism, in reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Ravensbourne (Mr. Hunt) on 30 October 1986 at column *213*.

The onus for deciding whether to comply with the measure or not must be with the organisation concerned.

Wider Opportunities Training Programme

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the amount of money by which funding of the wider opportunities training programme is to be reduced; when this reduction will start; how many places on the programme will be lost; and what is his estimate as to how many of the places lost will be for women and how many for men.

Mr. Cope: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Travel-to-work Areas

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Employment on what occasions there have been general reviews of travel-to-work areas; and if he will list all changes that have been made to any of the travel-to-work areas between the reviews in each case.

Mr. Lee: Since 1960 (when the concept of travel-to-work areas was first introduced for producing unemployment rates) travel-to-work areas have been reviewed on three occasions—in 1968, 1978 and 1984. These reviews were to take account of the latest information on travel-to-work patterns from the censuses of population conducted in 1961, 1971 and 1981, respectively.

Information on changes to travel-to-work areas between reviews before the 1984 review is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Since the 1984 review a minor revision has been made to the boundary between Llanelli and Swansea travel-to-work areas following a revision to the relevant 1981 Census of Population data. Also the names of three travel-to-work areas have been changed: St. Andrews became North-East Fife, Flint and Rhyl become Shotton, Flint and Rhyl and Ebbw Vale and Abergavenny became Blaenau Gwent and Abergavenny.

Disposable Income

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish the distribution of aggregate disposable income of selected groups of households for 1979 and 1985 using the family expenditure surveys of 1979 and 1985 (table 25) on a comparable basis, taking into account the change in housing benefit and the introduction of mortgage interest relief at source.

Mr. Lee: The exact information requested is available only at disproportionate cost. However, provision was made in analysis of the 1983 family expenditure survey (when the introduction of the housing benefit scheme necessitated a change of income definition) to provide results on two bases. The figures show 1985 and 1983 distributions from the family expenditure survey on the current basis.

Distribution of weekly household disposable income

	Lowest decile £	*Lower quartile* £	*Median* £	*Upper quartile* £	*Highest decile* £
All United Kingdom households					
1983	46·03	75·96	133·25	198·32	271·94
1985	48·44	83·45	152·73	232·74	322·59

	Lowest decile £	Lower quartile £	Median £	Upper quartile £	Highest decile £
Greater London households					
1983	47·94	75·84	142·61	231·57	324·46
1985	46·60	89·50	167·50	261·50	367·82

Data in this table are subject to sampling variation.

Agricultural Inspectors

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will now appoint additional agricultural inspectors to the Health and Safety Executive, to enable the executive to fulfil its role in enforcing the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 and the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986; whether he will make additional financial resources available to the executive, to assist it in carrying out its responsibilities under the Act; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Executive intends to meet its responsibilities for enforcing the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 and the control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 from within existing staff resources through a rearrangement of priorities. It is hoped that further recruitment to the agricultural inspectorate will take place later in the year.

For 1987-88 Parliament has voted grant-in-aid for the Health and Safety Executive of £1 million more than was shown as planned provision in the public expenditure White Paper, Cm. 56, and this provision was intended to include the costs of carrying out its responsibilities under the Act. Planned provision for future years is currently under consideration.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Immigration

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average length of time spent in Prison Department establishments for persons detained under Immigration Act powers during 1986.

Mr. Renton: The average period of detention in Prison Department establishments in England and Wales of persons initially received under the Immigration Act 1971 powers who were discharged in 1986 was about four weeks.

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were received into Prison Department establishments under Immigration Act powers during 1986 by individual prison establishments.

Mr. Renton: The readily available information is given in the following table:

Receptions of persons detained under the Immigration Act 1971 into Prison Department establishments in England and Wales in 1986

Establishment	Number[1]
Remand centres	
Ashford	144
Brockhill	1
Exeter	1
Latchmere House	863
Low Newton	1
Norwich	1
Risley	9
Prisons	
Bedford	4
Birmingham	46
Bristol	25
Brixton	1
Canterbury	34
Cardiff	7
Durham	7
Exeter	4
Gloucester	2
Holloway	11
Hull	3
Leeds	7
Leicester	5
Lewes	3
Lincoln	2
Norwich	1
Pentonville	21
Shrewsbury	1
Winchester	4
Wormwood Scrubs	3
Others	
Blantyre House	95
Bullwood Hall	1
Erlestoke	115
All Prison Department establishments	1,422

[1] The figures are those recorded centrally and are approximate, detailed checking of individual cases would involve disproportionate cost.

Mr. Dover asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the numbers of immigrants each year from 1979 to date who have legally gained admission as immigrants to the United Kingdom.

Mr. Renton: The numbers of persons granted settlement in the United Kingdom in each year from 1976 to 1986 are published in table 18 of "Control of Immigration: Statistics, United Kingdom 1986" (Cm. 166), copies of which are in the Library.

Mr. Dover asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information is available regarding the numbers of individuals who have entered the United Kingdom as illegal immigrants each year since 1979.

Mr. Renton: The available information, which relates to illegal entrants detected and dealt with, is summarised in table 22 of "Control of Immigration: Statistics, United Kingdom 1986" (Cm. 166), copies of which are in the Library.

Police (Newham)

Mr. Leighton asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many policemen stationed in the London borough of Newham live in the borough.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Eighty-seven.

Juries (London)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he proposes to take in response to the recent statement by the assistant commissioner of the Metropolitan police concerning the activities of alleged jury nobblers in London; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Protection of jurors is an operational matter for chief officers. The police are aware of the dangers, particularly in major trials involving organised crime, and if necessary seek the authority of the trial judge to provide police protection for the jurors in order to prevent any interference. However, the available evidence does not suggest that jury nobbling is a widespread practice or that a change in the law is needed.

Prisoners (Restraints)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he proposes to take in response to the suggestion by coroner Sir Montague Levine that his Department should take steps to prevent further deaths arising from the use on prisoners of body belts as restraints; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: I understand that Sir Montague Levine, who conducted the inquest, will be writing to the Department shortly about this unfortunate case. It would not be sensible to comment on the case or its implications for policy on the management of violent prisoners until Sir Montague's report and other relevant papers have been fully considered.

Prisoners (Suicide Risks)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to publish new guidelines concerning the supervision by prison officers of known suicide risks; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Revised instructions to Prison Department establishments on suicide prevention, including supervision procedures, are set out in circular instruction 3/1987, published in February, a copy of which is in the Library. These new procedures, in conjunction with the staff training programme already under way, should improve the prison service's ability to identify and help potential suicide victims.

Prevention of Terrorism

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many persons have been charged in England and Wales under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act; and how many have been convicted;

(2) how many persons have been detained under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act in England and Wales at the latest date;

(3) how many persons have been charged in Liverpool under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act; and how many have been convicted;

(4) how many persons have been detained *(a)* in Liverpool and *(b)* on Merseyside under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act at the latest date.

Mr. Hurd: Information on detentions up to the first quarter of 1987 by police force area is published in table 3 of Home Office "Statistical Bulletin" issue 11/87 and on charges and convictions up to 31 December 1986 in "Statistical Bulletin" issue 2/87. All detention by Merseyside police since May 1985 were recorded centrally as having taken place in Liverpool. Information on charges and their outcome for those detained in Merseyside was given to the hon. Member in reply to his question on 16 March 1987, at columns *361-62*. Further information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons who were arrested in Liverpool under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act could have been charged under other legislation.

Mr. Hurd: It is not possible to say how many persons arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 in any area could have been charged under other legislation at the time they were arrested.

Mr. Hind asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to respond to the recommendations made by Viscount Colville of Culross in his review of the operation during 1986 of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: I have considered very carefully the recommendation made by Viscount Colville on the use of the exclusion power in the Prevention of Terrorism Act. I have decided that it would not be wise now to discontinue the powers in sections 4, 5 and 6 of the Act. I shall keep the matter under review in the light of any comments Viscount Colville makes in his report on the Act as a whole to be published later this year.

Viscount Colville made several important points on the administration of the Act both by the police and Government Departments. We have accepted his recommendations on a number of these points and a copy of a letter to chief officers of police will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Departmental Staff

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men employed within each grade in his Department in each year since 1979.

Mr. Hurd: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Miss Paula Otemah

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the representations he has received supporting the release of Miss Paula Otemah from prison; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: We have received no such representations, though I am aware of the early-day motion standing in the name of the hon. Member, and other hon. Members, and of the hon. Member's approach to the governor of Risley remand centre.

Detainees (Police Cells)

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) by what date he expects the 648 unconvicted prisoners being held in police station cells on 10 July to be transferred to prison;

(2) when he expects those police officers currently guarding unconvicted prisoners held in police cells on 10 July to be able to return to normal police duties.

Mr. John Patten: Rollestone camp will open as a temporary prison on 3 August and receive its complement of 360 prisoners over the following two to three weeks. The camp is not suitable for accommodating remand prisoners and therefore cannot, itself, receive untried prisoners from police cells. Instead, it will draw from overcrowded local prisons in the south-east.

Shortly afterwards a substantial number of places will become available in local prisons nationally as a result of the changes in remission arrangements for offenders serving short sentences.

It is not possible to say with certainty when all unconvicted prisoners will be removed from police cells and therefore when police officers looking after them may return to normal duties. Both measures listed above will free places in the prisons so that they can take prisoners from police cells. This will begin to happen shortly after 3 August.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the west midlands as to how many west midlands police officers are currently employed in guarding unconvicted prisoners held in police cells; how many such prisoners were being held on 10 July; and how that compares with the numbers held at the same date one and two years ago, respectively.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I have asked the chief constable of the west midlands to let me have such information as is available and will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Firearms

Mr. Flynn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement regarding the accuracy of his Department's index to all letters and circulars issued since 1967, concerning the administration of the Firearms Act 1968, sent by his Department to chief officers of police;

(2) if he will place in the Library a copy of all circulars issued by the Home Office since 1967, concerning the administration of the Firearms Act 1968, to chief officers of police;

(3) if he will place a copy in the Library of his Department's index to all letters and circulars issued since 1967, concerning the administration of the Firearms Act 1968, sent by his Department to chief officers of police.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The only list which relates to circulars and letters issued since 1967 specifically about firearms controls is an informal document prepared for internal reference purposes. This list was supplied recently to an appellant's counsel to assist him in the identification of any material relevant to an appeal to the Crown court, Newport, against refusal of a firearms certificate. It is the practice to place a copy of all circulars on firearms matters in the Library.

Mr. Flynn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library a copy of all standard letters issued by his Department since 1967, concerning the administration of the Firearms Act 1968, to chief officers of police.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The contents of such letters and of circulars to chief officers of police that remain of current application have been consolidated in a revised memorandum for the guidance of the police on the administration of the Firearms Act 1968. This has been sent to major shooting organisations for comments. I shall place a copy in the Library when it has been finalised.

Mr. Flynn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library a copy of the 1972 Sir John McKay report, "The Control of Firearms in Great Britain: A Consultative Document", issued to all chief officers of police.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No. The report of Sir John McKay's working party on the control of firearms, prepared in 1972, was an internal document. Its main conclusions and recommendations were incorporated in the 1973 Green Paper, "The Control of Firearms in Great Britain" (Cmnd. 5297). It has no bearing on the way in which the Firearms Act 1968 is currently administered by chief officers of police.

Mr. William Powell asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many firearms and shotgun certificates were on issue and how many dealers were registered in 1986 in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* the Metropolitan police district; how these figures compared with those for previous years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: The position at 31 December each year was as follows:

	Firearms certificates on issue at 31 December	*Shotgun certificates on issue at 31 December*	*Dealers registered at 31 December*
England and Wales			
1979	169,590	782,074	..
1980	168,047	781,854	..
1981	164,872	785,225	..
1982	162,696	780,629	..
1983	159,804	783,378	..
1984	160,307	798,352	2,295
1985	160,385	[1]819,333	2,419
1986	160,285	840,951	2,523
of which, Metropolitan Police District			
1979	9,504	30,259	..
1980	9,374	28,990	..
1981	8,981	29,528	..
1982	8,856	28,504	..
1983	8,741	29,747	..
1984	8,878	30,293	238
1985	8,957	[1]37,147	288
1986	9,084	41,814	287

.. not available.

[1] The records of shotgun certificates for the Metropolitan police were computerised in 1985, and this brought to light previous under-recording of these figures.

Police Manpower

Mr. Churchill asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list, in order of priority, the principal

factors taken into consideration by his Department in assessing authorised police manpower levels in different police force areas.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Each application for an increase in the authorised establishment of a force is considered as a whole, but we take into account such factors as the police-population ratio, the level of crime, the purpose for which the additional posts are required and the civilian staff levels within the force. The importance of these factors will vary with the circumstances of each individual case.

Crime-Police Manpower Statistics

Mr. Churchill asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the police authorities in England and Wales in order of their ratio of recorded crimes for the year 1986 to authorised police manpower for that year; and if he will further list the actual figures of reported crimes and police manpower levels in each case.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The authorised establishment and actual strength of each police force in England and Wales as at 31 December 1986 are published in the report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary for 1986 (appendix 7), and the number of notifiable offences recorded by each force is published in Home Office "Statistical Bulletin" issue number 4/87 (table 6), copies of which are in the Library.

Mr. Antonas Gecas

Mr. Winninck asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what documentary evidence has been received by Her Majesty's Government from *(a)* overseas Governments and *(b)* other sources regarding the wartime activities of Mr. Antonas Gecas; and when the Government will be reaching a conclusion of the outcome of such evidence;

(2) to what specific alleged Nazi wartime crimes the documentary evidence received by Her Majesty's Government relating to Mr. Antonas Gecas refers;

(3) what representations have been made to him seeking the extradition of Mr. Antonas Gecas for alleged Nazi wartime crimes against humanity; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hurd: On 7 July representatives of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre gave the Department a substantial volume of documentary material in support of their allegation that Mr. Gecas had been involved in crimes of mass murder during the Nazi occupation of Lithuania. We have also examined other documents identified in the original list of names which the centre sent us last November. We are studying the recent material in order to assess the scope for further action. No request for the extradition of Mr. Gecas has been received.

Mr. Winnick asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department under what circumstances Mr. Antonas Gecas was given British citizenship; what information he gave at that time regarding his activities during the last war; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: Mr. Gecas was granted citizenship of the United Kingdom and Colonies in 1956 following an application for naturalisation under section 10(1) of the British Nationality Act 1948. The information which he supplied at that time will now be examined alongside the material handed to my Department on 17 July by the Simon Wisenthal centre.

Citizenship

Mr. Winnick asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the policy towards the removal of British citizenship from a naturalised citizen found to have been involved in Nazi wartime crimes against humanity; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: The circumstances of any particular case would be considered in accordance with the provisions of section 40 of the British Nationality Act 1981.

Operation Trident

Mr. Boateng asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what quantity of prohibited drugs has been seized in the course of Operation Trident from its inception to the present date; and what is the breakdown by weight and class of these drugs.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: As the drugs seized during the operation are now being analysed, the information requested is not yet available.

Mr. Boateng asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the total cost of Operation Trident from its inception to the present date.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that this information is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, it is likely that the total additional costs of the operation were small.

Mr. Boateng asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commisssioner of Police of the Metropolis as to how many arrests have taken place in the course of Operation Trident in the All Saints road area of Notting Hill from its inception to the present date; what is the breakdown, by reference to the race code used by the Metropolitan police, of those arrests; how many charges have arisen from those arrests; and what is the breakdown by nature of those charges.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that a total of 263 arrests had been made in the course of Operation Trident up to 21 July. Statistics on the ethnic background of those arrested are not centrally recorded. 73 people have been charged and 56 cautioned following arrest. Details are provided in the following table:

Number of persons charged in Operation Trident by nature of charge

	Charged	*Cautioned*
Drugs Supply	17	—
Possession of an offensive weapon	4	1
Burglary	1	—
Theft	5	—
Handling Stolen Goods	3	—
Deception	2	—
Disorderly Conduct	7	19
Drunk	1	29
Excess Alcohol	8	—
Obstructing Police and Highway	16	—
Assault Police	1	—

	Charged	Cautioned
Going equipped to steal	1	—
Other	7	7
Total	73	56

Mr. Boateng asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to how many officers have been deployed, in total, in the course of Operation Trident, from its inception to the present date; what is the maximum number of officers deployed in any one day; and what divisions these officers have been drawn from, broken down by numbers.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that information about the total number of officers deployed on the operation is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The maximum number of officers deployed directly on the operation at any one time was 88 on Friday 3 July. The officers involved in the operation have been drawn from all areas of the Metropolitan police.

Mr. Boateng asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has called for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis on Operation Trident; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The conduct of Operation Trident is an operational matter for the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis. I have, however, asked the Commissioner for information in relation to the questions asked by the hon. Member.

Parole

Mr. Boateng asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, since the change in parole policy announced in 1983, how many prisoners serving five years or more for offences of drug trafficking or violence have been released before the last few months of their sentence because of exceptional circumstances; what these exceptional circumstances have been; and how many prisoners have been released in each year since the commencement of the policy for the above reasons.

Mr. John Patten: The more restricted policy on parole to which the hon. Member refers has been applied to prisoners serving sentences of over five years for offences of violence or drug trafficking. As recorded in successive annual reports of the Parole Board, the numbers of cases in which, exceptionally, prisoners have been granted parole other than for a few months at the end of their sentence are:

	Number
1984	[1]23
1985	13
[2]1986	34

[1] This figure also covers December 1983.
[2] The latest date for which figures are available.

It is not possible to generalise about the reasons for considering that circumstances of a case are sufficiently exceptional to provide grounds for the grant of parole under the policy. Each case is considered on its individual merits.

War Criminals

Mr. Winnick asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the bringing to justice of United Kingdom inhabitants held responsible for Nazi crimes against humanity; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: The policy of successive Governments has been that those accused of serious crimes committed abroad should be extradited, provided the requirements of our law are met. Last week I received from the Simon Wisenthal Centre documentary material in support of allegations that people responsible for war crimes are living in this country. I am examining this material in order to assess the scope for further action.

Home Office Circulars

Mr. Flynn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list those to whom his Department has circulated Home Office circular 46/87, FRM 85/1/24/1; if he will place a copy in the Library; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: A copy of Hhome circular No. 46/1987 has been sent to all chief officers of police in England and Wales; the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster and Isle of Man constabularies; the Chief Officer of the States of Jersey police; clerks to police authorities; the Association of Chief Police Officers; the Police Federation; the Police Superintendents' Association; the Association of County Councils; the Association of Metropolitan Authorities; the Justices' Clerks' Society; the Director of Public Prosecutions; the Scottish Home and Health Department; the Northern Ireland Office; the British Transport police; the British Museum and the Bodleian Library at Oxford. A copy has also been placed in the Library of the House.

Passports

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many British citizens in each of the last five years have reported their passports *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen in each country by name; and how many such passports have been subsequently recovered.

Mr. Renton: The information is not available in the form requested. The number of United Kingdom standard passports reported lost or stolen overseas from 1984 to 1986, the only period for which information is available, is set out in the following table, by country of reported loss:

Country	1984	1985	1986
Australia	654	688	693
Canada	245	151	145
France	635	n/a	288
German Federal Republic	597	803	807
Greece	385	444	422
India	315	291	263
Israel	238	308	266
Italy	531	432	880
Kenya	186	149	178
Netherlands	152	179	266
Pakistan	20	37	132
Portugal	407	607	525
South Africa	534	692	596
Spain	3,367	3,253	3,589

Country	1984	1985	1986
Switzerland	35	209	257
Thailand	96	152	126
United States of America	1,210	1,499	1,787
Others	2,290	2,224	2,414
Total	11,897	12,118	13,634

The number of such passports reported as having been recovered is as follows:

	Number
1984	566
1985	634
1986	846

Prisoners (Costs)

Mr. Steinberg asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how much it costs to keep one person in prison for one week at *(a)* Durham prison, *(b)* Frankland prison and *(c)* Low Newton remand centre;

(2) how much on average it costs to keep one person in prison for one week in *(a)* a local prison, *(b)* a high security prison and *(c)* a remand centre.

Mr. John Patten: Information on average weekly costs of detention in individual penal establishments and different types of establishment is published in the annual reports on the work of the Prison Department. The latest available information is contained in the 1985-86 report (Cm. 11: see appendix 3, tables E and F), a copy of which is in the Library.

Lion Intoximeter 3000

Mr. Greg Knight asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there are plans to modify further the Lion Intoximeter 3000 evidential breath-testing instruments; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: A number of minor changes, none of which affect the analytical functions of the instruments, are planned. The modifications will correct minor faults with the machine's date and time mechanism (including provision for leap years); provide for self-checking of the acetone detector; and improve memory storage and retrieval. The changes will be carried out in the course of servicing by the manufacturer.

Handscomb and Others (Judgment)

Mr. Key asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will make a further statement about the Government's response to the Divisional Court judgment in the case of Handscomb and others.

Mr. Hurd: As I indicated in reply to a question from the the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) on 29 April, the Divisional Court judgment in the case of Handscomb and others upheld the lawfulness of the policy for the release of life sentence prisoners announced in reply to a question from the hon. Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates) on 30 November 1983, at cols. 505-7. One feature of that policy was the change made in the arrangements for fixing the date on the first formal consideration of the case of a life sentence prisoner by the Parole Board machinery. Since 1973 that date had been fixed on the advice of the joint Parole Board/Home Office committee. Under the revised arrangements, however, this review normally takes place three years before the expiry of the time thought necessary to satisfy the requirements of retribution and deterrence and is fixed following consultation with the judiciary on what in their view that time should be. The Divisional Court was critical of two aspects of the way in which that policy has been applied in those cases where a life sentence is awarded at the discretion of the trial judge, that is for offences other than murder (for which the life sentence is mandatory). It concluded that in such cases the consultation with the judiciary on the question of the period necessary to meet the requirements of retribution and deterrence in an individual case should take place as soon as practicable after the imposition of the sentence and should not be delayed for around three to four years as is the case at present; and that, to accord with the stated policy, the first review date in such cases should always be set in accordance with the judicial view on the requirements of retribution and deterrence and account should not be taken of other factors in setting that date.

Under the previous arrangements the joint committee gave initial consideration to the timing of the first formal review of a case by the Parole Board machinery after the prisoner had been detained for about three years. Over the years this arrangement had become less and less effective, with the result that the Committee was recommending a date for a first formal review in only about half the cases referred to it. One of the reasons for adopting the new procedure announced in 1983 was that this element of uncertainty in the system was removed. The decision to consult the judiciary about the requirements of retribution and deterrence for the purpose of fixing the date of the first formal review of a case at the same point at the joint committee had begun its consideration of cases under the previous arrangements was taken with the agreement of the Lord Chief Justice. But on reflection I accept the conclusion of the Divisional Court that there are strong arguments for carrying out this consultation exercise as soon as practicable following the imposition of a discretionary life sentence.

Following consultation with the Lord Chief Justice it has been agreed that the most satisfactory way of obtaining the judicial view is to ask the trial judge to write to me, through him, in every case where a discretionary life sentence is passed giving his view on the period necessary to meet the requirements of retribution and deterrence. This view will be related to the determinate sentence that would have been passed but for the element of mental instability and/or public risk which led the judge to pass a life sentence and will also take account of the notional period of the sentence which a prisoner might expect to have been remitted for good behaviour had a determinate sentence been passed. The date of the first formal review by the Parole Board machinery will then be fixed in accordance with the judicial view on the requirements of retribution and deterrence; and the review will, as before, normally take place three years before the expiry of that period. I have agreed with the Lord Chief Justice that this new procedure will be introduced with effect from 1 October 1987.

Arrangements have also been made to consult the judiciary about those discretionary life sentence cases where the first formal review has not yet been set, with a view to fixing the date as soon as possible. In addition, I shall arrange for a review to be undertaken of all

discretionary life sentence cases with a first formal review date of January 1988 or later. Where account has been taken of factors other than the judicial view on the requirements of retribution and deterrence in fixing the date, the date will be adjusted to bring it into line with the judicial view.

Although the issues before the Divisional Court related only to prisoners serving discretionary life sentences, I have decided that the date of the first formal review of the cases of prisoners serving mandatory life sentences should also be fixed as soon as practicable after conviction and sentence. The procedure under which the views of the trial judge and the Lord Chief Justice about the requirements of retribution and deterrence are obtained will be the same as that proposed for discretionary life sentence cases, and will be introduced at the same time. A similar exercise will also be carried out to fix the first review date in outstanding mandatory life sentence cases where this has not already been done. In view of the large number of cases involved (around 750) this will inevitably take some time.

In cases of prisoners serving life sentences for murder, where the sentence is not at the discretion of the court, the question of the notional equivalent determinate sentence does not arise. I shall continue to take into account the view of the judiciary on the requirements of retribution and deterrence in such cases as a factor amongst others (including the need to maintain public confidence in the system of justice) to be weighed in the balance in setting the first review date. I shall ensure that the timing of the first formal review in such cases is fixed in accordance with my overall policy for ensuring that the time served by prisoners serving life sentences for the worst offences of violence fully reflects public concern about violent crime.

As indicated in the November 1983 statement, the setting of the first review date under these arrangements will enable a life sentence prisoner to be released with three years of that date if the parole board so recommends, subject to the policy announced in reply to a question by the then right hon. and learned Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Carlisle) on 1 March 1985 that no life sentence prisoner will be detained for more than 17 years without a formal review of his case even where the period thought necesary to meet the requirements of retribution and deterrence exceeds 20 years. Ministers will continue to review every case where a life sentence prisoner has been detained for 10 years. However, as was made clear by the Divisional court, the release of a life sentence prisoner is solely at my discretion and it is for me to decide, after receiving the Parole Board's recommendation and after consulting the judiciary as required by section 61(1) of the Criminal Justice Act 1967, when actual release should take place.

Data Protection

Mr. Fry asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what fee he intends to prescribe as the maximum charge for subject access under the Data Protection Act 1984; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: In setting the maximum fee, I have had to take account, on the one hand, of the needs of data users so far as possible to cover their costs and, on the other, of the requirements of the Council of Europe Data Protection Convention and the importance of preventing the fee from acting as a disincentive to data subjects. As a consequence, I have now decided to fix the maximum fee at £10 and I shall shortly be making the appropriate regulations under the Act. Data users will, of course, be free in individual cases to charge any sum that falls within that maximum.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Constitution

12. **Mr. Adley** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made, in the light of the recent constitutional proposals by the Unionist parties, of the likelihood and implications of the Protestant community invoking Her Majesty's Government's declared undertaking not to stand in the way of a decision by the majority in the Province in favour of independence from the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King: I have made no such assessment. I have no evidence to suggest that a sizeable proportion of the people of Northern Ireland would regard independence as a sensible solution to the problems of the Province, now or in the foreseeable future.

15. **Mr. Stanbrook** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on his talks with Northern Ireland party leaders concerning the constitional future of the Province.

Mr. Tom King: I hope that there can soon be a constructive dialogue, involving all the constitutional political parties, about the future government of Northern Ireland. I therefore welcome the start of exploratory discussions between the unionist leadership and senior officials of my Department.

Teachers

13. **Mr. Hayward** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he intends to remove teachers' negotiating rights in Northern Ireland.

Dr. Mawhinney: No.

22. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he intends to impose a pay and contract settlement on Northern Ireland teachers, along the lines of the imposed settlement in England and Wales.

Dr. Mawhinney: No.

Cross-frontier Incursions

14. **Mr. Maginnis** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many protests have been lodged by the Irish Republic' Government since 15 November 1985 concerning cross-frontier incursions by the Army or the Royal Ulster Constabulary; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: Since 15 November 1985 the Irish Government has brought to our attention 78 occasions in which members of our security forces have allegedly crossed the border into the Republic of Ireland. Of these the British authorities have admitted 47; 22 have been denied, six are under investigation, and three others could not be pursued because of insufficient information. I understand how easy it is for members of the security

forces operating near the border to make mistakes and accidentally stray outside their respective jurisdictions, as has happened in the case of the security forces of both countries.

General Election

16. **Mr. William Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons in Northern Ireland were refused ballot papers at the recent general election because they did not have the necessary identification.

Mr. Stanley: These statistics were not collected at the polling stations in Northern Ireland during the recent general election, but the proportion of the electorate who were refused ballot papers because they did not have the necessary identification is thought to have been very small.

Job Losses

17. **Mr. Beggs** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many jobs are estimated to have been lost in Northern Ireland through terrorism and intimidation in 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1987 to date.

Mr. Stanley: We have not made any such estimates, but there is no doubt that terrorism has materially contributed to unemmployment in the Province.

Local Government

18. **Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he next intends to review the system of local government in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: I am not at the moment undertaking a review of local government. However, as my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, indicated in the debate on 7 July, this is one of the matters that could arise in any talks about the future government of Northern Ireland.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

19. **Mr. Allan Roberts** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions are now taking place between the Governments of the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom on the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Mr. Tom King: I last met Irish Ministers at a meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference on 16 July. As is set out in the joint statement issued after the meeting, a copy of which is in the Library, we discussed a range of matters within the field of activity of the Conference, including security and economic co-operation and equality of opportunity in employment.

Schoolchildren (Community Relations)

20. **Mr. Yeo** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he intends to take further measures to promote better community relations between schoolchildren in the Province.

Dr. Mawhinney: Yes. I am conscious of the need for increased effort on this front and I hope to announce our intentions shortly.

Youth Services

21. **Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement concerning the future of the Northern Ireland youth services following the consultation process which ended in June 1986.

Dr. Mawhinney: I am not yet able to make a full statement, but for the future I would wish to secure clearer objectives for young people to reach maturity through self development, enterprise and cross-community service.

Security

23. **Mr. Kilfedder** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about the security situation.

Mr. Tom King: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave the hon. Gentleman the Member for Antrim, South (Mr. Forsythe), earlier today.

Flags and Emblems

Mr. McGrady asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is his policy on the removal of flags and emblems from roads, footpaths and other buildings within his control.

Mr. Stanley: It is a matter for the operational judgment of the RUC to take whatever steps are necessary to prevent a breach of the peace arising from the provocative display of any flag or emblem.

As far as the flying of the Union flag from Government buildings in the Province is concerned, the practice is broadly in line with that in the rest of the United Kingdom.

Prison Officers (Stress)

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the level of pastoral care and psychological help to handle stress available to prison officers in the Northern Ireland prison service.

Mr. Stanley: The Prison Department offers prison officers a range of services designed to help those who find it difficult to cope with any personal problems.

It employs trained welfare officers who provide an advisory and guidance service to staff on a wide range of matters and who refer staff to outside agencies or experts for further help. It also obtains advice from the medical advisory service of the Department of Health and Social Services on the health of individual officers and on the occupational health needs of the service. MAS also offers a direct and personal service to staff experiencing health or occupational health problems. More generally management both in the prisons and in headquarters is available to assist individual officers with any problem and can call upon expert medical and other help as necessary.

Social Workers, Residential Care and Teaching Staff

Mr. Kilfedder asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether there has been any change in policy towards the training of social workers, residential care and teaching staff within the training schools establishment in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: No. The Department will continue to permit such staff to have leave of absence for further training where this is justified and practical.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Kilfedder asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the average period of time which patients have to wait before admission to the Royal Victoria hospital, the City hospital and the Ulster hospital, excluding emergency cases.

Mr. Needham: From the information routinely collected, it is not possible to calculate an average waiting time. The period of time spent on the waiting list varies from specialty to specialty. The table gives an analysis of waiting time for each specialty which has a waiting list at the three hospitals.

Number of Patients on Waiting Lists for Admission at 31 March 1987
Number Waiting

	Up to 3 months	*Over 3 and up to 6 months*	*Over 6 months and up to 1 year*	*Over 1 year and up to 2 years*	*Over 2 years and up to 3 years*	*Over 3 years*	*Total*
At Ulster							
General Surgery	204	43	19	—	—	—	266
Plastic Surgery	213	164	273	370	293	387	1,700
Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery	5	1	—	—	—	—	6
ENT	184	150	131	102	14	15	596
Gynaecology	198	—	—	—	—	—	198
Geriatric Medicine	13	6	5	22	7	1	54
Total	817	364	428	494	314	403	2,820
At RVH							
Neurology	37	—	—	—	—	—	37
Dermatology	12	—	—	—	—	—	12
Cardiology	6	7	7	3	3	100	126
General Surgery	196	115	222	264	227	308	1,332
Plastic Surgery	53	40	23	79	84	105	384
Thoracic Surgery	42	55	23	13	7	44	184
Cardiac Surgery	14	20	8	24	41	324	431
Neurosurgery	41	17	5	8	—	42	113
ENT	325	165	61	33	9	25	618
Ophthalmology	526	297	299	201	44	54	1,421
Dentistry	232	180	305	468	248	110	1,543
Gynaecology	85	14	2	1	—	—	102
Total	1,569	910	955	1,094	663	1,112	6,303
At BCH							
Cardiology	36	18	8	10	3	5	80
Nephrology	13	8	1	2	—	—	24
ENT	375	204	315	106	4	—	1,004
Gynaecology	268	96	14	—	—	—	378
Geriatric Medicine	22	4	5	9	1	—	41
Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery	34	19	7	3	1	2	66
General Surgery	636	303	322	238	119	157	1,775
Total	1,384	652	672	368	128	164	3,368

Departmental Staff

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men employed within each grade in his Department, in each year since 1979.

Mr. Stanley: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Education Costs

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) whether he will publish a table showing the amount spent by local authorities on *(a)* school transport and *(b)* school meals in the latest year for which figures are available; and what are the comparable figures for each year since 1978-79 in cash terms and real terms using 1986-87 prices and using an index of 100 for 1978-79;

(2) what is the latest figure for expenditure per pupil on books and on equipment in *(a)* primary schools, *(b)* secondary schools and *(c)* special schools; and what are the comparable figures for each of the years since 1978-79, in cash terms and real terms using 1986-87 prices and using an index of 100 for 1978-79.

Dr. Mawhinney: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Land Restoration

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the total expenditure by way of grant-aid under the agriculture improvement scheme on land restoration in the Province, in the financial years 1985-86 and 1986-87; and whether such grants are paid in respect of heathland and moorland.

Mr. Viggers: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Mourne Mountains and Slieve Croob

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he plans to designate parts of the Mourne Mountains and Slieve Croob as an environmentally sensitive area; what sites he is currently considering for designation as environmentally sensitive areas in Northern Ireland in 1988; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Land Reclamation

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the total expenditure by way of grant-aid on land reclamation in the Province, and the number of payments made, in the financial year 1986-87, under *(a)* the farm capital grant scheme, *(b)* the farm and horticulture development scheme, *(c)* the agriculture and horticulture grant scheme and *(d)* the agriculture and horticulture development scheme.

Mr. Viggers: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Water Pollution

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many incidents of water pollution by farm wastes were recorded in each of the years 1980 to 1986, and in 1987 to date, in Northern Ireland; how many of these incidents were attributable to pollution by silage effluent, and by slurry; and how many of these incidents were the subject of warning letters and prosecutions.

Mr. Needham: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Forth asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about the 1987-88 running cost limit for the Northern Ireland Office and Northern Ireland Departments.

Mr. Tom King: The running costs limit for 1987-88 for the Northern Ireland Office and the Northern Ireland Departments is being set at £476·762 million. Further details for provision for individual departments are set out in the appropriate Estimates volumes.

Mr. Greg Knight asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the cash limit for Northern Ireland departmental services for 1987-88.

Mr. Tom King: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary associated Supplementary Estimates, the cash limit for Northern Ireland Departmental Services (NIO1) for 1987-88 has been increased by £22·0 million from £2,425·9 million to £2,447·8 million. This reflects additions of: £3·2 million in respect of a final assessment of the net changes to the Northern Ireland programme to reflect changes in comparable programmes in England in the 1986 public expenditure survey; £13 million following the decision to implement the recommendations of the NHS Pay Bodies; £4 million to cover arrears of teachers pay following the agreement between Department of Education (NI) and the teachers unions in Northern Ireland; £1·7 million in respect of employment measures announced earlier in the year and £1·1 million in respect of university academic pay, both consistent with Great Britain treatment. This gross increase of £23 million is offset by the transfer of a total of £1 million to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Department of Agriculture for Scotland for the purchase of milk quotas. The total net increase of £22 million is being met from the reserve and does not therefore add to the public expenditure planning total.

Draft Matrimonial and Family Proceedings (Northern Ireland) Order

Mr. Archer asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which organisations and individuals made representations or submissions concerning the Draft Matrimonial and Family Proceedings (Northern Ireland) Order; and, of these, which opposed and which supported provisions in the order relating to financial relief.

Mr. Stanley [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 July 1987, c. *638*]: Representations or submissions on the proposal for a Draft Matrimonial and Family Proceedings (Northern Ireland) Order were made by the following organisations:

Belfast Law Centre[1]
Belfast Solicitors' Association
The Building Societies Association
The Catholic Bishops whose dioceses cover Northern Ireland
Christian Marriage Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland[2]
Church of Ireland Board for Social Responsibility (Northern Ireland)
Gingerbread (Northern Ireland)[2]
Inner Wheel Club of Coleraine[2]
The Law Society of Northern Ireland
Northern Ireland Association of Socialist Lawyers[2]
Northern Ireland Marriage Guidance Council[2]
Northern Ireland Women's Rights Movement[2]
Queen's University Women Graduates' Association (President and Committee)[2]
University of Ulster Students' Union at Jordanstown (petition containing 95 signatures)[2]
WISER Links (Derry Women's Centre)[2]
The Woman's Law and Research Group[2]

and by 47 individuals. (44 expressly opposed the provisions on financial relief: three supported them).

[1] Indicates an organisation which expressly supported the provisions on financial relief.

[2] Indicates an organisation which expressly opposed them.

PRIME MINISTER

Greenock Container Terminal

Q22. **Dr. Godman** asked the Prime Minister what assessment she has made of the implications for employment opportunities in the Greenock area of the proposed closure of the Greenock container terminal; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The decision to close the Greenock container terminal is a matter for the commercial judgment of the Clyde port authority. The Greenock area already benefits from the activities of the Inverclyde initiative and from the full range of support by the

Manpower Services Commission. The additional measures announced recently by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland to support the initiative will help further to strengthen the efforts to create new employment opportunities in Inverclyde.

Afghanistan

Q51. **Mr. Ron Brown** asked the Prime Minister if she will meet Dr. Najib, President of Afghanistan.

The Prime Minister: No.

Q67. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Prime Minister if, during her recent visit to Moscow, either Mr. Gorbachev or Mr. Sheverdnaze, the Soviet Foreign Minister, raised with her the question of supplies of Blowpipe missiles to the resistance forces in Afghanistan; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made on 2 April, at columns 1223-25.

Cabotage

Q77. **Sir David Price** asked the Prime Minister if, in the light of the declared intention of the European Council of Ministers to complete the internal market of the Community by the end of the decade, she will indicate what progress she has made in persuading the other European Governments to give the same rights of cabotage to British ships as the United Kingdom accords to theirs.

The Prime Minister: The Transport Council was not able to agree last December to the liberalisation of cabotage trade as part of the first stage of a Community shipping policy achieved under the United Kingdom's presidency. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport is therefore considering options for redressing the present imbalance of access to cabotage markets, including mounting a case in the European Court of Justice. It is patently unfair that some European Governments should be able to reserve their cabotage trade to domestic operators when other Governments like the United Kingdom, operate an open cabotage market.

House of Lords

Mr. William Powell asked the Prime Minister if she will list in the *Official Report* the names of all those Members of the House of Lords nominated to sit therein since 9 May 1979, together with the dates upon which they took their seats.

The Prime Minister: His Royal Highness The Prince Andrew was created Duke of York on 23 July 1986, and was introduced into the House of Lords on 11 February 1987.

Other peerages created since 9 May 1979 are as follows, together with the dates on which the holders were introduced.

Title	*Created*	*Introduced*
Lord Bellwin	21 May 1979	23 May 1979
Lord Lever of Manchester	3 July 1979	10 July 1979
Lord Stewart of Fulham	5 July 1979	17 July 1979
Lord MacKay of Clashfern	6 July 1979	11 July 1979
Lord Strauss	9 July 1979	11 July 1979
Lord Irving of Dartford	10 July 1979	10 July 1979
Lord Galpern	10 July 1979	16 July 1979
Lord Renton	11 July 1979	16 July 1979
Baroness Jeger	11 July 1979	25 July 1979
Lord Underhill	12 July 1979	17 July 1979
Lord Godber of Willington (died 25 August 1980)	12 July 1979	18 July 1979
Lord Gledwyn of Penrhos	16 July 1979	18 July 1979
Lord Brooks of Tremorfa	17 July 1979	23 July 1979
Lord Lowry	18 July 1979	19 July 1979
Lord Harris of High Cross	19 July 1979	24 July 1979
Lord Ross of Marnock	24 July 1979	25 July 1979
Lord Murton of Lindisfarne	25 July 1979	28 November 1979
Lord Hooson	26 July 1979	31 October 1979
Lord McFarlane of Llandaff	30 July 1979	20 November 1979
Baroness Airey of Abingdon	6 August 1979	7 November 1979
Lord Holderness	7 August 1979	14 November 1979
Lord Gibson-Watt	7 September 1979	7 November 1979
Lord Dacre of Glanton	27 September 1979	14 November 1979
Lord Lane	28 September 1979	24 October 1979
Baroness Skrimshire of Quarter (died 7 November 1979)	2 October 1979	31 October 1979
Lord Coggan	28 January 1980	5 March 1980
Baroness Trumpington	4 February 1980	6 February 1980
Lord Keith of Castleacre	6 February 1980	13 February 1980
Lord Hunt of Tanworth	8 February 1980	20 February 1980
Lord Emslie	11 February 1980	13 February 1980
Lord Sieff of Brimpton	14 February 1980	5 March 1980
Lord McAlpine of Moffat	21 February 1980	27 February 1980
Lord Roskill	15 April 1980	16 April 1980
Lord Boardman	10 July 1980	30 July 1980
Lord Marshall of Leeds	11 July 1980	23 July 1980
Lord Weinstock	17 July 1980	15 October 1980
Lord Matthews	22 July 1980	23 July 1980
Lord McFadzean of Kelvinside	1 September 1980	22 October 1980
Lord Bridge of Harwich	29 September 1980	8 October 1980
Lord Benson	2 February 1981	11 February 1981
Lord Swann	16 February 1981	24 February 1981
Lord Tordoff	11 May 1981	20 May 1981
Lord Molloy	12 May 1981	13 May 1981
Lord Jenkins of Putney	14 May 1981	19 May 1981
Lord John-Mackie	18 May 1981	19 May 1981
Baroness Lane-Fox	19 May 1981	9 June 1981
Lord Bishopston (died 20 April 1984)	21 May 1981	2 June 1981
Baroness Ewart-Biggs	22 May 1981	3 June 1981
Lord Beloff	26 May 1981	2 June 1981
Lord Elystan-Morgan	27 May 1981	16 June 1981
Baroness Platt of Writtle	28 May 1981	17 June 1981
Lord Plummer of St. Marylebone	29 May 1981	1 July 1981

Title	Created	Introduced
Lord Stodart of Leaston	1 June 1981	10 June 1981
Lord Campbell of Alloway	2 June 1981	24 June 1981
Lord Thomas of Swynnerton	16 June 1981	7 July 1981
Baroness Gardner of Parkes	19 June 1981	23 June 1981
Lord Mayhew	6 July 1981	8 July 1981
Lord Marsh	15 July 1981	28 July 1981
Lord Constantine of Stanmore	21 July 1981	28 July 1981
Lord Kadoorie	22 September 1981	14 October 1981
Lord Brandon of Oakbrook	24 September 1981	5 October 1981
Lord Forte	2 February 1982	2 March 1982
Lord Cayzer	8 February 1982	24 March 1982
Lord Bancroft	10 February 1982	3 March 1982
Lord Brightman	12 March 1982	17 March 1982
Lord MacLehose of Beoch	21 May 1982	21 July 1982
Lord Carnegy of Lour	14 July 1982	28 July 1982
Lord Pennock	16 July 1982	20 October 1982
Lord Gormley	20 July 1982	28 July 1982
Lord Templeman	30 September 1982	13 October 1982
Lord Lewin	19 November 1982	2 February 1983
Lord McIntosh of Haringey	17 January 1983	26 January 1983
Baroness Nicol	20 January 1983	26 January 1983
Baroness Cox	24 January 1983	2 March 1983
Lord Taylor of Hadfield	27 January 1983	16 February 1983
Lord Ingrow	31 January 1983	2 February 1983
Lord Ezra	2 February 1983	9 February 1983
Lord Rayner	3 February 1983	9 February 1983
Lord Quinton	7 February 1983	23 February 1983
Lord Prys-Davies	9 February 1983	23 February 1983
Lord Bauer	10 February 1983	16 March 1983
Lord Richardson of Duntisbourne	11 February 1983	23 March 1983
Lord Cameron of Balhousie (died 29 January 1985)	14 March 1983	16 March 1983
Lord Gallacher	28 March 1983	30 March 1983
Viscount Whitelaw	16 June 1983	16 June 1983
Lord Hanson	30 June 1983	6 July 1983
Lord Howard of Henderskelfe (died 27 November 1984)	1 July 1983	6 July 1983
Lord Gray of Contin	4 July 1983	5 July 1983
Viscount Tonypandy	11 July 1983	19 July 1983
Lord King of Wartnaby	15 July 1983	26 July 1983
Lord Blanch	5 September 1983	1 November 1983
Lord Stallard	7 September 1983	9 November 1983
Lord Ennals	9 September 1983	1 November 1983
Lord Graham of Edmonton	12 September 1983	25 October 1983
Lord Stoddart of Swindon	14 September 1983	26 October 1983
Lord Wilson of Rievaulx	16 September 1983	15 November 1983
Lord Maude of Stratford-upon-Avon	19 September 1983	2 November 1983
Lord Broxbourne	21 September 1983	30 November 1983
Lord Kaberry of Adel	23 September 1983	9 November 1983
Lord Fanshawe of Richmond	27 September 1983	22 November 1983
Lord Dean of Berwick	28 September 1983	2 November 1983
Lord Barnett	30 September 1983	8 November 1983
Lord Eden of Winton	3 October 1983	16 November 1983
Lord Peyton of Yeovil	5 October 1983	25 October 1983
Lord Bruce-Gardyne	7 October 1983	15 November 1983
Lord Carmichael of Kelvingrove	10 October 1983	22 November 1983
Lord Grimond	12 October 1983	16 November 1983
Lord Fitt	14 October 1983	26 October 1983
Lord Mulley	30 January 1984	1 February 1984
Lord Bottomley	31 January 1984	15 February 1984
Lord Henderson of Brompton	1 February 1984	2 February 1984
Lord McAlpine of West Green	2 February 1984	8 February 1984
Earl of Stockton (died 29 December 1986)	24 February 1984	24 February 1984
Lord Cameron of Lochbroom	8 June 1984	20 June 1984
Lord Young of Graffham	10 October 1984	16 October 1984
Lord Chapple	4 February 1985	6 February 1985
Baroness Warnock	6 February 1985	27 March 1985
Lord Vinson	7 February 1985	27 February 1985
Lord Murray of Epping Forest	14 February 1985	20 February 1985
Lord Kimball	9 May 1985	21 May 1985
Lord Silkin of Dulwich	13 May 1985	15 May 1985
Lord Butterworth	15 May 1985	5 June 1985
Lord Elliott of Morpeth	16 May 1985	22 May 1985
Lord Crawshaw of Aintree (died 16 July 1986)	17 May 1985	4 June 1985
Lord Donoughue	21 May 1985	26 June 1985
Lord Williams of Elvel	22 May 1985	4 June 1985
Lord Griffiths	23 May 1985	5 June 1985
Baroness Turner of Camden	29 May 1985	18 June 1985
Lord Morton of Shuna	30 May 1985	12 June 1985
Lord Sanderson of Bowden	5 June 1985	11 June 1985
Baroness Hooper	10 June 1985	12 June 1985
Lord Wolfson	13 June 1985	26 June 1985
Lord Mellish	12 July 1985	17 July 1985
Lord Marshall of Goring	22 July 1985	30 July 1985
Lord Ackner	30 January 1986	5 February 1986
Lord Oliver of Aylmerton	31 January 1986	5 February 1986
Lord Goff of Chieveley	6 February 1986	11 February 1986
Lord Dainton	14 February 1986	22 July 1986
Lord Bonham-Carter	21 July 1986	30 July 1986
Lord Moore of Wolvercote	22 July 1986	22 July 1986
Lord Deedes	23 September 1986	15 October 1986
Lord Wyatt of Weeford	3 February 1987	4 February 1987
Lord Bramall	9 February 1987	17 February 1987
Baroness Blackstone	18 March 1987	7 April 1987
Lord Carter	23 March 1987	24 March 1987
Lord Peston	24 March 1987	25 March 1987
Lord Irvine of Lairg	25 March 1987	25 March 1987
Lord Stevens of Ludgate	27 March 1987	31 March 1987
Lord Johnston of Rockport	30 March 1987	29 April 1987
Lord Basnett	31 March 1987	31 March 1987
Lord Trafford	3 April 1987	7 April 1987
Lord Plumb	6 April 1987	28 April 1987
Baroness Blatch	7 April 1987	6 May 1987
Lord Goold	8 April 1987	8 April 1987

Title	Created	Introduced
Lord Havers	22 June 1987	22 June 1987
Lord Chilver	14 July 1987	15 July 1987
Lord Knights	22 July 1987	22 July 1987

Pension Schemes

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Prime Minister if she will take steps to improve the co-ordination between the Inland Revenue and the Department of Health and Social Security in regard to the regulation and supervision of private sector pension schemes; and if she will clarify the status, powers and responsibilities of the Occupational Pensions Board.

The Prime Minister: I have noted my hon. Friend's proposal, but I have no reason to believe that the present relationship between the two Departments in this respect is unsatisfactory. The Occupational Pensions Board, an independent statutory body constituted under the Social Security Act 1973, has certain limited responsibilities for occupational pensions under that Act, the Social Security Pensions Act 1975 and the Social Security Act 1986.

Departmental Staff

Ms. Richardson asked the Prime Minister what was the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men employed within each grade in the Cabinet Office and her Private Office in each year since 1979.

The Prime Minister: The information is not available in the precise form requested. The number of women and men employed at each grade level in the Cabinet Office, including my own Office, is as follows. The figures from 1983 onwards include the Management and Personnel Office.

Number[1] of Male(M) and Female(F) Staff Employed 1979-1987

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Grade 1									
Male	3·0	3·0	3·0	3·0	5·0	6·0	5·0	4·0	3·0
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	1·0	1·0	1·0
Grade 2									
Male	5·0	4·0	6·0	3·0	11·0	6·0	7·0	8·0	8·0
Female	—	—	—	—	1·0	—	—	—	—
Grade 3									
Male	11·0	12·0	10·0	8·0	23·0	24·0	27·0	26·0	24·0
Female	1·0	—	—	—	2·0	2·5	1·0	2·0	3·0
Grade 4									
Male	—	—	—	—	3·0	2·0	6·0	6·0	5·0
Female	—	—	—	—	1·0	—	1·5	1·5	1·5
Grade 5									
Male	26·0	24·0	22·0	18·0	48·0	47·0	47·0	49·0	48·0
Female	3·0	2·0	1·0	1·0	9·0	9·0	10·5	7·5	10·5
Grade 6									
Male	4·0	4·0	5·0	3·0	19·0	24·0	21·0	21·0	20·0
Female	—	—	—	—	3·0	2·0	1·0	5·0	5·0
Grade 7									
Male	74·5	65·5	47·0	37·0	129·0	125·0	137·0	157·0	156·0
Female	7·0	8·5	9·0	9·0	31·0	30·5	33·0	33·0	31·5
SEO									
Male	16·0	14·0	13·0	13·0	82·0	82·0	73·0	66·0	79·0
Female	2·0	2·0	1·0	1·0	15·0	13·5	16·0	17·5	16·5
HEO									
Male	42·0	35·0	42·0	43·0	96·0	103·0	101·0	104·0	96·0
Female	16·0	19·0	19·0	16·0	50·0	47·0	59·0	68·5	69·5
EO									
Male	60·0	59·0	54·0	58·0	133·0	119·0	114·0	117·0	131·0
Female	52·0	51·0	46·0	44·0	130·0	129·5	127·5	125·5	138·0
AO									
Male	95·5	73·5	69·0	68·0	189·0	172·5	162·0	158·5	159·5
Female	99·5	87·5	84·5	87·5	327·0	306·5	300·0	305·0	307·5
AA									
Male	39·0	32·0	33·0	30·5	101·5	90·5	80·5	81·0	74·0
Female	52·5	90·5	92·0	84·0	314·0	260·5	253·0	277·5	271·5
(OG)									
Male	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3·5	8·0
Female	35·5	6·0	—	—	—	—	—	—	1·0

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Total:									
Male	376·0	326·0	304·0	264·5	839·5	801·0	780·5	801·0	811·5
Female	268·5	266·5	252·5	242·5	883·0	801·0	803·5	844·0	856·5

Inner Cities

Mr. Wareing asked the Prime Minister what form co-ordination will take between the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of the Environment in respect of Government policies for the inner cities.

The Prime Minister: Co-ordination, both between departments and between the Government and other local bodies, is important to the success of our policies for the inner cities. Effective machinery to secure this co-operation already exists in the urban programme partnerships, the city action teams and the inner cities initiative.

Telecommunications

Mr. Douglas asked the Prime Minister whether, in her meetings with President Reagan, she had an opportunity of discussing the effect upon British and American telecommunications interests of further delay in negotiations for the second KKD international telecommunications network in Japan.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Arundel (Mr. Marshall) yesterday.

Mr. Michael Marshall asked the Prime Minister whether she had an opportunity of discussing with President Reagan the common interests of the United Kingdom and the United States of America in a speedy resolution to the negotiations for the second KDD international telecommunications network in Japan.

The Prime Minister: No. The United States administration, however, are well aware of our views.

"Spycatcher"

Mr. Allen asked the Prime Minister if she will obtain for the Library of 10 Downing street a copy of the book, "Spycatcher", by Mr. Peter Wright.

The Prime Minister: No.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister (1) whether it was with her authority that at 4 pm on Wednesday 8 July, the Treasury Solicitor's Office telephoned Theodore Goddard, solicitors for *The Sunday Times*, to ask for an undertaking by 5.30 pm that afternoon not to publish further extracts from Mr. Peter Wright's book "Spycatcher"; and if she will make a statement;

(2) whether it was with her authority that around 3 pm on Wednesday 8 July the Treasury Solicitor's Office telephoned Theodore Goddard, solicitors for *The Sunday Times*, indicating an intention later that afternoon to ask them for an undertaking not to publish further extracts from Mr. Peter Wright's book "Spycatcher"; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given by my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General to the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) on 20 July, at column 16.

Engagements

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 July.

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 July.

Mr. Stern asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 July.

Mr. Pike asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 July.

Mr. Rooker asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 July.

Mr. Greenway asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 July.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today.

ENERGY

Nuclear Technology

Mr. Flynn asked the Secretary of State for Energy what assessment he has made of the prospects for the sale of *(a)* nuclear reactors, *(b)* nuclear reprocessing technologies and *(c)* enriched uranium to countries (i) within or (ii) outside the European Community in the next year.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Assessment of sales prospects is a matter for the commercial organisations concerned.

Coal Imports

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Energy what was the level of coal imports for the last 12 months *(a)* by country of origin, *(b)* by tonnage and *(c)* by cost per tonne.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Coal imports into the United Kingdom during the period May 1986 to April 1987 inclusive (the latest 12 months for which statistics are currently available) were as shown in the following table.

Country of Origin	'000 tonnes	Average cost per tonne £
Australia	3614	36·84
USA	3267	37·36
Poland	1082	41·44
Canada	445	35·65
Federal Republic of Germany	333	105·69
Netherlands	203	38·17
South Africa	170	36·40
Belgium/Luxembourg	156	46·07
Bulgaria	144	33·84
Soviet Union	37	31·35
Colombia	31	36·72
France	23	60·05

Country of Origin	'000 tonnes	Average cost per tonne £
China	23	89·61
German Democratic Republic	19	22·84
Eire	11	69·64
Other Countries[2]	29	59·05
Total	3588	40·24

[1] At the United Kingdom port of entry.
[2] Nine countries, each of which supplied less than 10,000 tonnes of coal to the United Kingdom in the period May 1986 to April 1987.
[3] Total differs from sum of components due to rounding.

Most of the coal imported into the United Kingdom is anthracite and coking coal rather than ordinary steam coal. Anthracite (naturally smokeless coal with a high heat content per tonne) commands a particularly high price. It is imported from a variety of countries and represents most of the coal imported from West Germany and China during the 12 months in question.

Coal Industry

Mr Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will issue a direction to British Coal to withdraw the new disciplinary code of conduct.

Mr. Michael Spicer: No. The terms and conditions of employment of mineworkers is a matter for negotiation between the management of British Coal and the mining unions.

Power Station (Fawley)

Sir David Price asked the Secretary of State for Energy if, in making his decision about the proposed siting by the Central Electricity Generating Board of a 1800MW coal-fired power station at Fawley, he will take into account a possible source of pollution dangers to those communities who live downwind from Fawley on the east side of Southampton Water and the potential risk to the Hamble river; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend has not yet received any application from the Central Electricity Generating Board for consent for the construction of a coal-fired power station at Fawley. If such an application is made, he will take all relevant points into account in reaching his decision.

Departmental Staff

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Energy what was the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men employed within each grade in his Department in each year since 1979.

Mr. Parkinson: The numbers of *(a)* women and *(b)* men employed in my Department in each year since 1979 are as follows:

Year and Grade	Women	Men
1979		
Grade 1	—	1·0
Grade 2	—	5·0
Grade 3	—	15·0
Grade 5	3·0	44·5
Grade 6	6·0	23·5
Grade 7	16·5	133·5
Senior Executive Officer and equivalent grades	13·5	100·5
Higher Executive Officer and equivalent grades	35·5	127·5
Executive Officer and equivalent grades	71·0	162·5
Administrative Officer and equivalent grades	164·5	103·5
Administrative Assistance and equivalent grades	163·5	77·0
1980		
Grade 1	—	1·0
Grade 2	—	5·0
Grade 3	1·0	14·0
Grade 5	2·0	43·5
Grade 6	2·0	28·5
Grade 7	12·0	132·5
Senior Executive Officer and equivalent grades	11·0	106·5
Higher Executive Officer and equivalent grades	30·0	140·5
Executive Officer and equivalent grades	60·0	143·5
Administrative Officer and equivalent grades	150·0	91·0
Administrative Assistant and equivalent grades	184·5	72·0
1981		
Grade 1	—	1·0
Grade 2	—	3·0
Grade 3	1·0	13·0
Grade 5	2·0	48·0
Grade 6	—	28·5
Grade 7	13·0	129·5
Senior Executive Officer and equivalent grades	9·5	111·0
Higher Executive Officer and equivalent grades	25·5	121·5
Executive Officer and equivalent grades	59·5	136·5
Administrative Officer and equivalent grades	152·5	92·5
Administrative Assistant and equivalent grades	164·5	68·0
1982		
Grade 1	—	1·0
Grade 2	—	3·0
Grade 3	1·0	11·0
Grade 5	3·0	49·0
Grade 6	—	23·0
Grade 7	13·0	128·0
Senior Executive Officer and equivalent grades	9·0	107·5
Higher Executive Officer and equivalent grades	28·0	117·0
Executive Officer and equivalent grades	51·0	124·0
Administrative Officer and equivalent grades	142·5	87·0
Administrative Assistant and equivalent grades	175·5	59·0
1983		
Grade 1	—	1·0
Grade 2	—	2·0
Grade 3	—	11·0
Grade 5	3·0	41·0
Grade 6	1·0	23·0
Grade 7	15·5	121·0
Senior Executive Officer and equivalent grades	9·0	110·0
Higher Executive Officer and equivalent grades	24·0	106·0

Year and Grade	Women	Men
Executive Officer and equivalent grades	51·0	125·0
Administrative Officer and equivalent grades	142·0	83·5
Administrative Assistant and equivalent grades	168·0	48·0
1984		
Grade 1	—	1·0
Grade 2	—	2·0
Grade 3	1·0	11·0
Grade 5	3·0	44·0
Grade 6	4·0	21·0
Grade 7	15·0	126·0
Senior Executive Officer and equivalent grades	7·0	108·0
Higher Executive Officer and equivalent grades	24·0	102·0
Executive Officer and equivalent grades	57·0	129·0
Administrative Officer and equivalent grades	142·0	78·5
Administrative Assistant and equivalent grades	154·0	48·0
1985		
Grade 1	—	1·0
Grade 2	—	2·0
Grade 3	—	11·0
Grade 5	4·0	45·0
Grade 6	6·0	29·0
Grade 7	13·0	126·0
Senior Executive Officer and equivalent grades	9·0	98·0
Higher Executive Officer and equivalent grades	22·0	101·0
Executive Officer and equivalent grades	57·5	130·5
Administrative Officer and equivalent grades	145·5	72
Administrative Assistant and equivalent grades	149·5	45·0
1986		
Grade 1	—	1·0
Grade 2	—	2·0
Grade 3	—	12·0
Grade 4	—	—
Grade 5	4·0	46·0
Grade 6	5·0	32·0
Grade 7	13·0	120·0
Senior Executive Officer and equivalent grades	13·0	99·0
Higher Executive Officer and equivalent grades	25·0	109·5
Executive Officer and equivalent grades	53·0	113·5
Administrative Officer and equivalent grades	137·0	77·0
Administrative Assistant and equivalent grades	129·0	38·5
1987		
Grade 1	—	1·0
Grade 2	—	2·0
Grade 3	—	12·0
Grade 4	—	1·0
Grade 5	3·0	45·5
Grade 6	8·0	32·0
Grade 7	18·0	126·0
Senior Executive Officer and equivalent grades	11·0	97·0
Higher Executive Officer and equivalent grades	20·5	112·0
Executive Officer and equivalent grades	61·5	125·5
Administrative Officer and equivalent grades	127·0	81·0
Administrative Assistant and equivalent grades	119·0	39·5

Note: Figures in the tables include an allowance for grades now obsolete and for grades not identified by the Treasury's central manpower database.

Nuclear Incidents

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make it his policy to request the Health and Safety Executive's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate to update the quarterly notifications of incidents and accidents for the period July 1982 to May 1987 using the new criteria for reporting incidents reported to the House on 30 April.

Mr. Michael Spicer: No. The quarterly statements issued by the Health and Safety Executive have already reported all incidents having significance or potential significance for the health and safety of the work force at nuclear installations or for the general public during the period specified.

Electricity Industry

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he proposes to allow new providers of electricity generation for either own-use or for sale to operate in the wake of the privatisation of the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Yes.

Mr. Baldry asked the Secretary of State for Energy how he intends to meet any expediture arising from his proposal to privatise the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Parkinson: Parliamentary approval for expenditure on this new service will be sought in a Supplementary Supply Estimate for the Department of Energy. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure will be met by repayable advances from the contingencies fund.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Energy what estimate he has made of the cost of providing extra facilities to transmit surplus electricity generated in Scotland to the grid serving England and Wales.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a matter for the two utilities concerned.

British Gas (Privatisation)

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will publish an estimate of the amount of money spent advertising the sale of British Gas for privatisation.

Mr. Peter Morrison: It is not the practice of Her Majesty's Government to publish the sums paid to individual advisers or contractors in a privatisation. Overall marketing costs to the Government, which included the share information office, prospectus printing and despatch and the customer mailing as well as the advertising, were £35 million before VAT.

It was money well spent. The activities involved played a vital role in preparing the market prior to setting the price for British Gas shares. A change of just one penny in the share price was equivalent to £40 million.

UKAEA (Nuclear Research and Development)

Mr. Baldry asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make available summaries of his Department's programme letters in respect of its funding of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority's nuclear research and development programmes.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I have today placed copies in the Library.

Energy Technologies

Mr. Hunter asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information is publicly available on the appraisal of different energy technologies.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I am today placing in the Library of the House Energy Paper 54 "Energy Technologies for the United Kingdom — 1986 Appraisal of Research, Development and Demonstration". This is a comprehensive assessment of a wide range of different energy technologies covering virtually all those currently considered to be relevant for the United Kingdom.

ESCOM (South Africa)

Mr. Boateng asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether all uranium imported into the United Kingdom from *(a)* South Africa and *(b)* Namibia is treated as covered by the International Atomic Energy or Euratom safeguards.

Mr. Michael Spicer [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 July 1987, c. *647-48*]: All uranium imported into the United Kingdom for civil use is subject to Euratom safeguards and to the terms of the UK/Euratom/IAEA safeguards agreement.

Mr. Boateng asked the Secretary of State for Energy what proportion of the total uranium stockpile held in the United Kingdom is under International Atomic Energy Authority or Euratom safeguards.

Mr. Michael Spicer [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 July 1987, c. *647-48*]: All civil uranium in the United Kingdom is subject to Euratom safeguards and to the terms of the UK/Euratom/IAEA safeguards agreement.

Mr. Boateng asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will place in the Library any correspondence between *(a)* Her Majesty's Government and the European Commissioners and *(b)* between Her Majesty's Government and the Australian and Canadian attaches to the European Community on the matter of the application of nuclear safeguards to uranium imports to the EEC for use in the United Kingdom in each case since May 1979.

Mr. Michael Spicer [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 July 1987, c. *647-48*]: No. Correspondence between the United Kingdom Government, the European Commission and the Australian or Canadian Governments is confidential to the parties concerned.

Nuclear Waste

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is Her Majesty's Government's policy on returning nuclear waste arising in low, intermediate and high-level categories from the reprocessing of *(a)* imported thermal oxide fuel and *(b)* imported magnox fuel to each country of origin, what are the volumes involved in each waste category for contracts for spent nuclear fuel imported for reprocessing so far signed; and if he will make a statement on the impact on Nirex of managing spent nuclear fuel imported for reprocessing from other countries.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Energy what commercial and national security restrictions currently exist covering the disclosure of information on nuclear waste plutonium contaminated materials, plutonium and depleted uranium following reprocessing after discharge from power stations.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to the replies given by my hon. Friend the Member for Eddisbury (Mr. Goodlad) to the hon. Member for Meirionydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas) on 26 and 29 January 1987 at columns *58* and *327*, respectively. The reply on 29 January erroneously refers to the date of the other reply as 28 January.

Offshore Technology Board

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will list the members of the Offshore Technology Board, giving their occupations and working backgrounds, their remuneration, and an estimate of how many hours a year, each spend, by name, on the board's behalf.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Sellafield

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has about progress by British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. in carrying out safety improvements at Sellafield stipulated in the Nuclear Installation Inspectorate's audit reports.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Coal Waste

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Energy what commercial restrictions cover the disclosure of information on coal waste from power stations.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Coal ash from power stations is widely used in the construction industry and its availability widely publicised. The sale of such waste is a matter for the Central Electricity Generating Board which advises me that only the pricing terms of sales contracts are normally kept confidential.

Magnox Reactors

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will update to 31 March 1987 the information on thermal energy generated and spent fuel discharged by Hunterston A station given the reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy on 10 July 1986; and if he will revise the figure for fuel discharged in 1985-86 given in that answer.

Mr. Ian Lang [*pursuant to the reply*, 2 July 1987, c. 128]: I have been asked to reply. I am advised by the South of Scotland Electricity Board that during the financial year 1986-87 the thermal output of Hunterston A was 9,211,936·4 MWh (thermal) and 75·68 tonnes of fuel were discharged. In 1985-86, 96·94 tonnes of fuel were discharged, not 9,694 as previously stated.

ENVIRONMENT

Radioactive Waste

25. **Mr. McGrady** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what further action he intends to take to mitigate the effects of the discharge of radioactive waste into the Irish sea by British Nuclear Fuels Ltd.

Mr. Moynihan: British Nuclear Fuels plc is undertaking a major investment programme to reduce discharges from Sellafield. As a result of this programme, which will extend into the 1990s, liquid discharges have been reduced to less than a sixth of their 1979 level. Together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, my Department has introduced a new authorisation limiting radioactive liquid discharges from Sellafield into the sea. The authorisation, which came into effect on 1 July 1986, set tighter annual, quarterly and two-day limits on the overall amounts of radioactivity which may be discharged into the sea and, for the first time, set specific limits on a wide range of individual radionuclides that are of radiological significance or that account for a large proportion of the discharge in activity terms. The authorisation will be reviewed in two or three years' time and again when the current investment programme is completed.

Water Environment

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate the numbers of people using the water environment and its surrounds for recreational purposes.

Mr. Moynihan: Membership of organised clubs in Great Britain for the sports of angling, canoeing, rowing, sub aqua, water skiing and sailing in 1985 totalled an estimated 510,000. This figure underestimates the total number of users as it does not take account of casual users of water areas for recreation. Figures from the 1983 general household survey also indicate that this figure is an underestimate.

From the limited data available, it is reckoned that approximately 2 million people per year make use of the water environment for recreation.

Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting Houses

Mr. Beith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration he has given to the 42nd interim report of the Royal Commission on the ancient monuments of England relating to nonconformist chapels and meeting houses; and whether he will list any of those chapels and meeting houses referred to in the report especially worthy of preservation which have been demolished, significantly altered or become disused since its publication.

Mr. Moynihan: Most of the information requested is not held by the Department. I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible with as much information as can readily be assembled.

Rating Reform

Mr Ralph Howell asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how, under the proposed community charge legislation, he intends to recover unpaid community charges from the unemployed, self employed or retired.

Mr. Howard: The same recovery procedure which currently applies for domestic rates will continue to be available: local authorities will be empowered to seek a court order permitting distraint on goods.

Mr. Hannam asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will consult organisations representing the interests of both elderly and disabled people prior to the introduction of a community charge.

Mr. Howard: The Government conducted a major consultation exercise following publication of the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" (Cmnd. 9714). A number of voluntary and welfare organisations responded to the Green Paper, including Age Concern England, the British Pensioners and Trade Unions Action Association and the Spastics Society.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I are always prepared to listen to the views expressed by such organisations.

Mr. Summerson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment at what intervals property will be revalued for the unified business rate; and if at revaluation the rate in the pound will be adjusted accordingly.

Mr. Howard: There will be a general revaluation of non-domestic property in 1990. It is intended that there should be a further revaluation in 1995 and at intervals of no more than five years thereafter. In a year of revalution, the national non-domestic rate poundage will be adjusted in inverse proportion to the change in aggregate rateable value.

Mr. Summerson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration will be given when revaluing business properties for the introduction of the unified business rates to the possibility that, in some areas, recent substantial rate increases may not have had time to affect rental values.

Mr. Howard: When valuing a property for rating, the valuation office is required to ascertain the rent that a new tenant would be prepared to pay at the relevant date. Although existing rents for comparable properties are taken into account, the valuation officer may adjust them if they no longer reflect current local market conditions.

Opencast Mining

Mr. Cummings asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list, by county, for each year, from 1976 until 29 February 1984, inclusive, every opencast coal mining application for authorisation that he considered, stating in each case whether or not the relevant local authority formally approved the application and whether or not the application was authorised.

Mr. Trippier: The information is as follows:

Opencast coal applications for authorisations by county

	Date of Application	*Date of decision*[1]
Clwyd		
Crosstree Farm	9 June 1976	12 April 1978
Point Einian	7 February 1979	[2]13 August 1981
Cumbria		
Oughterside	2 December 1976	21 March 1978
Foxhouse	23 June 1978	12 July 1979
Maresby and Keckle	23 June 1978	12 February 1980

	Date of Application	Date of decision[1]
Pica	15 November 1978	9 April 1980
Derbyshire		
Newgate II	6 April 1976	19 October 1976
Whitehouse	14 April 1976	5 November 1976
Furnance Hillock	25 October 1976	27 April 1977
Shilo South Ext.	5 December 1977	[2] 16 June 1978
Ryefield	17 July 1978	23 April 1979
Erin	17 November 1978	6 July 1979
Godkin	20 December 1978	14 February 1980
Icehouse	19 June 1979	15 October 1979
Newlands	27 November 1979	8 December 1981
Glapwell	14 February 1980	28 May 1980
Oakes Row	20 August 1980	11 March 1981
Ling's	23 April 1981	7 December 1981
Birch Hall	23 April 1982	19 May 1983
Dunfermline and Galloway		
Cadgerhall	18 May 1979	13 September 1979
Durham		
Ibbetsons	23 February 1976	25 June 1976
Hunters	19 March 1976	1 September 1976
Deborah	19 November 1976	10 August 1977
Rowley	6 October 1977	5 May 1978
Tanners Hall	16 February 1978	20 July 1979
Buckhead	2 March 1978	13 August 1979
Edmansley	17 October 1978	28 July 1980
Daisy Hill	15 November 1978	[2]15 October 1980
Red Barns	29 January 1979	[3]21 December 1979
Wooley	25 May 1979	20 October 1980
Buckhead extension	19 November 1979	26 February 1980
Dunleyford	19 December 1979	14 February 1983
Langley	5 March 1980	27 January 1981
Hilltop	25 July 1980	[3]29 February 1984
Moss Close	6 August 1980	27 January 1981
Chapman's Well	10 July 1981	29 February 1984
Red Barns	24 June 1982	21 March 1983
Billy Hill	12 October 1982	29 February 1984
Black Hill	17 November 1982	12 September 1983
Dyfed		
Rhos Colliery	23 February 1976	25 June 1976
Lamberts Colliery	20 November 1978	10 July 1979
Glyn Tai	27 November 1978	30 June 1982
Smiths Colliery	3 February 1979	10 September 1979
Wernos Colliery	5 July 1979	29 April 1980
Glyn Glas	18 March 1980	2 October 1980
Ffos Las	2 April 1982	11 March 1983
Garnant	11 April 1983	[3]11 November 1983
East Lothian		
Blindwells	9 December 1976	19 December 1977
Fife		
West Moss	19 July 1977	28 July 1978
Thornyhill	27 December 1979	30 April 1980
Kiersbeath	3 July 1980	26 February 1981
Greater Manchester		
Miller's Lane	29 December 1976	5 September 1978
Amberswood	24 January 1978	24 January 1980
Tan Pit Slip East	5 March 1979	3 December 1979
Nicholas	15 September 1980	21 May 1982
Pemberton	12 March 1982	29 February 1984
Amberswood ext.	22 March 1983	[3]29 February 1984
Lancashire		
Fauldheads	19 February 1976	18 August 1976
Ellerbeck	26 August 1976	19 September 1977
Tan Pit Slip ext. South	16 March 1977	24 November 1977
Ellerbeck North	13 March 1980	14 April 1982
Leicestershire		
Donington extension	28 November 1977	17 April 1978
Willesley Clay	26 October 1979	[3]17 January 1980
Coalfield North	5 March 1980	16 October 1980
Woodhead	8 February1983	[2]10 January 1984
Nottinghamshire		
Canal	12 August 1980	27 January 1981
Sinotherfly	6 January 1981	[3]29 February 1984
Bentinck	29 October 1981	2 August 1982
Powys		
Tredeg	5 December 1977	22 June 1978
Salop		
Lime Kiln Lane	25 May 1976	20 January 1977
South Yorkshire		
Cauker	16 March 1976	11 December 1978
Eastwood	8 August 1977	22 November 1977
Staffs		
Bateswood North	6 September 1976	8 December 1977
Mitre East Ext.	30 November 1977	24 April 1978
Holly Bank	3 October 1978	6 July 1979
Bursnips Road	27 February 1979	17 April 1980
Natsfield	14 May 1979	22 December 1980
Bateswood North	1 September 1980	3 June 1982
Red Street	10 October 1980	20 July 1981
Great Oak	14 November 1980	[3]29 February 1984
Streets Lane	29 December 1981	[2]11 October 1983
High Lane	8 November 1982	5 June 1987
Bleak House	28 July 1983	[4]—
Strathclyde		
Bowes	26 July 1977	28 February 1978
Headless Cross	6 December 1978	12 April 1979
Rigmuir	12 March 1980	25 June 1980
Headless Cross	15 September 1981	5 October 1981
Raugh Hill	1 December 1981	19 December 1983
Ponesk	6 April 1982	29 February 1984
Sourlie	21 May 1982	18 January 1983
Bowes (revised)	12 October 1982	18 January 1983
Ben Bain	9 March 1983	12 October 1983
Tyne and Wear		
Horsegate	15 March 1976	[2]23 March 1977
Kibblewaite	20 January 1982	23 December 1983
Warwickshire		
Orchard	16 July 1980	[3]29 February 1984
Sudeley	23 July 1982	22 July 1985
West Glamorgan		
Drym Ext. South	2 February 1976	12 May 1976
Maesgwyn Ext.	15 February 1977	28 July 1977
East Pit	6 June 1980	27 January 1981
West Yorkshire		
Snydale Ext. South	26 January 1976	8 April 1976
Gamblethorpe	28 February 1977	26 July 1978
Ingham	3 August 1977	[3]10 March 1978
Lockhead	11 May 1978	5 September 1978
Ingham (revised)	25 May 1979	6 July 1979
Springfield	16 July 1979	18 November 1980
St. Aidans Ext.	17 December 1979	1 October 1980
Cornwall	14 August 1980	28 April 1982

[1] All authorisations were granted unless otherwise indicated.
[2] Refused.
[3] Withdrawn.
[4] Replaced by later application.

Prior to 1 March 1984 the Opencast Executive had deemed planning permission for its operations and therefore formal approval by the mineral planning authority did not arise.

Council House Sales

Mr. Gerald Bowden asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the reasons for the delay in the purchase by Mrs. C. Ellis of her council home at 24 Crystal Palace road, East Dulwich SE22; and when he now expects Southwark council to complete the transaction.

Mr. Waldegrave: I understand that Mrs. Ellis is one of many tenants of Southwark council whose right-to-buy application is delayed because the council is still considering how to comply with the new requirements, introduced by the Housing and Planning Act 1986, to notify applicants of known structural defects. My Department is pressing Southwark council to deal with the delays.

Compulsory Purchase

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if Her Majesty's Government are satisfied that the present arrangements for compensation as a result of compulsory purchase are equitable; and what proposals exist to allow for the payment of a sum towards replacement costs of relocation.

Mr. Waldegrave: I believe that the rules in section 5 of the Land Compensation Act 1961 for assessing the market value of properties which have been compulsorily acquired are in general a fair way of establishing the value of what is being taken from the landowner. We have no proposals for changing entitlement to reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses arising from the move, and to compensation for the value of fixtures which cannot be removed.

London Docklands Development Corporation

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the members of the London Docklands Development Corporation; and what are the selection criteria for membership.

Mr. Trippier: The members of the London Docklands Development Corporation are Mr. Christopher Benson (chairman), Mr. John Mills (deputy chairman), Mr. Alan Benjamin, Mrs. Jennifer D'Abo, Sir Andrew Derbyshire, Sir John Garlick, Councillor Jonathan Mathews, Mr. Lewis Moss, Mr. Dennis Stevenson, Mr. Wyndham Thomas, and Mr. Reg Ward (chief executive).

There are currently two vacancies on the board. Members should have relevant experience to the regeneration of urban areas, and the board must include some with special knowledge of the locality.

Housing

Mr. David Nicholson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list his powers to determine the number of extra housing units to be built in an area, beyond original proposals by the district; and what factors he has to take into account when prescribing extra construction.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Secretary of State's powers to determine the number of housing units to be built in an area are derived from his approval of county structure plans, as set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1971, as amended. He may approve them, with or without modifications or reservation, or he may reject them. Structure plans are normally examined in public by a panel under an independent chairman. He weighs all the evidence as well as the panel's recommendations before coming to a decision.

Mr. David Nicholson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what extra housing provision he has called for in the borough of Taunton Deane; when he made this request, and for what reason; whether he specifies the new construction to be in particular areas of the borough; and whether he specifies that account should be taken of non-statutory "green wedges", such as exist in Taunton Deane.

Mr. Waldegrave: The broad provision of housing in the borough of Taunton Deane is set out in the Somerset structure plan. Before the Secretary of State approved the first alteration to it in August 1986 he gave careful consideration to the panel's report of the examination in public. The panel acknowledged that Taunton was a major centre for development and that there were environmental constraints. They recognised the need to restrain housing growth over the district but concluded that an additional 400 dwellings would be justified in Taunton. The Secretary of State agreed.

The detailed location for development is a matter for local plans which, with the structure plan, are the framework for considering planning applications. The Secretary of State is not directly involved in the preparation of local plans, but they have to conform generally to the approved structure plan. Authorities responsible for preparing them have to take account of all material factors, including the need to protect and conserve the environment.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest estimate of the numbers of houses, also expressed as a percentage of the total, in Oldham and the north-west, and nationally, which are *(a)* substandard dwellings and unfit, *(b)* fit but lacking one or more basic amenities and *(c)* non-substandard dwellings in need of renovation.

Mr. Waldegrave: Local authorities are asked for these figures in their annual housing investment programme returns; the figures are not necessarily comparable as authorities' criteria differ and they are not consistent with national estimates from the English house condition survey 1981.

The figures relating to April 1986 provided by Oldham and estimates for the north-west and for England, including allowance for any missing returns, are as follows:

	Oldham		North-west		England	
	Number	Percentage of stock	Number	Percentage of stock	Number	Percentage of stock
Unfit dwellings	4,777	5·5	106,700	3·9	654,000	3·5
Dwellings fit but lacking basic amenities	3,370	3·9	71,600	2·6	501,000	2·7
Non-substandard dwellings in need of renovation[1]	16,206	18·6	508,800	18·8	2,890,000	15·4

[1] Dwellings requiring repairs estimated at more than £3,000 (£4,200 in Greater London).

Radiation Monitoring

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment in which areas of the United Kingdom levels of nuclear radiation are regularly monitored; and in which areas levels have increased or decreased since the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

Mr. Moynihan: Regular monitoring is undertaken around major nuclear installations by their operators. National monitoring is also undertaken by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority and the National Radiological Protection Board. In all parts of the United Kingdom, background levels increased immediately following the Chernobyl accident but are now decreasing.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what changes he *(a)* has made or *(b)* proposes to make in the monitoring of nuclear fallout over the United Kingdom in the wake of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

Mr. Moynihan: I refer to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 30 June 1987 at columns 65-67. This explained the main framework of the new contingency plan. The Department is discussing with other organisations how the plan can now be implemented.

Water Supply (Meters)

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will estimate *(a)* the average cost of a current water flow meter and *(b)* the cost by each water authority area of the installation cost of water meters to each user's premises, by category.

Mr. Moynihan: The size of a meter, and therefore its cost, will depend on the volume of flow it is designed to measure. For a domestic supply, a meter typically costs between £12 and £15. The prime determinant of the installation cost is the nature of the plumbing arrangement of the property being metered rather than the category of property or the area in which it is situated.

Defective Housing

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will list by type, numbers and local authority area, the number of homes currently designated by the Housing Defects Act; and which other types of homes are currently being considered for designation under the Act.

Mr. Waldegrave: Information on the distribution, by local authority, of prefabricated reinforced concrete dwellings designed before 1960, designated under the housing defects legislation, was obtained in 1983 and updated in July 1986 to include Smith houses. Copies of this material are in the Library. We are assembling updated information from local authorities on the numbers of designated types (including Boswell). I shall arrange for this to be placed in the Library and a copy sent to the hon. Member when it is available. I have received a representation from the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) concerning the designation of Truscon RD27 houses in Liverpool. We hope to be able to give a decision shortly.

Severn-Trent Water Authority

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the average household bill for water rates, by local authority area, levied by the Severn-Trent water authority in each of the last four years.

Mr. Moynihan: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment to the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) on 29 June 1987 at column *46*. The further information requested by the hon. Member is not held centrally.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the number of households disconnected for non-payment in the Severn-Trent water authority area in each of the last three financial years, detailed by local authority area; how many of those disconnected were *(a)* pensioners, *(b)* single parents or *(c)* disabled or handicapped; and what was the average length of the disconnection period.

Mr. Moynihan: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay) on 13 July at col. *392*. Other information on disconnections is not held centrally.

Palace of Westminster (Asbestos)

Ms. Walley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give details of all asbestos monitoring which has been undertaken in the Palace of Westminster and its associated outbuildings, specifying the locations and the condition of the asbestos found; if he will list by location all the remedial works currently planned or in progress, together with the timetables involved; and if, in the case of any remedial work which has been decided upon but not yet scheduled, he will give details of the condition of the asbestos and the assessment of the health hazard posed.

Mr. Chope: There are some 40 locations on the parliamentary estate where asbestos is known to exist. These are inspected annually. I will write to the hon. Member with the details she requests and place copies in the Library.

Canary Wharf

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what part or parts of the master building agreement signed by the London Docklands Development Corporation and Olympia and York, require those developers to consult any London borough council, other than the London borough of Tower Hamlets, on any aspect of their proposals.

Mr. Trippier: None.

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the appropriate sum, at 1987 prices, necessary to complete each phase of the Canary wharf development in the London docklands; what proportion of such sums is likely to be invested by British institutions; and what is the appropriate distribution of the shareholdings in the scheme by nationality.

Mr. Trippier: I cannot speculate on these matters.

Ms. Gordon asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will direct the London Docklands Development Corporation to publish the master building agreement and associated agreements relating to Canary wharf.

Mr. Trippier: No.

Ms. Gordon asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the agreed contribution of Olympia and York to the costs of sewage and drainage works required for the Canary wharf development.

Mr. Trippier: The developers of Canary wharf are to be responsible for works, including those for drainage, on the site and for the costs of those works.

Ms. Gordon asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is the amount of public money to go into the Westferry circus part of the Canary wharf project;

(2) what contribution Olympia and York are making to the construction costs of Westferry circus.

Mr. Trippier: The developers of Canary wharf will bear the full construction costs of Westferry circus.

Ms. Gordon asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on the price of the land for the Canary wharf project agreed by the London Docklands Development Corporation and Olympia and York.

Mr. Trippier: The land price payable to LDDC by the developers of Canary wharf is equivalent to £1 million per acre for 20 acres, of which £8 million is payable in cash and £12 million is accounted for by the developers' commitments to various on-site works. The land price is only one element of the overall package to development proposals which includes the developers' £67 million contribution to the cost of LRT's City extension of the docklands light railway.

Ms. Gordon asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether any reassessment of the price for the land in the master building agreement for Canary wharf has taken place since the first draft agreement was prepared in 1986 up to the present day;

(2) what was the date at which an independent valuation was made for the Canary wharf development.

Mr. Trippier: The Department kept the terms of the whole agreement, including the land price, under review throughout the negotiations and the land price was also considered in an independent assessment of the whole agreement in April 1987.

South-West Water Authority

Mr. Matthew Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will allow the South-West water authority external borrowing powers prior to the privatisation of water authorities.

Mr. Moynihan: My right hon. Friend has no plans to change water authorities' borrowing powers prior to privatisation.

Land Prices (Isle of Dogs)

Ms. Gordon asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the latest information as to the range of prices per acre of land for offices in the Isle of Dogs enterprise zone.

Mr. Trippier: Prices range between £1 million and £2 million per acre, depending on the circumstances.

Nuclear Reactors (France)

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many times, and on what dates, problems at French nuclear reactors have been reported to Her Majesty's Government under the bilateral agreement; and what action followed.

Mr. Moynihan: No problems have been reported to Her Majesty's Government under the bilateral agreement.

Enterprise Zone (Isle of Dogs)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, for each financial year of its existence, what are the sums he has transferred to the London borough of Tower Hamlets in respect of the value of rate income forgone in respect of those parts of the enterprise zone in that borough; and what is his estimate of the likely sums to be paid in each of the years before the termination of the arrangements.

Mr. Trippier: The following amounts have been paid to the London borough of Tower Hamlets in respect of rate revenue forgone in the Isle of Dogs enterprise zone:

Financial year	*Amount*
	£
1982-83	1,144,672
1983-84	1,386,381
1984-85	2,232,004
1985-86	2,177,419
1986-87	[1]2,833,554

[1] Subject to audit.

The borough has also been paid £2,475,000 in the present financial year so far. The amount paid in each year is affected both by the amount of demolition and new development that takes place and by the level of the rate set by the borough. It is therefore, not possible to estimate what amounts are likely to be paid in future years.

Jonathan Swift House

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will announce a decision on the request for the listing of Jonathan Swift's former house at Prospect, Whitehaven.

Mr. Ridley: The Jonathan Swift house was listed as a building of special architectural or historic interest on 21 July.

Rates

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish the overall percentage change in the non-domestic rate poundage in each rating authority in England between 1981-82 and 1987-88, showing the percentage increase which would have occurred in each if the non-domestic rate poundage had increased in line with the retail price index over this period and the difference between the two percentages for each authority.

Mr. Ridley: I have today placed the available information in the Library.

Environment Council

Mr. Robert G. Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the outcome of the Environment Council on 21 July.

Mr. Moynihan: My noble Friend, the Minister for Environment, Countryside and Water represented the United Kingdom at this meeting.

My noble Friend was pleased to report that the Council reached a common position by a qualified majority on two draft directives on vehicle emissions: emissions from cars, known as the "Luxembourg package", and gaseous emissions from heavy vehicles. In accordance with the new co-operation procedure introduced by the Single European Act, the draft directives will now be referred to the European Parliament for its opinion. My noble Friend voiced the United Kingdom's concern that the use of article 100A as the legal base for these two measures should not prejudice the use of article 130S in the new environment chapter of the EEC treaty the legal base for measures whose predominant objective is the protection and improvement of the environment. This view was supported by all member states and the Commission.

One element of the "Luxembourg package" is that it enables member states to specify dates by which new cars must be able to run on unleaded petrol. Once the directive is adopted, we shall apply such in the United Kingdom at the earliest possible date. The Council also adopted under Article 130S a directive permitting member states to ban the sale of leaded regular petrol.

Provisional agreement was reached by a majority of member states, including the United Kingdom, on a compromise package for particula standards no diesel cars. Limits will be introduced in two stages, with tighter limits applying initially only to new engine types.

On chlorofluorocarbons the Council took note of a report by the Commission on progress towards a protocol to the ozone layer convention. Particular tribute was paid to the co-operation between the Commission and the three member states (United Kingdom, Belgium and Denmark) which have held the Presidency during the negotiations. Considerable optimism was expressed that outstanding points of difference would be resolved at the diplomatic conference to be held in Montreal in September.

Marine Pollution

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration he has given to the implications of the resolution of the recent meeting of the Paris Commission on the Prevention of Marine Pollution on the reduction and control of radioactive discharges into the marine environment.

Mr. Moynihan: This meeting did not pass a resolution on this topic. There was majority support for a recommendation on the minimisation and elimination of pollution caused by radioactive discharges but the United Kingdom and France entered reservations on it.

Water Charges

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what basis will be adopted for water charges when domestic rates are abolished.

Mr. Moynihan: This is under discussion with the water industry.

Block Grant (Isle of Wight)

Mr. Barry Field asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from the Association of County Councils seeking the removal of the effects of 1987-88 block grant safety nets and gain caps; and what estimate he has made of the effects of implementation to these proposals on the Isle of Wight county council.

Mr. Chope: There are no proposals to remove the nets and caps on block grant entitlements for 1987-88, and no representations have been received from the Association of County Councils on this subject since the settlement.

My right hon. Friend has today announced his proposals for local authority current provision and aggregate exchequer grant for 1988-89. The local authority associations will be consulted formally about his proposals for the settlement, including options for block grant distribution, and safety nets and caps, later in the autumn. Illustrative grant entitlements for individual authorities cannot yet be calculated.

Cash Limits

Mr. Baldry asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any changes to announce to his Department's cash limits.

Mr. Ridley: Yes. The non-voted cash limit in 1987-88 for new towns (DOE/NTI) has been reduced by £50 million from minus £95·146 million to minus £145·146 million to take account of receipts from disposals of property which are higher than forecast. The non-voted cash limit in 1987-88 for the urban block (DOE/UAI) is being increased by £31 million. This increase is in addition to the £3·1 million increase to the cash limit under the end-year flexibility increases announced today by my right hon. Friend, the Chief Secretary. The revised cash limit, taking account of both changes, is £437·5 million. The balance of £19 million will be surrendered to the reserve.

Charities (Grants)

Mr. Andrew Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make orders under section 49 of the Local Government Act 1985 requiring residuary bodies to make grants to eligible charities within their areas from money received from the sale of land belonging to the former Greater London council or metropolitan councils; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: An order was made under section 49 of the Local Government Act 1985 on 2 February (SI 118/87) to require the London residuary body to pay £10 million to the Trust for London in the financial year 1986/87.

My right hon. Friend has given careful consideration to all representations made to him about the possibility of other section 49 orders to make grants to charities in London and in the former metropolitan counties. No further section 49 orders are planned. Instead receipts that might have been used for this purpose will be distributed to the relevant boroughs and district councils. These councils are in the best position to decide on the appropriate level of support for their local voluntary sector.

Royal Arsenal Gatehouse

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what reply he gave to applications by the London borough of Greenwich dated 30 July 1986 and 9 April 1987 for a special capital allocation to enable the council to restore the royal arsenal gatehouse.

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Transport what reply he gave to a letter dated 21 July 1986 from the director of architectural services of the London borough of Greenwich seeking a special capital allocation to enable the council to restore the royal arsenal gatehouse on land surplus to the A206 road improvement scheme.

Mr. Chope: The London borough of Greenwich was informed that a special capital allocation was not available. The council has discretion in deciding how to spend the resources which it has available for capital expenditure and it is for the council to decide whether to allocate a share of those resources to the restoration of the royal arsenal gatehouse.

THE ARTS

"Nightmare on Elm Street III"

Mr. Summerson asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received concerning the film "Nightmare on Elm Street III"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: I have had no representations about this film. I do not have ministerial responsibility for the content of commercially-produced films.

Departmental Staff

Ms. Richardson asked the Minister for the Arts what was the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men employed within each grade in his Department in each year since 1979.

Mr. Luce Since the creation of the Office of Arts and Libraries as a separate Department in 1983 the numbers have been as follows:

	1984		*1985*		*1986*		*1987*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
Grade 2	—	1	—	1	—	1	—	1
Grade 5	—	3	—	3	—	3	1	2
Grade 6	1	—	1	—	1	—	1	—
Grade 7	5	6	3	7	3	6	3	6
Senior Executive Officer	1	—	—	1	—	2	1	1
Higher Executive Officer	3	7	4	6	3	7	3	6
Executive Officer	5	2	4	2	5	5	7	3
Administrative Officer	7	2	5	4	8	4	7	6
Administrative Assistant	2	—	5	—	2	1	1	3
Total	24	21	22	24	22	29	24	28

Note: The figures given are for 1 January in the year shown.

DEFENCE

Security Forces

24. **Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many service personnel are currently serving in the security forces in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Freeman: As at 31 March 1987 (the most recent available figure) 17,694 service men and women are serving in the security forces in Northern Ireland.

Woolwich Arsenal (Reprographic Unit)

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many tenders he has received from contractors for the on-site operation of the reprographic unit of the directorate general of defence quality assurance at Woolwich arsenal;

(2) what estimate he has made as to how many jobs are likely to be lost if the reprographic unit of the directorate general of defence quality assurance is transferred to private contractors; and what are the estimated annual savings;

(3) what discussion he has reached on the possible contractorisation of the reprographic unit of the directorate general of defence quality assurance.

Mr. Sainsbury: The tenders for the on-site operation of the reprographic unit of the directorate general of defence quality assurance at Woolwich arsenal are in the course of

preparation. It is not therefore possible at this stage to say whether the task will be contractorised, whether jobs would be lost or what savings might be effected.

Departmental Manpower

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Defence what was the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men employed within each grade of his Department in each year since 1979.

Mr. Sainsbury: I shall write to the hon. Member shortly.

Hifix 6 Radio Transmitters

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list the locations of all HI/FIX 6 radio transmitters now operating or under construction.

(2) what types of vessel are equipped to make use of the HI/FIX 6 radio transmitter's signals;

(3) if he will list all the purposes that the HI/FIX 6 radio transmitter is intended to serve;

(4) if he will state the total expenditure on the HI/FIX 6 system; and if he will list vessels adapted to make use of the HI/FIX system;

(5) why the HI/FIX 6 radio system was built.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Hifix 6 is a radio navigation aid providing precise navigational data to RN ships operating in coastal waters. The system is fitted to all Hunt, River and Ton class mine-countermeasures vessels and to all ocean going and coastal survey vessels. Total expenditure on setting up the Hifix 6 systems, including development, production, spares and works costs, was about £10 million at 1983 prices. In addition, there is a small running maintenance contract. The location of Hifix 6 radio transmitters is classified.

Fylingdales (Radar System)

Mr. Denzil Davies asked the Secretary of State for Defence when work on the large phased array radar at Fylingdales will be completed.

Mr. Freeman: We hope that the modernisation of the ballistic missile early warning system at RAF Fylingdales will be completed by the early 1990s.

Trident

Mr. Denzil Davies asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the estimated total cost to the United Kingdom of United States technical assistance with the United Kingdom development of the ELS communication system for Trident.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Ministry of Defence has been considering the potential of extra low frequency communications as a means of improving the effectiveness of Royal Navy submarines, generally by allowing them to operate at greater depth and speed while receiving communications. This involves an evaluation of the practical characteristics of an ELF system through a trial installation, for which purpose technical assistance from a United States company has been provided under normal commercial contract procedures. The details of this are subject to commercial confidentiality and cannot be disclosed.

Mr. Denzil Davies asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the estimated total cost to the United Kingdom of United States technical assistance with the development of United Kingdom warheads for Trident.

Mr. Sainsbury: It has been the policy of successive Governments not to reveal information of this nature.

Cruise Missiles

Mr. Denzil Davies asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many times United States Air Force B-52s equipped with either internal or external air-launched cruise missiles have exercised in the United Kingdom since 1 January 1986.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the right hon. Member to the reply I gave yesterday to the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock).

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether United States ships carrying nuclear sea-launched cruise missiles have visited British ports.

Mr. Ian Stewart: In accordance with long-standing policy, neither the United States Government nor the British Government confirm or deny the presence of nuclear weapons on visiting warships.

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether air-launched cruise missiles will be deployed in Britain as part of the Reforger 87 exercises.

Mr. Ian Stewart [*pursuant to his reply*, 22 July 1987]: The position remains as stated by my right hon. Friend, the hon. Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Mr. Stanley) in his answers to the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) on 18 June 1984 at column *41*; 26 July 1984 at columns *751-52*; and 15 November 1985 at column *309*.

Overseas Military Training Assistance

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will list those countries *(a)* which currently receive military training assistance and *(b)* whose applications for such assistance are currently being considered.

Mr. Freeman: I shall answer shortly.

Furniture Removals

Mr. Onslow asked the Secretary of State for Defence what new arrangments his Department has made or intends to make for the allocation of contracts for furniture removals for Army families; and if he is satisfied that there has been adequate consultation with the firms which have previously carried out this work.

Mr. Freeman: Until recently the great majority of service removals have been arranged using the "three tender system", under which the service man himself obtained three quotations and the Department refunded to him the amount of the lowest tender. This system has, however, been criticised in the past as being potentially open to abuse, and as placing an undue burden on public funds.

Following a review and the experience of suitable trials, it was recently decided that, save in exceptional circumstances, all removals for Army personnel should be

conducted under centrally placed contract arrangements. Contracts have been introduced progressively throughout the country for all Army removals, and the other two services will be adopting similar procedures shortly.

The removal industry has been aware of these developments and several meetings have been held with the British Association of Removers. Any removal company interested in this work can apply to tender as contracts are let or renewed, although it may be necessary to restrict the number of companies actually invited to tender in any particular round.

European Defence Initiative

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has had any recent discussions with his European North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts on technical developments and the security implications of the European defence initiative.

Mr. Sainsbury: There is no "European Defence initiative" as such. The subject of possible improvements to NATO's air defences in Europe has, however, been discussed on a number of occasions by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence with his NATO counterparts, both European and North American. Details of these discussions are, of course, confidential.

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Defence what communications he has had with the President of the European Commission, Mr. Delors, on proposals by the European Community to develop an integrated European defence industry.

Mr. Sainsbury: None.

Lance Missile Warheads (Replacement)

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether there are any current North Atlantic Treaty Organisation plans to replace Lance missile warheads with more modern nuclear warheads.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I have nothing to add to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the hon. Member for Newport, East (Mr. Hughes) on 24 March at column *162*.

Eight-inch Nuclear Artillery

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether a decision will be taken on the modernisation of the Army's 8-in nuclear artillery before November.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given today by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence to my hon. Friend the Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith).

2nd Infantry Division

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list by *(a)* home base and *(b)* current postings the units which comprise the 2nd Infantry Division of the Army.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested by the hon. Member is classified.

Lance Missile

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Defence what nuclear warheads for Lance have been deployed by the United States in support of the British Army of the Rhine since 1981.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I shall answer as soon as possible.

United States Units

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list the United States units which temporarily will be based in each constituency in 1987;

(2) if he will list the constituencies in which United States units exercising from the United States in 1987 will be based.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It is not the practice to give detailed information of this kind.

Short-range Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the effect of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Montebello agreement of October 1983 on the number of short-range nuclear systems being deployed in Europe.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The number of short-range nuclear systems deployed by NATO in Europe is published annually in annex A to the "Statement on the Defence Estimates". Following implementation of the reductions agreed by Ministers at Montebello in 1983, NATO's stockpile of nuclear warheads in Europe is at its lowest level for over 20 years.

Radium 223

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the source of the radium 223 used in training exercises.

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Defence what quantity of radium 223 sulphate, diluted with barium sulphate and aluminium oxide, is typically used in military training exercises simulating nuclear accidents.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I shall answer as soon as possible.

Military Exercises (Radioactive Contamination)

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how much radioactive material by weight has been removed *(a)* from the Swynnerton training camp in each of the last seven years and *(b)* from each exercise involved in Exercise Senator;

(2) where, and by what method of transportation, radioactive material is disposed of following Exercise Senator.

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Defence what steps his Department takes to protect *(a)* service men, *(b)* civilians and *(c)* livestock from land contaminated by radioactivity as a result of training exercises simulating nuclear accidents.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It is not our practice to discuss details of nuclear accident response exercises. However, steps are taken after a nuclear accident exercise involving the use of radioactive materials to ensure that neither MOD

personnel, civilians nor livestock are exposed to radiation, by the thorough clearing-up of contaminated material. This is subsequently isolated for a period of a few months to allow it to decay to minute levels of radioactivity. The means of disposal are fully in accordance with the requirements of civil authorising departments.

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Defence, further to his answer on 15 July, *Official Report*, columns 1129-35, what method was used to spray radioactive contaminants during the tests referred to.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I shall answer as soon as possible.

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether any exercise at the Swynnerton training camp in January 1981 *(a)* involved radioactive contaminants and *(b)* were part of Exercise Senator.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It is not our practice to discuss details of particular exercises.

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Defence what information was given to police and other personnel active in Swynnerton, Staffordshire, as to the extent to which they were exposed to radioactive materials as a result of military exercises.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I shall answer as soon as possible.

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Defence what have been the recent effects of radioactive materials on people in Swynnerton, Staffordshire, arising from military training exercises.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the right hon. Member to my reply of 20 July to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) at column. *97*.

Training Exercises (Radioactive Materials)

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will clarify what is meant by a clear training advantage in the use of radioactive materials during military training exercises simulating nuclear accidents.

Mr. Ian Stewart: In order to maintain an effective nuclear accident response organisation, capable of dealing with the consequences of an accident involving defence nuclear material, personnel have to be trained in the use of detection equipment, in decontamination techniques, and in safe operating procedures in contaminated areas. Most of this training can be undertaken without the use of radioactive material. However, it is necessary to ensure that such training is effective by giving appropriate personnel some experience of working with the low levels of radioactivity required to achieve relevant instrument readings. Such training is only carried out under safe, controlled conditions, and the material involved is of concentrations that do not pose a hazard either to the participants or to the general public.

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the number of military training exercises simulating nuclear accidents and involving the use of radioactive materials which his Department has undertaken in each year since 1979 inclusive.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It is not our practice to give details of nuclear accident response exercises.

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will itemise the protective clothing worn by service men when participating in military training exercises simulating nuclear accidents.

Mr. Ian Stewart: All personnel permitted access to contaminated areas in such exercises are required to wear protective clothing appropriate to the levels of contamination assumed for exercise purposes including respiratory protection. Such clothing also includes items such as coveralls, gloves and boots.

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what procedures his Department has for monitoring the long-term effects on the health of those personnel who participate in training exercises involving the use of radioactive materials;

(2) if his Department has any plans to review *(a)* the use of radioactive materials in training exercises simulating nuclear accidents, *(b)* the procedures for monitoring the effects on those involved and *(c)* the procedures for informing other authorities of such exercises;

(3) which authorities his Department informs when training exercises dealing with nuclear accidents take place; at what stage each of these authorities is informed; and at which level, within each authority, the information is made available.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) of 20 July at columns *95-96*; and that to the hon. Member for Stoke on Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) of 20 July at column *94*. I see no need to review procedures in this area.

Operation Senator (Radioactive Material)

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will list all the chemicals in the radioactive material used by his Department in Operation Senator in 1981.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I shall answer as soon as possible.

Nuclear Weapons Storage Sites

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether British emergency services have any right of access to United States nuclear weapons storage sites in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Ian Stewart: There is full liaison with the local emergency services, particularly the fire service, at all RAF Stations in the United Kingdom where any explosive material may be stored, including those from which United States forces operate.

Iran-Iraq War (Equipment and Sales)

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total value of non-lethal defence equipment sold by the United Kingdom to Iran and Iraq in each year since the outbreak of the war between these two countries.

Mr. Sainsbury: It has been the consistent policy of successive Administrations not to give the details of defence sales business with other countries. As is well known in the case of Iraq and Iran, Her Majesty's Government have strictly adhered to the policy guidelines for defence sales as set out in the answer given on 29

October 1985 by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in reply to a question from the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel).

Atomic Tests (Ex-Service Men)

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Defence how the validity of the study of ex-service men by the National Radiological Protection Board is affected by the discovery that not all names recorded in the operational record books are of personnel present during the atomic tests; and if he will make a statement showing the numbers affected.

Mr. Sainsbury: The information MOD has provided for the study on potential participants included access to the operational record books. Since the criteria for inclusion in the study were set by NRPB, questions on its validity should be directed to them.

Royal Navy Armaments Depot, Beith

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Defence if, pursuant to his reply of 15 July, *Official Report*, column *496*, he will define the safeguarded zone surrounding the Royal Navy armaments depot, Beith; when it was established and when it was last reviewed; if he will list the commercial premises within the safeguarded zone in respect of which his Department has not exercised its rights of veto; and if he will list all other proposed developments within this zone which his Department has proscribed.

Mr. Freeman: The safeguarding zone surrounding RNAD Beith is defined using standard criteria produced by the Health and Safety Executive. These criteria correlate to international regulations and prescribe the safety distances for specific quantities of stored ammunition. The current safeguarding zone is defined on the safeguarding map issued by the Scottish Development Department on 21 December 1967 to the local planning authority, now Cunninghame district council. The safeguarding zone was formally established in 1964. It is regularly checked in relation to the amount of explosives stored but no alteration to the map has been necessary since it was issued in 1967. The commercial premises within the safeguarding zone in respect of which my Department has not invoked its statutory right to object are:

1. Fertiliser compound, Barrmill thread mills.
2. Agriculture store, Shotts cottage, Beith.
3. Erection of cubicle housing unit, Bankhead farm.
4. Cow cubicle unit at Roughwood, Beith.
5. Cubicle housing unit for cows, South Barr farm, Beith.
6. Garage (for storage) at Beith road, Barrmill.

Proposed developments within the safeguarding zone to which my Department has objected:

1. Caravan site at Brighouse.
2. Dwellinghouse at Windyhouse farm, Beith.
3. House at Drumble farm, Beith.
4. Blue Circle Cement works, Barrmill.
5. Conversion of Byre into a dwellinghouse at West Middlebank, farm, Dalry.
6. Mac Mix Ltd., ready mixed concrete depot in old quarry area, Barrmill.
7. Conversion of outbuilding to dwellinghouse at Meikle Barcosh, Dalry road, Beith.
8. Giffen estate, Dalry erection of stables and use as a horseriding complex.
9. Conversion of stables into public house at The Coach House, Giffen estate.

Cash Limits

Mr. Patrick Thompson asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he proposes to make any changes to the current cash limits for 1987-88.

Mr. Younger: My right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury announced today an increase to the cash limit for class I, Vote 2 of £350,815,000 under the end-year flexibility scheme for central Government expenditure. I can now announce that the cash limit for that vote will be increased by a further £250,245,000, from £8,902,652,000 to £9,152,897,000. Of this new increase, £210,000,000 comes under the terms of the additional flexibility arrangements I announced to the House on 19 December 1986 -at column 778, and which is a direct result of underspending last year arising from procurement decisions taken to improve contractors' performance and the value for money obtained from our defence procurement contracts during the 1986-87 financial year, including the Department's new and tauter approach to interim payments. The remaining amount, £40,245,000, represents the return to my Department's cash block of £40,000,000 which had been set aside for the external financing requirement of Royal Ordnance plc. (as described in the introduction to class I Supply Estimates 1986-87, HC284-I), but which was not in the event needed for this purpose; together with £245,000 in respect of the transfer of responsibility for the review board for Government contracts from Her Majesty's Treasury to the Ministry of Defence. These sums will be met from within the reserve and will therefore not add to the public expenditure planning total.

Battlefield Nuclear Weapons Systems

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on battlefield nuclear weapons systems in service with United Kingdom forces in the British Army of the Rhine.

Mr. Younger: Following SACEUR's proposals to NPG Ministers in 1985 for the reduction of NATO's nuclear stockpile in Europe, My Department undertook a review of United Kingdom-operated battlefield nuclear weapon systems in BAOR. As a result, it has been decided, with SACEUR's approval, to rationalise these over the next 12 months. This will involve, inter alia, the United Kingdom's complete withdrawal from the 8 in. nuclear artillery role in order to concentrate resources on the 155 mm dual-capable gun already in service. These changes will complete the actions placed on the United Kingdom by SACEUR as part of the first phase of his proposals to implement the 1983 Montebello decision to reduce the nuclear stockpile and improve its effectiveness.

No decisions on modernisation as it affects British forces have yet been taken. A report on this aspect will be made to the House when the appropriate moment comes.

The measures which will be introduced will lead to an overall reduction in the United Kingdom-assigned nuclear warhead stocks in Europe, including the associated logistic elements, and will produce savings in manpower and other resources totalling some £55 million over the next 10 years.

Coach House, Giffen

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will now reconsider his decision to veto the creation of licensed premises at the Old Coach House, Giffen estate, by Dalry.

Mr. Freeman [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 July, 1987, c. 496]: No.

Destroyers and Frigates

Sir David Price asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to be able to announce the results of the tenders for the single role minehunter order.

Mr. Sainsbury [*pursuant to his reply*, 14 July 1987, c. 440]: I am happy to announce today that, following a competition, a contract is to be placed with Vosper Thornycroft (UK) Ltd. for the build of four single role minehunters. The competition was keen, but a batch order for four vessels placed at VT provided best value for money for the MOD.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Members' Staff

Mr. Gwilym Jones asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will give the numbers of staff of hon. Members that are accommodated in parliamentary buildings and the costs involved under relevant headings for 1970-71, 1975-76, 1980-81 and the latest available financial year.

Mr. Wakeham: The information is as follows:

	Number
1970-71	199
1975-76	304
1980-81	364
1986-87	422

It is not possible to separate the costs of providing this accommodation from the overall costs involved.

Publications (Clerks' Contributions)

Mr. Cryer asked the hon. Member representing the House of Commons Commission if he will state the criteria which govern contributions by House of Commons Clerks to outside publishing concerns; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Beith: It has always been regarded as acceptable for Clerks of the House of Commons to contribute factual, descriptive and analytical material on parliamentary matters to academic, educational or other serious publications. Approval is sought from the Clerk of the House in any case of doubt. The Commission has never considered it necessary to lay down guidelines on this matter.

WALES

Land Authority for Wales

Mr. Gwilym Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the future of the Land Authority for Wales.

Mr. Grist: I expect to receive shortly the report of a comprehensive financial management and policy review of the Land Authority for Wales. I shall be giving careful consideration to the future of the authority and its role in the light of the findings of the review.

Mr. Gwilym Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he is satisfied that developers are not making disproportionate profits from the activities of the Land Authority for Wales.

Mr. Grist: Disposals of land by the Land Authority for Wales are invariably at full market value. There can thus be no question of the land authority subsidising developers' profits.

Mr. Gwilym Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the land holdings of the Land Authority for Wales and the purpose involved where that land is held for a purpose not in accord with the planning use of the relevant local council.

Mr. Grist: I have asked the chairman of the Land Authority for Wales to write to my hon. Friend.

Pupils (Capitation Allowance)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list by each county the capitation allowance for pupils in (i) primary schools and (ii) secondary schools in each of the past 10 years; and what each of the above figures represents as a percentage of the councils' total incomes in each year.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The information is not available in the form requested.

NHS (Per Capita Expenditure)

Mr. Galbraith asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the National Health Service per capita expenditure for each of the health regions in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The information requested is as follows:

DHA and FPS expenditure per capital in 1985-86

	DHAs			*FPS*		
	Expenditure	*Resident population*	*Spend per head*	*Expenditure*	*Resident population*	*Spend per head*
	£ million	*millions*	*£*	*£ million*	*millions*	*£*
Clwyd						
Revenue	76.294		191			
Capital	7.355	0.399	18			
Total	83.649		209	28.861	0.399	72
East Dyfed						
Revenue	47.907		210			

	DHAs Expenditure £ million	DHAs Resident population millions	DHAs Spend per head £	FPS Expenditure £ million	FPS Resident population millions	FPS Spend per head £
Capital	1·818	0·228	8			
Total	49·725		218	25·485	0·339	75
Gwent						
Revenue	93·569		212			
Capital	4·029	0·442	9			
Total	97·598		221	33·225	0·442	75
Gwynedd						
Revenue	47·514		202			
Capital	0·936	0·235	4			
Total	48·450		206	18·626	0·235	79
Mid Glamorgan						
Revenue	110·474		206			
Capital	7·955	0·535	15			
Total	118·429		221	42·557	0·535	80
Pembrokeshire						
Revenue	16·227		146			
Capital	1·734	0·111	16	n a	n a	n a
Total	17·961		162			
Powys						
Revenue	21·288		190			
Capital	1·256	0·112	11			
Total	22·544		201	8·868	0·112	79
South Glamorgan						
Revenue	127·403		322			
Capital	3·614	0·396	9			
Total	131·017		331	31·244	0·396	79
West Glamorgan						
Revenue	76·021		209			
Capital	8·348	0·364	23			
Total	84·369		232	28·912	0·364	79
WHCSA						
Revenue	4·688		2			
Capital	17·142	2·821	6	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	21·830		8			
TOTAL DHAs AND WHCSA						
Revenue	621·385		220	217·778	2·821	77
Capital	54·187	2·821	19			= Total FPS
Total	675·572		239			
TOTAL FPS	217·778	2·821	77			
GRAND TOTAL ALL WALES DHAs + FPS	893·350	2·821	316			

Notes:

(1) Expenditure figures extracted from 1985-86 DHA annual accounts.
(2) FPS figures include expenditure on FPC administration.
(3) DHA resident population figures from OPCS mid year estimates.
(4) It must be borne in mind that there are large flows of patients between health authorities and this is reflected in their funding. The funding of South Glamorgan also takes account of its teaching responsibilities.
(5) The FPS figures shown in respect of East Dyfed in fact relate to the whole of the county of Dyfed inclusive of the district of Pembrokeshire.

Departmental Staff

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men employed within each grade in his Department in each year since 1979.

Mr. Peter Walker: I will write to the hon. Lady as soon as possible and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Special Advisers

Mr. John asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will list the benefits he anticipates will accrue to Wales as a result of the appointment of hon. Members as his special advisers;

(2) to what departmental papers and with what degree of classification those hon. Members recently appointed as his special advisers will have access;

(3) what is his estimate of the additional cost to public funds of the servicing by his Department of those hon. Members recently appointed as his special advisers;

(4) what is his estimate of the additional civil servants' time per annum which will be involved in servicing those hon. Members recently appointed as his special advisers.

Mr. Peter Walker: I look forward to considerable benefit arising from my having access to the experience, knowledge and interest of my hon. Friends in their particular fields of interest.

They will have access to papers under the normal rules governing all hon. Members' access to Government documents and I anticipate no extra staff time or public funds being required

Local Authority Expenditure

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will publish a table showing the amount spent by local authorities on *(a)* school transport and *(b)* school meals in the latest year for which figures are available; and what are the comparable figures for each year since 1978-79 in cash terms and real terms using 1986-87 prices and using an index of 100 for 1978-79.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Schools (Books and Equipment)

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the latest figure for expenditure per pupil on books and on equipment in *(a)* primary schools, *(b)* secondary schools and *(c)* special schools; and what are the comparable figures for each of the years since 1978-79, in cash terms and real terms, using 1986-87 prices and using an index of 100 for 1978-79.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The information requested is as follows:

Expenditure (£'s per Pupil) on books and equipment at outturn Prices

	1978-79	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*
Primary Schools	11·9	12·7	14·6	16·2	18·5	19·8	17·9	20·0
Secondary Schools	20·9	22·8	25·2	28·4	33·5	37·4	39·9	41·3
Special Education[1]	35·1	42·2	40·9	59·5	54·7	57·9	67·1	93·7
Expenditure on Books and Equipment, at 1986-87 Prices[2]								
Primary Schools								
£'s per pupil	23·1	21·1	20·5	20·7	22·0	22·6	19·6	20·6
Index (1978-79 = 100)	100	91·3	88·7	89·6	95·2	97·8	84·8	89·2
Secondary Schools								
£'s per pupil	40·6	37·9	35·3	36·3	39·9	42·6	43·6	42·5
Index (1978-79 = 100)	100	93·3	86·9	89·4	98·3	104·9	107·4	104·7
Special Education[1]								
£'s per pupil	68·2	70·2	57·4	76·0	65·1	66·0	73·3	96·5
Index (1978-79 = 100)	100	102·9	84·2	111·4	95·5	96·8	107·5	141·5

[1] Figures relate to the education of pupils at maintained special schools and other special education provided elsewhere than at school. Expenditure on special education in primary and secondary schools is included in the primary and secondary school unit costs.
[2] Expenditure deflated to 1986-87 prices using the GDP deflator as at 30 June 1987.

Housing

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas) on 17 July, he will list those planning permissions granted for residential housing developments on appeal in each year since 1979.

Mr. Grist: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list, by Welsh district, the number of homes considered to be unfit for human habitation as a percentage of the total housing stock in each district.

Mr. Grist: Reliable estimates of the number of dwellings considered to be unfit in each local authority district will not be available until the publication of the 1986 Welsh house condition survey.

Birth Statistics

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list for the years 1985 and 1986 the estimated percentages of women delivering in Wales *(a)* whose labours were induced, *(b)* whose labours were of spontaneous onset, and *(c)* who had elected caesarean sections.

Mr. Grist: The information requested is as follows:

Estimated Percentages of Deliveries by Type of Onset of Labour: Wales

Type of Onset of Labour	*Percentage*	
	1985	*1986*[1]
Spontaneous onset	93·4	93·4
Induced[2]		
Elective Caesarean Section	6·6	6·6

[1] Provisional
[2] Separate figures are not shown because the available information is unreliable.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list for the years 1985 and 1986 the estimated percentages of women delivered in Wales whose deliveries were *(a)* spontaneous, including abnormal presentation of head and breech spontaneous, *(b)* instrumental including forceps, vacuum and for each extraction, *(c)* caesarean section and *(d)* other and unspecified means.

Mr. Grist: The information requested is as follows:

Estimated Percentages of deliveries by specified mode of delivery Wales

Mode of Delivery	*Percentage* 1985	[illegible] 1986[1]
Spontaneous including abnormal presentation of head and breech spontaneous	78·8	78·8
Instrumental-forceps, vacuum and breech extraction	8·6	8·7
Caesarean section	12·6	12·5

[1]Provisional

Water Pollution

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many incidents of water pollution by farm wastes were recorded in each of the years 1980 to 1986, and in 1987 to date, in Wales; how many of these incidents were attributable to poilution by silage effluent, and by slurry; and how many of these incidents were the subject of warning letters and prosecutions.

Mr. Grist: The number of incidents of water pollution by agricultural waste recorded in 1984, 1985 and 1986 were 327, 464 and 404, respectively. Figures for 1987 are not yet available. Detailed information of the incidents and prosecutions, and figures for the previous years, are not held centrally, but may be obtained from the Welsh water authority.

Conservation

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales what arrangements have been made, in accordance with the requirements of section 18(8) of the Agriculture Act 1986, to monitor the effect on wildlife and the landscape of agreements concluded with farmers in the Cambrian mountains environmentally sensitive area; whether he will make details of these arrangements available in the Library; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: The monitoring arrangements of the Cambrian mountains ESA include aerial photography, ground surveys of vegetation and hay meadows and the evaluation of woodland. Discussions with the Nature Conservancy Council are being held on ways for monitoring the effect upon wildlife in the area. Details of the arrangements will shortly be made available in the Library of the House.

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) in respect of land within environmentally sensitive areas, how many farmers have applied to enter into management agreements in each of these areas, and what is the total area of land involved; and how many agreements have so far been concluded with farmers in each of these areas, and what is the total area of land involved;

(2) if he will give the extent in hectares of the Cambrian mountains environmentally sensitive area, the total area of agricultural land within the environmentally sensitive area, and an estimate of the number of farmers eligible to enter into management agreements in that area.

Mr. Peter Walker: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Forestry

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the total area of land which was referred to the Welsh Office Agriculture Department by the Forestry Commission under the forestry grant consultation procedures for each of the years ended 31 March 1986 and 31 March 1987; and if he will list in the *Official Report* in respect of each of the area offices of his Department the area of land which it advised was (*a*) acceptable to award forestry grant and (*b*) inappropriate to afforest on agricultural grounds.

Mr. Peter Walker: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Hospitals

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list by date all hospitals in Wales planned, under construction or completed since May 1979; and if he will list, by date, all existing hospitals to which new wards or other major improvements have been added since May 1979.

Mr. Grist: The information requested is as follows:

Table 1 New hospitals in Wales since May 1979

Scheme Completed	*District*	*Completion Date*
Ysbyty Glan Clwyd, Scheme 1	Clwyd	May 1979
Ysbyty Gwynedd	Gwynedd	June 1983
Mold Community Hospital	Clwyd	January 1984
Princess of Wales, Bridgend	Mid Glamorgan	March 1985
Wrexham DGH, Scheme 1	Clwyd	March 1985
Morriston DGH, Scheme 1	West Glamorgan	May 1985
Ystradgynlais Community Hospital	Powys	February 1986
Under Construction		*Expected Completion Date*
Llanelli General Hospital	East Dyfed	June 1989

In Planning

Currently district health authorities have preliminary plans for two new district general hospitals and for 11 new community hospitals.

Table 2: Major hospital development schemes in Wales (costing in excess of £5m) since May 1979

Scheme Completed	*District*	*Completion Date*
Royal Gwent Hospital, Scheme 5	Gwent	December 1979
St. Woolos Hospital, Scheme 1	Gwent	October 1982
Under Construction		*Expected Completion Date*
Llandough Hospital, Obstetric Development	South Glamorgan	July 1988
Royal Gwent Hospital, Scheme 6	Gwent	December 1988
Singleton Hospital, Scheme 3	West Glamorgan	December 1992

Rates

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list, by Welsh county, *(a)* the rate precept and *(b)* the percentage increase of this in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Peter Walker: The information requested is as follows:

County rate precept and year on year change

	1974-75 (£)	*Per cent. change*	*1975-76 (£)*	*Per cent. change*	*1976-77 (£)*	*Per cent. change*	*1977-78 (£)*	*Per cent. change*	*1978-79 (£)*	*Per cent. change*
Counties										
Clwyd	44·00		54·70	24·30	54·00	17·50	71·50	11·70	79·00	10·50
Dyfed	43·40		54·00	24·40	56·70	5·00	64·10	13·10	67·90	5·90
Gwent	47·50		55·00	15·80	64·00	16·40	73·90	13·50	79·00	6·90
Gwynedd	47·50		60·00	26·30	62·00	3·30	63·50	2·40	70·00	10·20
Mid Glamorgan	49·10		63·60	29·50	68·30	7·40	72·40	6·00	73·40	1·40
Powys	43·40		51·70	19·10	53·00	2·50	54·00	1·90	57·00	5·60
South Glamorgan	43·50		52·00	19·50	59·00	13·50	66·50	12·70	72·50	9·00
West Glamorgan	48·00		63·00	31·30	69·50	10·30	73·90	6·30	79·50	7·60

	1979-80 (£)	*Per cent. change*	*1980-81 (£)*	*Per cent. change*	*1981-82 (£)*	*Per cent. change*	*1982-83 (£)*	*Per cent. change*	*1983-84 (£)*	*Per cent. change*
Counties										
Clwyd	99·60	25·90	124·00	24·60	148·00	19·40	148·00		148·00	
Dyfed	57·00	28·10	111·31	27·90	122·20	9·80	122·30	0·10	130·70	6·90
Gwent	98·00	24·10	117·00	19·40	129·00	10·30	135·00	4·70	141·00	4·40
Gwynedd	96·50	37·90	111·00	15·00	128·00	15·30	125·00	−3·90	136·00	10·60
Mid Glamorgan	95·70	30·40	119·37	24·70	144·90	21·40	144·80	0·10	154·10	6·40
Powys	81·00	42·10	108·00	33·30	124·00	14·80	128·00	3·20	128·00	
South Glamorgan	90·00	24·10	101·90	13·20	116·40	14·20	133·40	14·60	124·80	−6·40
West Glamorgan	109·60	37·90	133·00	21·40	156·00	17·30	161·00	3·20	165·00	2·50

	1984-85 (£)	*Per cent. change*	*1985-86 (£)*	*Per cent. change*	*1986-87 (£)*	*Per cent. change*	*1987-88 (£)*	*Per cent. change*
Counties								
Clwyd	162·00	9·50	172·00	6·20	189·00	9·90	198·00	4·80
Dyfed	142·70	9·20	170·62	19·60	195·28	14·50	208·85	6·90
Gwent	141·00	0·00	146·00	3·50	173·00	18·50	192·00	11·00
Gwynedd	145·00	6·60	150·00	3·40	168·00	12·00	183·00	8·90
Mid Glamorgan	180·40	17·10	187·42	3·90	205·90	9·90	215·79	4·80
Powys	134·00	4·70	154·00	14·90	177·00	14·90	138·00	6·20
South Glamorgan	132·40	6·10	147·40	11·30	183·20	24·30	190·70	4·10
West Glamorgan	175·00	6·10	184·00	5·10	197·00	7·10	225·00	14·20

SCOTLAND

Offshore Supplies

Mr. Worthington asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he is taking to ensure that when there is an upturn in the market for offshore production and exploration rigs, the GIE Clydebank yard is still in existence to take advantage of the increased demand for its products.

Mr. Lang: Bouygues Offshore, the parent company of UIE, has already announced that it intends to keep the yard open, if necessary on a care-and-maintenance basis, and to concentrate its United Kingdom activities at Clydebank, so that UIE is in a position to continue to compete for work and to benefit when offshore activity recovers. My Department will be offering any assistance it can to UIE in its efforts to secure new orders.

Out-patients

Mr. Galbraith asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing the number of out-patient attendances both new and old for each surgical specialty in each hospital in Scotland for 1985.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information requested, which relates to 30 September 1985, is set out in the table. The appropriate surgical specialty codes are as follows:

	Codes
General Surgery	01
Orthopaedic Surgery	02
ENT Surgery	03
Ophthalmology	04
Urology	05
Neurosurgery	06
Cardiothoracic Surgery	07
Plastic Surgery	08
Orthodontic and Paediatric Dentistry	11
Oral Surgery and Oral Medicine	12
Restorative Dentistry	13
Surgical Paediatrics	39
Accident and Emergency	49

Hospital	*Specialty code*	*New outpatient attendances*	*Return outpatient attendances*
The Cottage Hospital, Campbeltown	12	11	9
The Cottage Hospital, Campbeltown	39	34	17
The Cottage Hospital, Campbeltown	49	1,428	75
Victoria Hospital, Rothesay	01	529	738
Victoria Hospital, Rothesay	03	74	76
Victoria Hospital, Rothesay	04	0	15
West Highland Hospital	01	1,035	1,552
West Highland Hospital	02	78	225
West Highland Hospital	03	167	121
West Highland Hospital	04	130	524
West Highland Hospital	11	125	252
West Highland Hospital	12	105	194
West Highland Hospital	49	2,052	0
Dumbarton Health Centre	01	618	786
Dumbarton Health Centre	03	281	500
Dumbarton Health Centre	04	493	1,404
Vale of Leven District General Hospital	01	1,226	2,078
Vale of Leven District General Hospital	02	301	449
Vale of Leven District General Hospital	03	358	561
Vale of Leven District General Hospital	11	27	24
Vale of Leven District General Hospital	49	13,875	3,452
Victoria Infirmary, Helensburgh	01	777	1,083
Victoria Infirmary, Helensburgh	03	155	199
Victoria Infirmary, Helensburgh	49	1,224	1,068
Gourock Health Centre	01	540	1,252
Gourock Health Centre	02	81	264
Gourock Health Centre	03	222	143
Greenock Health Centre	01	1,008	1,611
Greenock Health Centre	02	370	316
Inverclyde Royal Hospital	01	1,291	3,039
Inverclyde Royal Hospital	02	7,211	9,199
Inverclyde Royal Hospital	03	1,371	2,762
Inverclyde Royal Hospital	04	1,560	6,167
Inverclyde Royal Hospital	11	344	2,174
Inverclyde Royal Hospital	49	30,139	5,876
Port Glasgow Health Centre	01	974	1,635
Dykesbar Hospital	12	138	346
Russel Institute, Paisley	03	245	602
Russel Institute, Paisley	04	198	352
Royal Alexandra Infirmary	01	2,848	8,101
Royal Alexandra Infirmary	02	3,890	14,388
Royal Alexandra Infirmary	03	2,661	3,641
Royal Alexandra Infirmary	49	39,391	6,467
Royal Alexandra Infirmary Annexe	03	648	1,104
Royal Victoria Eye Infirmary	04	5,428	16,199
Royal Victoria Eye Infirmary	49	9,772	0
Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy	01	3,099	6,404
Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy	02	5,242	13,412
Isle of Arran War Memorial Hospital	01	284	1,405
Isle of Arran War Memorial Hospital	03	65	45
Isle of Arran War Memorial Hospital	04	61	134
Isle of Arran War Memorial Hospital	49	763	96
Ayrshire Central Hospital	01	236	654
Ayrshire Central Hospital	02	7	113
Ayrshire Central Hospital	03	644	1,143
Lady Margaret Hospital	49	604	410
Crosshouse Hospital	01	4,975	8,329
Crosshouse Hospital	02	8,159	16,545
Crosshouse Hospital	03	2,295	4,446
Crosshouse Hospital	04	2,659	6,633
Crosshouse Hospital	07	67	229
Crosshouse Hospital	11	502	1,966

Hospital	Specialty code	New outpatient attendances	Return outpatient attendances
Crosshouse Hospital	12	1,142	3,616
Crosshouse Hospital	49	27,956	2,773
Clinic, Old Irvine Road, Kilmarnock	11	67	385
Ailsa Hospital	12	614	773
Ayr County Hospital	01	2,314	1,064
Ayr County Hospital	02	5,577	12,778
Ayr County Hospital	03	1,280	2,098
Ayr County Hospital	49	16,778	582
Heathfield Hospital	04	1,791	7,865
Heathfield Hospital	11	324	1,540
Heathfield Hospital	12	790	1,831
Heathfield Hospital	49	1,149	0
Seafield Sick Childrens Hospital	01	308	194
Seafield Sick Childrens Hospital	02	462	3,391
Seafield Sick Childrens Hospital	03	847	1,360
Seafield Sick Childrens Hospital	05	169	333
Seafield Sick Childrens Hospital	08	138	673
Seafield Sick Childrens Hospital	49	4,445	1,439
Davidson Cottage Hospital	03	167	227
Davidson Cottage Hospital	49	3,917	1,861
Ballochmyle Hospital	01	922	678
Ballochmyle Hospital	02	856	1,582
Ballochmyle Hospital	03	278	468
Ballochmyle Hospital	04	319	811
Ballochmyle Hospital	05	1,606	1,734
Ballochmyle Hospital	07	114	149
Ballochmyle Hospital	08	810	1,748
Ballochmyle Hospital	49	386	0
Jedburgh Health Centre	02	154	191
Borders Peripheral Clinics	04	352	905
Peel Hospital	01	1,255	1,290
Peel Hospital	02	1,171	5,112
Peel Hospital	49	5,225	0
Coldstreay Cottage Hospital	49	363	21
Knoll Hospital	01	5	45
Knoll Hospital	02	125	251
Knoll Hospital	03	16	18
Knoll Hospital	49	1,317	1,956
Galashiels Cottage Hospital	01	244	225
Galashiels Cottage Hospital	03	333	197
Galashiels Cottage Hospital	11	99	336
Galashiels Cottage Hospital	12	125	127
Galashiels Cottage Hospital	49	1,405	314
Kelso Health Centre, Kelso	01	220	339
Kelso Health Centre, Kelso	03	221	40
Hawick Cottage Hospital	01	594	569
Hawick Cottage Hospital	02	333	397
Hawick Cottage Hospital	03	235	263
Hawick Cottage Hospital	11	74	336
Hawick Cottage Hospital	49	2,095	0
Eyemouth Health Centre	02	93	211
Kelso Cottage Hospital	02	209	460
Kelso Cottage Hospital	11	10	17
Kelso Cottage Hospital	12	24	4
Kelso Cottage Hospital	49	1,076	160
Galashiels Health Centre	04	88	175
Selkirk Cottage Hospital	03	128	98
Selkirk Cottage Hospital	49	515	0
Sister Margaret Cottage Hospital	49	433	1
Hay Lodge Hospital and Health Centre	01	194	155
Hay Lodge Hospital and Health Centre	02	128	261
Hay Lodge Hospital and Health Centre	03	199	118
Hay Lodge Hospital and Health Centre	49	744	24
Campbeltown Health Centre	11	68	294
Dunoon and District General Hospital	01	547	569
Dunoon and District General Hospital	02	227	429
Dunoon and District General Hospital	03	139	175
Dunoon and District General Hospital	04	255	753
Dunoon and District General Hospital	49	3,427	2,140
Islay Hospital	01	112	62
Islay Hospital	03	33	28
Islay Hospital	49	263	0
Mid Argyll Hospital	01	242	162
Mid Argyll Hospital	03	66	70
Mid Argyll Hospital	04	86	205

Hospital	Specialty code	New outpatient attendances	Return outpatient attendances
Mid Argyll Hospital	11	70	230
Mid Argyll Hospital	49	2,002	1,567
The Cottage Hospital, Campbeltown	01	142	64
The Cottage Hospital, Campbeltown	02	146	196
The Cottage Hospital, Campbeltown	03	82	55
The Cottage Hospital, Campbeltown	04	168	232
The Cottage Hospital, Campbeltown	05	60	30
Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy	03	3,196	4,129
Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy	04	1,716	6,311
Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy	05	1,232	1,632
Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy	07	100	235
Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy	08	260	855
Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy	11	247	1,515
Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy	12	220	400
Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy	39	130	253
Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy	49	28,518	8,403
Adamson Hospital	01	282	621
Adamson Hospital	02	174	353
Adamson Hospital	03	173	114
Adamson Hospital	11	117	887
Adamson Hospital	49	1,690	582
St. Andrew's Hospital	01	423	798
St. Andrew's Hospital	02	643	1,316
St. Andrew's Hospital	03	415	603
St. Andrew's Hospital	05	166	178
St. Andrew's Hospital	11	82	607
St. Andrew's Hospital	49	1,523	1,185
Randolph Wemyss Memorial Hospital	02	205	391
Randolph Wemyss Memorial Hospital	49	28	23
Peripheral Clinic, East Fife	04	278	479
Dunfermline and West Fife Hospital	01	3,004	7,896
Dunfermline and West Fife Hospital	02	4,094	8,813
Dunfermline and West Fife Hospital	03	1,458	939
Dunfermline and West Fife Hospital	04	1,156	3,351
Dunfermline and West Fife Hospital	12	165	247
Dunfermline and West Fife Hospital	39	224	507
Dunfermline and West Fife Hospital	49	22,655	8,595
Milesmark Hospital	11	344	789
West Fife District General	11	80	327
Peripheral Clinic, West Fife	02	35	170
Peripheral Clinic, West Fife	04	204	689
Belvidere Hospital	12	7	46
Townhead Health Centre	04	42	58
Canniesburn Hospital	08	2,912	27,339
Ballieston Health Centre	04	6	8
Glasgow Dental Hospital and School	11	2,278	24,020
Glasgow Dental Hospital and School	12	24,627	48,953
Glasgow Dental Hospital and School	13	10,505	48,630
Glasgow Royal Infirmary	01	6,384	15,616
Glasgow Royal Infirmary	02	3,209	22,721
Glasgow Royal Infirmary	03	4,473	8,849
Glasgow Royal Infirmary	04	2,683	9,783
Glasgow Royal Infirmary	05	1,589	8,162
Glasgow Royal Infirmary	07	155	1,645
Glasgow Royal Infirmary	08	751	3,545
Glasgow Royal Infirmary	12	1,009	739
Glasgow Royal Infirmary	49	77,310	13,766
Woodside Health Centre	01	303	118
Woodside Health Centre	03	217	240
Maryhill Health Centre	01	200	137
Maryhill Health Centre	03	180	166
Lennox Castle Hospital	12	176	644
Ruchill Hospital	01	1,302	1,021
Stobhill Hospital	01	2,908	7,560
Stobhill Hospital	02	3,856	6,201
Stobhill Hospital	03	1,993	5,263
Stobhill Hospital	04	1,330	4,723
Stobhill Hospital	05	1,142	3,383
Stobhill Hospital	11	172	35
Stobhill Hospital	12	888	1,663
Stobhill Hospital	39	242	420
Stobhill Hospital	49	36,518	10,865
Mearnskirk General Hospital	02	32	613
Mearnskirk General Hospital	03	15	4
Philipshill Hospital	02	0	2,796

Hospital	Specialty code	New outpatient attendances	Return outpatient attendances
Royal Samaritan Hospital for Women	05	5	20
Victoria Infirmary, Glasgow	01	6,706	12,360
Victoria Infirmary, Glasgow	02	9,031	22,325
Victoria Infirmary, Glasgow	03	4,373	8,450
Victoria Infirmary, Glasgow	04	1,807	7,206
Victoria Infirmary, Glasgow	05	1,915	2,322
Victoria Infirmary, Glasgow	08	990	2,414
Victoria Infirmary, Glasgow	12	2,135	4,175
Victoria Infirmary, Glasgow	49	49,193	6,935
Southern General Hospital	01	3,316	7,539
Southern General Hospital	02	4,590	10,850
Southern General Hospital	03	1,963	2,260
Southern General Hospital	04	1,697	5,546
Southern General Hospital	05	1,188	2,679
Southern General Hospital	06	761	2,341
Southern General Hospital	12	182	526
Southern General Hospital	49	35,960	4,840
Drumchapel Hospital	04	42	15
Drumchapel Hospital	12	88	150
Gartnavel District General Hospital	01	5,287	13,961
Gartnaval District General Hospital	02	0	1,697
Gartnaval District General Hospital	03	7,685	20,894
Gartnaval District General Hospital	04	836	6,029
Gartnaval District General Hospital	12	19	30
Knightswood Hospital	12	10	69
RHSC, Drumchapel	04	2	1
RHSC, Drumchapel	12	9	27
RHSC, Yorkhill	02	1,884	5,605
RHSC, Yorkhill	03	1,290	2,003
RHSC, Yorkhill	04	963	1,780
RHSC, Yorkhill	05	99	148
RHSC, Yorkhill	11	44	937
RHSC, Yorkhill	12	8	881
RHSC, Yorkhill	39	3,165	11,917
RHSC, Yorkhill	49	24,639	2,104
The Queen Mother's Hospital	12	260	0
Western Infirmary	01	1,327	3,609
Western Infirmary	02	7,938	18,621
Western Infirmary	04	3,160	14,045
Western Infirmary	05	1,633	4,889
Western Infirmary	07	246	2,276
Western Infirmary	08	232	747
Western Infirmary	12	709	1,076
Western Infirmary	49	55,098	4,192
Eye Infirmary O. P. Department	03	16	8
Eye Infirmary O. P. Department	04	3,835	16,629
Eye Infirmary O. P. Department	49	15,730	2,745
Dunbar Hospital, Thurso	01	544	1,574
Dunbar Hospital, Thurso	02	159	220
Dunbar Hospital, Thurso	03	207	104
Dunbar Hospital, Thurso	49	915	354
Bignold Hospital	01	392	1,347
Bignold Hospital	02	118	200
Bignold Hospital	03	144	67
Bignold Hospital	11	42	326
Bignold Hospital	12	50	21
Bignold Hospital	49	796	1,869
Caithness Central Hospital	04	327	1,270
Lawson Memorial Hospital	01	832	821
Lawson Memorial Hospital	02	138	128
Lawson Memorial Hospital	03	168	36
Lawson Memorial Hospital	04	132	303
Lawson Memorial Hospital	08	10	15
Lawson Memorial Hospital	11	33	425
Lawson Memorial Hospital	49	341	0
Thurso High School	11	34	250
R.N.I. Inverness	03	317	158
Raigmore Hospital, Inverness	01	3,173	3,329
Raigmore Hospital, Inverness	02	2,699	5,967
Raigmore Hospital, Inverness	03	1,752	1,173
Raigmore Hospital, Inverness	04	1,542	8,059
Raigmore Hospital, Inverness	06	138	207
Raigmore Hospital, Inverness	08	152	277
Raigmore Hospital, Inverness	11	551	4,571
Raigmore Hospital, Inverness	12	949	1,208

Hospital	Specialty code	New outpatient attendances	Return outpatient attendances
Raigmore Hospital, Inverness	49	16,563	1,947
Town and Country Hospital, Nairn	01	276	198
Town and Country Hospital, Nairn	02	121	95
Town and Country Hospital, Nairn	03	150	57
Town and Country Hospital, Nairn	11	82	508
Town and Country Hospital, Nairn	49	2,259	2,377
Ian Charles Hospital, Grantown	49	693	82
Belford Hospital, Fort William	01	993	1,416
Belford Hospital, Fort William	02	165	284
Belford Hospital, Fort William	03	289	115
Belford Hospital, Fort William	04	188	564
Belford Hospital, Fort William	11	80	870
Belford Hospital, Fort William	12	29	16
Belford Hospital, Fort William	49	4,112	1,903
Mackinnon Memorial Hospital, Broadford	01	262	1,104
Mackinnon Memorial Hospital, Broadford	02	84	73
Mackinnon Memorial Hospital, Broadford	03	71	16
Mackinnon Memorial Hospital, Broadford	04	46	54
Mackinnon Memorial Hospital, Broadford	49	591	0
Portree Hospital	01	331	563
Portree Hospital	02	154	126
Portree Hospital	03	97	28
Portree Hospital	04	65	151
Portree Hospital	49	572	212
Ross Memorial Hospital, Dingwall	01	689	542
Ross Memorial Hospital, Dingwall	02	216	154
Ross Memorial Hospital, Dingwall	03	398	166
Ross Memorial Hospital, Dingwall	04	97	62
Ross Memorial Hospital, Dingwall	11	197	1,276
Ross Memorial Hospital, Dingwall	12	47	20
Ross Memorial Hospital, Dingwall	49	1,932	1,117
Granton Grammar School	11	31	203
Name unknown	11	10	224
Cumbernauld Health Centre	01	643	746
Cumbernauld Health Centre	03	245	548
Cumbernauld Health Centre	04	70	135
Cumbernauld Health Centre	05	250	679
Cumbernauld Health Centre	11	129	1,631
Cumbernauld Health Centre	12	28	44
Victoria Cottage Hospital, Kilsyth	49	327	216
Kilsyth Health Centre	01	196	297
Kilsyth Health Centre	02	135	167
Kilsyth Health Centre	03	198	217
Kilsyth Health Centre	05	60	93
Monklands District General Hospital	01	1,736	4,813
Monklands District General Hospital	02	4,322	12,312
Monklands District General Hospital	03	1,928	3,124
Monklands District General Hospital	04	725	1,656
Monklands District General Hospital	05	890	807
Monklands District General Hospital	08	384	575
Monklands District General Hospital	11	314	2,535
Monklands District General Hospital	12	570	2,412
Monklands District General Hospital	49	49,252	8,453
Biggar Health Centre	01	177	222
Bellefield Hospital	12	141	257
Kello Hospital	01	18	1
Kello Hospital	49	1,324	1,738
Lady Home Hospital	01	174	190
Lady Home Hospital	49	786	650
Law Hospital	01	4,009	7,381
Law Hospital	02	3,690	13,144
Law Hospital	03	2,101	3,896
Law Hospital	04	1,463	5,563
Law Hospital	11	86	183
Law Hospital	12	376	999
Law Hospital	49	25,621	9,294
Strathclyde Hospital, Motherwell	01	664	604
Strathclyde Hospital, Motherwell	02	0	790
Strathclyde Hospital, Motherwell	03	1,445	1,668
Strathclyde Hospital, Motherwell	04	2,488	6,508

Hospital	Specialty code	New outpatient attendances	Return outpatient attendances
Strathclyde Hospital: Motherwell	11	442	2,374
Kirklands Hospital	12	158	144
William Smellie External Clinics	04	182	687
Hunter Health Centre	04	154	356
Blantyre Health Centre	04	131	427
Hairmyres Hospital	01	3,369	5,382
Hairmyres Hospital	02	5,276	10,731
Hairmyres Hospital	03	1,790	1,996
Hairmyres Hospital	04	544	612
Hairmyres Hospital	05	972	764
Hairmyres Hospital	07	222	1,164
Hairmyres Hospital	11	51	237
Hairmyres Hospital	12	259	851
Hairmyres Hospital	49	22,887	1,317
Stonehouse Hospital	01	2,029	2,635
Stonehouse Hospital	02	2,427	6,807
Stonehouse Hospital	03	1,263	1,362
Stonehouse Hospital	04	1,044	1,936
Stonehouse Hospital	05	297	245
Stonehouse Hospital	49	9,132	913
Larkhall Health Institute	04	32	295
Hamilton Central Clinic	04	78	72
Craighead School Clinic	04	61	42

Hospital	Specialty code	New outpatient attendances	Return outpatient attendances
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary	01	8,091	10,554
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary	02	4,277	19,973
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary	03	3,227	5,037
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary	04	2,381	14,266
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary	05	2,476	2,306
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary	06	268	1,061
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary	07	0	923
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary	08	1,194	1,701
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary	12	2,949	4,523
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary	49	54,980	22,280
Woodend General Hospital	04	430	15
Woodend General Hospital	08	0	1,412
Banchory Medical Centre	11	4	385
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital	02	840	4,210
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital	03	1,461	2,702
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital	04	604	2,914
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital	08	276	1,840
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital	11	1,116	5,373
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital	39	1,249	1,629
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital	49	11,290	2,705
Arduthie Hospital	49	427	10
Mackie Academy, Stonehaven	11	83	612
Aboyne Hospital	49	609	232
Kincardine O'Neil War Memorial Hospital	01	1	0
Kincardine O'Neil War Memorial Hospital	49	1	0
Kingseat Hospital	04	0	15
Kingseat Hospital	12	76	359
Royal Cornhill Hospital	04	19	0
Royal Cornhill Hospital	12	188	735
Peterhead Health Centre	11	24	126
Peterhead Health Centre	49	3,269	3,771
Ellon Health Centre	11	14	376
Banff Academy	11	52	225
Fraserburgh Academy	11	12	120
Gordon Schools, Huntly	11	3	146
Inverurie Academy	11	1	433
Inverurie Hospital	49	627	0
Insch War Memorial Hospital	49	411	479
Peterhead Cottage Hospital	01	194	111
Peterhead Cottage Hospital	02	275	77
Peterhead Cottage Hospital	03	386	450
Peterhead Cottage Hospital	04	221	772
Peterhead Cottage Hospital	05	168	84
Peterhead Cottage Hospital	49	3,060	156
Peterhead Academy	11	25	106

Hospital	Specialty code	New outpatient attendances	Return outpatient attendances
Fraserburgh Hospital	01	208	106
Fraserburgh Hospital	02	243	232
Fraserburgh Hospital	03	268	404
Fraserburgh Hospital	04	104	461
Fraserburgh Hospital	05	161	74
Fraserburgh Hospital	49	4,268	4,048
Huntly Jubilee Hospital	01	494	787
Huntly Jubilee Hospital	02	99	101
Huntly Jubilee Hospital	03	90	132
Huntly Jubilee Hospital	04	55	218
Huntly Jubilee Hospital	49	1,384	1,639
Turriff Cottage Hospital	49	878	780
Chalmers Hospital, Banff	01	529	580
Chalmers Hospital, Banff	02	288	337
Chalmers Hospital, Banff	03	239	384
Chalmers Hospital, Banff	04	296	1,097
Chalmers Hospital, Banff	07	0	18
Chalmers Hospital, Banff	49	2,416	2,882
Dr. Gray's Hospital, Elgin	01	2,531	3,482
Dr. Gray's Hospital, Elgin	02	389	457
Dr. Gray's Hospital, Elgin	03	392	790
Dr. Gray's Hospital, Elgin	04	580	1,510
Dr. Gray's Hospital, Elgin	07	4	105
Dr. Gray's Hospital, Elgin	08	72	186
Dr. Gray's Hospital, Elgin	11	315	1,549
Dr. Gray's Hospital, Elgin	12	230	134
Dr. Gray's Hospital, Elgin	49	6,223	1,321
Seafield Hospital, Buckie	01	294	175
Seafield Hospital, Buckie	02	135	103
Seafield Hospital, Buckie	03	158	152
Seafield Hospital, Buckie	04	209	524
Seafield Hospital, Buckie	07	0	8
Seafield Hospital, Buckie	49	1,260	820
Stephen Hospital, Dufftown	01	28	12
Stephen Hospital, Dufftown	49	455	427
Turner Hospital, Keith	01	169	220
Turner Hospital, Keith	02	84	117
Turner Hospital, Keith	03	68	117
Turner Hospital, Keith	04	73	211
Turner Hospital, Keith	12	9	0
Turner Hospital, Keith	49	1,298	676
Leanchoil Hospital, Forres	01	224	196
Leanchoil Hospital, Forres	02	125	176
Leanchoil Hospital, Forres	03	113	124
Leanchoil Hospital, Forres	04	152	255
Leanchoil Hospital, Forres	49	1,690	408
Fleming Hospital, Aberlour	01	53	11
Fleming Hospital, Aberlour	49	609	498
Buckie High School	11	66	139
Dental Clinic, Orkney	11	33	166
Dental Clinic, Orkney	11	41	118
Balfour Hospital	01	804	2,105
Balfour Hospital	02	70	127
Balfour Hospital	03	213	269
Balfour Hospital	04	139	470
Balfour Hospital	12	27	3
Balfour Hospital	49	1,487	246
Belhaven Hospital	11	1	56
Belhaven Hospital	49	651	670
Health Centre, North Berwick	02	15	13
Health Centre, North Berwick	04	12	15
Health Centre, North Berwick	11	0	61
Eastern General Hospital	01	871	2,315
Eastern General Hospital	49	100	0
Edenhall Hospital	01	421	51
Edington Cottage Hospital	49	1,136	749
Leith Hospital	01	1,371	2,654
Leith Hospital	04	328	626
Leith Hospital	39	248	872
Leith Hospital	49	6,560	2,938
Roodlands General Hospital	01	1,482	2,406
Roodlands General Hospital	03	639	701
Roodlands General Hospital	11	242	822
Roodlands General Hospital	49	6,736	3,119
Western General Hospital	01	1,844	3,473

Hospital	Specialty code	New outpatient attendances	Return outpatient attendances
Western General Hospital	02	4,026	10,317
Western General Hospital	03	2,228	4,386
Western General Hospital	04	91	92
Western General Hospital	05	1,921	3,084
Western General Hospital	06	823	2,489
Western General Hospital	39	755	2,328
Western General Hospital	49	25,940	8,203
Prestonpans Health Centre	02	18	22
Prestonpans Health Centre	04	16	42
Tranent Health Centre	02	14	30
Tranent Health Centre	04	18	33
Chalmers Hospital, Edinburgh	01	1,207	2,158
City Hospital, Edinburgh	03	0	28
City Hospital, Edinburgh	07	102	1,441
Deaconess Hospital	01	899	2,395
Deaconess Hospital	49	8	0
Edinburgh Dental Hospital and School	11	355	5,660
Edinburgh Dental Hospital and School	12	27,443	46,143
Longmore Hospital	01	0	8,355
Princess Margaret Rose Orthopaedic Hospital	02	2,207	10,244
RHSC, Edinburgh	02	320	389
RHSC, Edinburgh	03	2,020	2,031
RHSC, Edinburgh	08	292	1,429
RHSC, Edinburgh	39	1,587	2,581
RHSC, Edinburgh	49	15,112	5,880
Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh	01	5,320	9,903
Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh	02	7,430	26,732
Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh	03	8,194	18,977
Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh	04	6,731	27,960
Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh	05	2,099	3,155
Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh	06	107	924
Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh	08	1,075	2,475
Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh	11	192	2,670
Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh	12	1,156	3,258
Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh	49	66,527	9,102
Bangour General Hospital	01	3,267	4,687
Bangour General Hospital	02	2,282	5,086
Bangour General Hospital	03	2,358	4,868
Bangour General Hospital	04	1,776	2,705
Bangour General Hospital	08	608	6,567
Bangour General Hospital	11	134	287
Bangour General Hospital	12	547	1,005
Bangour General Hospital	49	19,625	3,808
Broxburn Health Centre	02	23	49
Craigshill Health Centre	02	64	76
Howden Health Centre	02	9	15
Bathgate Health Centre	02	52	105
Linlithgow Group Practice	02	19	14
Ninewells Hospital, Dundee	01	6,511	12,843
Ninewells Hospital, Dundee	03	5,049	7,940
Ninewells Hospital, Dundee	04	5,004	19,075
Ninewells Hospital, Dundee	39	349	302
Ninewells Hospital, Dundee	49	4,539	0
Dundee Royal Infirmary	02	7,253	15,617
Dundee Royal Infirmary	05	1,147	2,045
Dundee Royal Infirmary	06	572	1,656
Dundee Royal Infirmary	08	1,158	5,533
Dundee Royal Infirmary	49	41,903	2,679
King's Cross Hospital, Dundee	12	0	160
Ashludie Hospital, Monifieth	12	189	101
Royal Victoria Hospital, Dundee	12	436	264
Nethergate Eye Clinic	03	360	275
Nethergate Eye Clinic	04	427	777
Dundee Ortho. and Rheum. Clinic	02	831	1,315
Dundee Dental Hospital	11	4,426	11,485
Dundee Dental Hospital	12	9,302	8,942
Dundee Dental Hospital	13	5,293	27,907
Royal Dundee Liff Hospital	12	352	181
Strathmartine Hospital, Baldovan	12	475	139
Armitstead Children's Hospital	02	16	75
Fairmuir Special School	02	245	211
Bridge of Earn Hospital, Perthshire	01	610	830
Bridge of Earn Hospital, Perthshire	02	3,318	6,614
Bridge of Earn Hospital, Perthshire	49	4,003	0

Hospital	Specialty code	New outpatient attendances	Return outpatient attendances
Perth Royal Infirmary	01	2,223	3,586
Perth Royal Infirmary	02	328	508
Perth Royal Infirmary	03	1,586	2,135
Perth Royal Infirmary	04	2,091	6,437
Perth Royal Infirmary	08	861	2,950
Perth Royal Infirmary	11	259	1,034
Perth Royal Infirmary	12	843	1,538
Perth Royal Infirmary	49	14,995	1,811
St. Margaret's Hospital, Auchter.	01	146	134
St. Margaret's Hospital, Auchter.	02	9	15
St. Margaret's Hospital, Auchter.	03	112	74
St. Margaret's Hospital, Auchter.	49	1,053	1,290
Crieff Cottage Hospital	01	340	455
Crieff Cottage Hospital	02	41	74
Crieff Cottage Hospital	03	189	149
Crieff Cottage Hospital	04	34	46
Crieff Cottage Hospital	49	896	184
Aberfeldy Cottage Hospital	01	91	129
Aberfeldy Cottage Hospital	02	55	39
Aberfeldy Cottage Hospital	49	566	53
Irvine Memorial Hospital, Pitlochry	01	141	144
Irvine Memorial Hospital, Pitlochry	02	26	11
Irvine Memorial Hospital, Pitlochry	03	125	135
Irvine Memorial Hospital, Pitlochry	49	1,666	161
Blairgowrie and Rattray Cottage Hospital	01	335	488
Blairgowrie and Rattray Cottage Hospital	02	69	97
Blairgowrie and Rattray Cottage Hospital	03	159	82
Blairgowrie and Rattray Cottage Hospital	04	56	66
Blairgowrie and Rattray Cottage Hospital	49	1,767	1,034
Meigle Cottage Hospital, Perthshire	01	89	289
Meigle Cottage Hospital, Perthshire	03	48	29
Meigle Cottage Hospital, Perthshire	49	49	157
Murray Royal Hospital, Perthshire	04	24	15
Murray Royal Hospital, Perthshire	12	73	412
Murthly Royal Hospital, Perthshire	12	0	72
Arbroath Infirmary	01	1,088	1,051
Arbroath Infirmary	02	649	1,631
Arbroath Infirmary	03	629	937
Arbroath Infirmary	04	420	1,334
Arbroath Infirmary	49	5,856	6,147
Brechin Infirmary	01	267	364
Brechin Infirmary	02	260	593
Brechin Infirmary	03	392	596
Brechin Infirmary	04	115	352
Brechin Infirmary	08	66	188
Brechin Infirmary	49	598	260
Forfar Infirmary	01	796	908
Forfar Infirmary	02	253	319
Forfar Infirmary	03	260	336
Forfar Infirmary	49	2,631	1,768
Montrose Royal Infirmary	01	406	446
Montrose Royal Infirmary	02	486	741
Montrose Royal Infirmary	03	205	249
Montrose Royal Infirmary	04	271	720
Montrose Royal Infirmary	49	1,857	1,214
Sunnyside Royal Hospital, Montrose	12	323	261
Stracathro Hospital, Brechin	01	490	962
Stracathro Hospital, Brechin	02	1,195	2,960
Stracathro Hospital, Brechin	04	98	227
Stracathro Hospital, Brechin	06	28	34
Stracathro Hospital, Brechin	12	19	383
Stracathro Hospital, Brechin	49	4,028	1,103
Royal Scottish National Hospital	12	958	573
Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary	01	4,215	8,562
Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary	02	4,067	8,363
Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary	03	2,219	2,868
Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary	04	1,461	5,927
Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary	05	885	1,860
Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary	11	452	1,454
Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary	12	288	1,527
Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary	49	26,188	2,739
BO'Ness Hospital	04	106	447
BO'Ness Hospital	12	0	15
Bellsdyke Hospital	12	118	178
Stirling Royal Infirmary	01	2,391	3,309

Hospital	Specialty code	New outpatient attendances	Return outpatient attendances
Stirling Royal Infirmary	02	2,601	4,934
Stirling Royal Infirmary	03	2,285	3,078
Stirling Royal Infirmary	04	2,003	6,631
Stirling Royal Infirmary	05	1,017	1,882
Stirling Royal Infirmary	07	63	350
Stirling Royal Infirmary	11	366	722
Stirling Royal Infirmary	12	321	583
Stirling Royal Infirmary	49	18,045	2,754
Clackmannan County Hospital	01	1,237	1,672
Clackmannan County Hospital	02	859	1,367
Clackmannan County Hospital	03	286	209
Lewis Hospital, Stornoway	01	3,452	3,210
Lewis Hospital, Stornoway	02	307	286
Lewis Hospital, Stornoway	03	415	186
Lewis Hospital, Stornoway	04	369	989
Lewis Hospital, Stornoway	05	0	212
Lewis Hospital, Stornoway	11	56	539
Lewis Hospital, Stornoway	12	48	31
Daliburgh Hospital	01	981	431
Daliburgh Hospital	03	43	6
Daliburgh Hospital	04	48	119
Castle Douglas Hospital	49	550	0
Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary	01	3,298	5,617
Dumfries and Galloway R.I.	02	2,859	11,613
Dumfries and Galloway R.I.	03	2,076	3,099
Dumfries and Galloway R.I.	04	1,653	5,272
Dumfries and Galloway R.I.	11	411	2,422
Dumfries and Galloway R.I.	12	543	1,341
Dumfries and Galloway R.I.	49	15,419	311
Kirkcudbright Cottage Hospital	01	120	85
Kirkcudbright Cottage Hospital	04	33	56
Kirkcudbright Cottage Hospital	49	907	120
Moffat Cottage Hospital	01	105	141
Garrick Hospital, Stranraer	01	751	1,488
Garrick Hospital, Stranraer	02	322	453
Garrick Hospital, Stranraer	03	507	476
Garrick Hospital, Stranraer	04	369	402
Garrick Hospital, Stranraer	11	124	699
Garrick Hospital, Stranraer	12	109	212
Garrick Hospital, Stranraer	49	5,681	712
Newton Stewart Health Centre	01	238	369
Newton Stewart Health Centre	02	227	318
Newton Stewart Health Centre	04	103	187
Castle Douglas Health Centre	01	59	116
Castle Douglas Health Centre	02	48	76
Castle Douglas Health Centre	04	14	106
Castle Douglas Health Centre	11	56	232
Lerwick Health Centre	11	46	385
Gilbert Hospital	01	1,060	1,637
Gilbert Hospital	02	237	213
Gilbert Hospital	03	307	359
Gilbert Hospital	04	162	668
Gilbert Hospital	12	69	24
Gilbert Hospital	39	99	231
Lerwick Health Centre	11	34	218

Prevention of Terrorism

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many persons have been detained in Scotland under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act on a yearly basis at the latest available date.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: These figures are given in table 3 of Home Office "Statistical Bulletin" No. 11/87, which is available in the Library.

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many persons have been charged in Scotland under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act; and how many have been found guilty;

(2) how many persons have been convicted in Scotland under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act on a yearly basis at the latest available date.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information available is set out in the table. In terms of Scottish statistics, "persons with charge proved" is equivalent to "persons found guilty". Information on the number charged and the number convicted could not be provided without disproportionate cost. However, any difference between the number of persons with charge proved and the number convicted is likely to be minimal.

Offences Under Prevention of Terrorism Legislation: Persons with Charge Proved, Scotland

Year	Number
1974	—
1975	—
1976	2
1977	2
1978	2
1979	17
1980	6
1981	5
1982	10
1983	13
1984	6
1985	3
1986	9
Total	75

It should be noted that, quite separately from offences under the Prevention of Terrorism legislation, persons detained under that legislation may be charged with common law offences or offences under other legislation.

Departmental Staff

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men employed within each grade in his Department in each year since 1979.

Mr. Rifkind: The table contains the information requested for non-industrial grades as at 1 January of each year. Comparable figures for industrial grades are not available.

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
(a) Women									
Senior Management 1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Senior Management 2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Senior Management 3	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0
Senior Management 4	1·0	1·0	—	—	—	—	—	1·0	1·0
Senior Management 5/AS	14·0	14·0	12·0	10·0	9·0	10·0	13·5	12·0	8·0
Senior Management 6/SP	21·0	22·5	21·5	21·5	18·0	20·5	20·5	23·0	28·0
Senior Management 7/Principal	40·5	41·5	38·5	35·5	33·5	30·0	29·5	34·5	34·0
Senior Executive Officer	45·5	46·0	40·5	39·5	36·5	39·5	39·5	42·0	45·0
Higher Executive Officer	190·0	180·5	165·0	156·5	149·0	151·5	154·0	183·0	194·0
Executive Officer	547·0	528·0	511·0	484·5	471·0	459·0	455·5	488·0	515·5
Administrative Officer	1,196·5	1,160·0	1,151·0	1,116·0	1,099·5	1,059·5	1,048·5	1,067·5	1,065·0
Administrative Assistant	1,094·0	1,279·5	1,273·0	1,191·5	1,092·0	1,004·5	982·5	946·5	936·0
Obsolete Grades	262·0	17·5	4·5	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	3,412·5	3,291·5	3,218·0	3,056·0	2,909·5	2,775·5	2,744·5	2,798·5	2,827·5
(b) Men									
Senior Management 1	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0
Senior Management 2	9·0	8·0	9·0	9·0	9·0	8·0	8·0	8·0	8·0
Senior Management 3	34·0	32·0	30·0	30·0	30·0	25·0	27·0	27·0	25·0
Senior Management 4	10·0	11·0	12·0	12·0	11·0	13·0	15·0	16·0	15·0
Senior Management 5/AS	201·0	195·0	196·0	193·5	192·5	167·5	158·5	159·5	131·5
Senior Management 6/SP	165·0	168·5	166·0	142·0	145·0	168·5	171·5	167·0	200·0
Senior Management 7/Principal	411·5	405·5	398·0	384·0	383·0	390·0	437·0	435·0	432·5
Senior Executive Officer	594·0	595·0	562·0	538·5	526·5	523·0	499·0	514·0	527·0
Higher Executive Officer	824·0	816·0	794·0	780·5	809·0	829·5	834·5	817·0	803·5
Executive Officer	1,608·5	1,584·5	1,575·5	1,543·5	1,536·0	1,504·5	1,400·0	1,414·5	1,433·0
Administrative Officer	2,178·5	2,223·0	2,296·0	2,236·0	2,216·5	2,217·0	2,106·5	2,216·5	2,349·0
Administrative Assistant	468·5	431·5	416·0	388·5	395·0	399·5	341·0	375·0	377·0
Obsolete Grades	85·0	37·0	24·0	1·0	1·0	—	—	—	—
Total	6,590·0	6,508·0	6,479·5	6,259·5	6,255·5	6,246·5	5,999·0	6,150·5	6,302·5

Granton Foreshore (Contamination)

Mr. Ron Brown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has received recent representations about the contamination of Granton foreshore; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: We have received three representations since the beginning of this year. Edinburgh district council and the Forth river purification board, the bodies principally responsible for investigating and dealing with complaints involving pollution, are investigating the matter.

Education Costs

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) whether he will publish a table showing the amount spent by local authorities on *(a)* school transport and *(b)* school meals in the latest year for which figures are available; and what are the comparable figures for each year since 1978-79 in cash terms and real terms using 1986-87 prices and using an index of 100 for 1978-79;

(2) what is the latest figure for expenditure per pupil on books and on equipment in *(a)* primary schools, *(b)* secondary schools and *(c)* special schools; and what are the comparable figures for each of the years since 1978-79, in cash terms and real terms using 1986-87 prices and using an index of 100 for 1978-79.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Electricity Generation

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the current capacity of electricity generating stations in Scotland; and by how much in each of the past four years this has exceeded demand in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: I am advised by the Scottish electricity boards that the current capacity of electricity generating stations in Scotland is 8,399 MW. This includes British Nuclear Fuel's reactors at Chapelcross and UKAEA's prototype fast reactor at Dounreay, but excludes any private generating capacity. Taking account of the planning margin (currently 28 per cent.), the excess capacity over maximum demand was 1,316 MW in 1983-84; 1,130 MW in 1984-85; 1,053 MW in 1985-86; and 652 MW in 1986-87.

YTS

Mrs. Ray Michie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has undertaken any assessment of the impact of the reduction in the lodging allowance for YTS trainees who are obliged to take up placements away from their home in rural areas such as Argyll and Bute; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The Manpower Services Commission is currently reviewing the funding of YTS including living away from home allowances. Any particular problems in certain parts of Scotland will be taken into account in the review.

Rivers (Pollution)

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what complaints about pollution in rivers were made in each of the river purification board areas in each year since 1979; what prosecutions have resulted; and what action has been taken to prevent recurrences.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: These matters fall within the responsibilities of the seven river purification boards whose annual reports include information of this kind. I am arranging for copies of the latest reports to be placed in the House of Commons Library and will investigate the possibility of obtaining copies for earlier years.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the level of unemployment in each sector in the Ayr, Girvan and Sanquhar travel-to-work areas in 1979 and 1986 respectively.

Mr. Lang: The only available information is from the 1981 to 1984 censuses of employment, and is shown in the table. The estimates for individual travel-to-work areas are subject to sampling errors, and are dependent on the level of detail supplied by the respondent. In particular, in the 1984 census it has been possible to allocate a number of teachers and other local authority employees to the travel-to-work area of their work place, whereas they were counted at the Ayr headquarters in 1981; this has been a major factor in the reduction in the recorded number of employees in services in Ayr.

Employees in employment: September Census of Employment

(thousands)

Industry (1980 SIC)	*Ayr TTWA*		*Girvan TTWA*		*Cumnock and Sanquhar TTWA*	
	1981	*1984*	*1981*	*1984*	*1981*	*1984*
0 Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1·0	0·8	0·4	0·3	0·8	0·7
1 Energy and water supply	0·6	0·4	0·0	0·0	4·2	3·1
2-4 Manufacturing	8·9	8·3	0·9	0·8	3·8	3·2
5 Construction	2·0	2·9	0·1	0·1	0·6	0·8
6-9 Services	33·1	23·3	1·6	1·5	5·0	4·7
TOTAL	43·6	34·8	3·0	2·7	14·3	12·5

Buses

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what routes and frequencies of bus services in Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley constituency were registered *(a)* prior to bus deregulation and *(b)* currently.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This information is not available centrally.

Girvan Bypass

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the result of the further consideration of the demand and need for the Girvan bypass; and if he will now authorise preliminary work to proceed.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Strathclyde regional council, as agent authority for my right hon. and learned Friend, has been instructed to carry out a feasibility study in respect of a Girvan bypass. The report of the council is not expected until later this year and I would not wish to comment in advance of that.

South Ayreshire Hospital

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects the contract for the south Ayrshire hospital to be awarded; what is the expected completion date for building and the date on which the hospital will be opened for patients; what the planned bed complement is in each specialism for the new hospital; and what approval he has given for the arrangements for disposal of Ayr county, Heathfield and Seafield hospitals when they are surplus to requirement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I understand that Ayrshire and Arran health board hopes to award the contract for the

replacement acute hospital in 1988 with a view to completing the building by 1990. The board is responsible for determining the opening date and the allocation of beds among specialties.

My right hon. and learned Friend has not yet been asked to approve the closure and disposal of any of the hospitals in Ayr that may become surplus to requirements when the new hospital opens.

Nursery Places

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the percentage provision of nursery places for three and four-year-olds in each of the following wards: *(a)* Coylton and Kincaid, *(b)* Maybole, *(c)* North Carrick, *(d)* South Carrick, *(e)* Girvan, Ailsa, *(f)* Girvan, Glendown and *(g)* Annbank, Mossblown and St. Quinox.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: This information is not available at ward level.

Selective Financial Assistance

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the number of applicants for selective financial assistance, the number of employees involved in each case and other non-confidential information about the applicants in each of *(a)* Ayr, *(b)* Girvan and *(c)* Cumnock and Sanquhar travel-to-work areas.

Mr. Lang: Information on individual applications cannot be disclosed for reasons of confidentiality. Summary information for applications for selective financial assistance in each TTWA in the period since the changes in regional policy came into effect on 29 November 1984 is set out in the table.

	Value of grant applied for (£ million)	*Associated project costs (£ million)*
Ayr	6·4	82·9
Girvan	1·0	5·5
Cumnock and Sanquhar	4·2	20·4

In response to these applications, grant offers of £8·7 million have been made associated with £90·6 million project costs and the creation or safeguarding of just under 2,000 jobs.

Harbours

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what grants, loans or other assistance from any European Community funds have been provided for the development of harbours in Scotland; what have been the criteria for submitting harbour schemes for consideration for assistance; and if he will discuss with Strathclyde regional council a scheme for the development of Girvan harbour and its submission for European assistance.

Mr. Lang: The European regional development fund provides the main source of European Community assistance for harbour-related developments in Scotland, having given grants of £38 million since 1975. The basic criterion for the submission of schemes, subject to the public expenditure framework, is compliance with the European community regulation governing the operation of the fund.

It is for Strathclyde regional council to come forward with any proposals for Girvan harbour; until then discussions would be premature.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Sir Hector Monro asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he is able to announce the designation of further environmentally sensitive areas in Scotland.

Mr. Rifkind: Three further environmentally sensitive areas will now be designated in Scotland: the Machair Lands of the Uists and Benbecula; the Whitlaw Eildon area of the Borders region and the Loch Ken River Dee valley in the Stewartry district of Dumfries and Galloway. Further consultations will be held with interested bodies in each of those areas before the designating orders are made.

New Town Development Corporations

Mr. Allan Stewart asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the arrangements for financing the industrial and commercial activities of new town development corporations in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: As part of one of the series of financial management surveys of non-departmental public bodies, the Government have recently been reviewing the arrangements for financing Scottish new towns expenditure. We have concluded that it is unlikely that Cumbernauld, Glenrothes, Irvine and Livingston development corporations will generate surpluses in future on a sufficient scale to enable them to repay borrowing taken out to cover past deficits or to reimburse the Government grants paid to meet the interest charges on loans taken out to finance general revenue deficits.

We therefore propose to take steps at the earliest opportunity to put the funding of corporations' non-housing activities on a more stable and realistic basis. The aim of the new arrangements will be to enable corporations to continue during the remaining period of their lives to perform their essential functions of promoting economic development in Scotland in an efficient and cost-effective way. My Department will shortly commence discussions with development corporations about the precise form of the new arrangements. It is, however, clear that, to pave the way for the new arrangements, it will be necessary to seek statutory powers to write off part of corporations' existing debt. The Government will introduce the necessary legislation as soon as practicable.

In the meantime, corporations will continue to have access to the national loans fund to cover revenue deficits and the Government will continue to make grants available to cover the interest charges on such borrowing.

Dounreay

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what report he has received from the Campaign Against Dounreay Expansion on the radioactivity levels in the vicinity of Dounreay, based upon the findings of a study conducted by Dr. Robert Wheaton; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No report of this nature has been received from the Campaign Against Dounreay

Expansion. My right hon. and learned Friend is, however, aware of Dr. Wheaton's findings and is satisfied that they are consistent with the results obtained from the official environmental monitoring surveys around Dounreay. The results, which are contained in Scottish Department "Statistical Bulletin" No. 1(E)1987, confirm that the levels of radioactivity are equivalent, in terms of doses to people, to a very small fraction of the internationally agreed limits for members of the public.

Ambulance Service

Mr. Worthington asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the percentage share of National Health Service costs allocated to the Scottish ambulance service; and how this compares with percentage expenditure in England and Wales.

Mr. Michael Forsyth [*pursuant to his reply*, 22 July 1987]: In 1985-86, the latest year for which comparative figures are available, the Scottish ambulance service received 1·24 per cent. of total expenditure on the National Health Service in Scotland by comparison with 1·85 per cent. in England and 2·16 per cent. in Wales.

In the current financial year, the Scottish ambulance service will receive an estimated 1·35 per cent. of total expenditure.

Health Boards

Mr. Harry Ewing asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will indicate the amount paid to each general manager and unit managers in Scotland's health boards arising from savings made in each health board.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No such payments have been made.

Mr. Galbraith asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list each member of every health board in Scotland, and the source of their nomination.

Mr. Michael Forsyth [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 July 1987, col. *398*]: The information requested is as follows. Where and individual was the source of the nomination, his style and description is given as at the time of nomination.

Name and by whom nominated

ARGYLL AND CLYDE HEALTH BOARD

Members appointed to 31 August 1989
Mrs. E. M. Cockburn OBE—Secretary of State
Dr. R. Erskine—BMA
Mrs. M. A. Foggie—Inverclyde Local Health Council
Mr. J. H. Gillougley—Paisley Chamber of Commerce
Dr. Anne M. Kelly—Association of Clinical Biochemists
Mrs. J. C. Le Roux—Cancer Research Committee
Dr. J. Moffat—Royal College of Psychiatrists
Mr. E. T. F. Spence MBE—Scottish Office
Rev. J. Young—Renfrew Local Health Council

Members appointed to 31 March 1991
Mr. J. D. Barnett—Scottish Episcopal Church, Diocese of Argyll & the Isles
Mr. A. H. Brabender—Secretary of State
Mr. J. Campbell—COHSE
Mr. L. Capaldi—Secretary of State
Mr. J. Cattanach—Haemophilia Society
Mr. George M. Deuchars—Bank of Scotland
Dr. S. G. McAlpine—Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons
Mrs. Leila C. McKichan—British Red Cross Society
Mr. G. McMillan—Regional Council
Mr. R. R. Reid—Argyll & Bute District Council and Argyll & Bute Local Health Council
Mrs. E. W. Riddel—Inverclyde District Council

AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN HEALTH BOARD

Members appointed to 31 March 1989
Mr. J. Cahill—Cunningham District Council
Mrs. A. M. Campbell—Scottish Society for the Mentally Handicapped
Mr. T. Dickie—Health Board
Mr. J. W. G. Donaldson—Health Board
Mrs. M. W. Gallie—Constituency Member
Dr. J. J. Morrow—BMA
Mr. I. B. Valentine—Ayr Constituency Conservative Association
Mrs. A. B. Wilson—Secretary of State
Dr. W. M. Wilson—BMA

Members appointed to 31 March 1991
Mr. K. Blair—Cumnock & Doon Valley District Council: Health Board
Mr. J. D. Brown—Health Board
Mr. R. Campbell JP—Strathclyde Regional Council
Mrs. A. Dunbar—Cunningham District Council
Mr. P. Hunter—STUC
Mrs. N. M. Lambie—Cunningham District Council
Mr. B. A. Murphy—Law Society of Scotland
Miss. J. Ross—Royal College of Midwives
Mr. J. T. Sinclair—Society of Radiographers
Mr. D. Watts-Russell—Secretary of State
Dr. J. P. Wiltshire—CBI

BORDERS HEALTH BOARD
Members appointed to 31 March 1989
Dr. W. B. Aitken—BMA: Health Board
Mr. P. S. Elliot—STUC: Health Board
Mr. R. W. Jack—Roxburgh District Council: Health Board
Mr. A. C. Purves MBE—CBI: BMA: Health Board
Lady F. E. Sanderson—Borders Local Health Council
Mr. R. A. Stewart—BMA: STUC: Health Board

Members appointed to 31 March 1991
Mr. A. P. Dorward—BMA: Health Board
Mrs. M. Forster—Secretary of State
Dr. I. G. Houston—BMA: Royal College of Surgeons
Mrs. M. Millican—Berwickshire District Council: Borders Local Health Council
Mrs. F. M. Nisbet—Scottish Health Visitors Association: Scottish Association of Nurse Administrators
Mr. W. Scott CBE—Secretary of State
Mr. W. M. S. Thom—British Dental Association
Mr. A. S. Watt—Borders Regional Council

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY HEALTH BOARD
Members appointed to 31 March 1989
Mr. W. D. Beck—Co-op Union Ltd.
Mr. I. S. F. Brown—Constituency Member
Mrs. M. D. Dick-Smith—Dumfries and Galloway Regional Council
Miss A. C. Kelly—CANO of Health Board
Mrs. A. R. Murdoch—Stewarty District Council
Mr. M. J. Pumphry—Health Board
Miss I. A. Stewart—CPSM
Dr. T. S. R. Train—Health Board
Mr. G. Willacy—Annandale and Eskdale District Council
Mr. W. I. Wilson—BMA: Wigtown District Council

Members appointed to 31 March 1991
Mrs. M. H. Bonn—Health Board
Mrs. A. U. G. Harper—Scottish Society for Mentally Handicapped
Mr. J. S. Kerr—COHSE
Mr. H. S. McFadzean—Health Board
Mr. W. Seright—Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh: Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, Glasgow: BMA
Mr. W. Service—BMA: Western Joint Opthalmic Committee: Wigtown District Council
Mrs. J. D. Tulloch—Health Board: Western Joint

Opthalmic Committee
Dr. A. P. D. Wilkinson—BMA

FIFE HEALTH BOARD
Members appointed to 31 March 1989
Mr. J. I. M. Burns—Health Board
Mr. J. S. Edminston—Health Board: Secretary of State
Mr. H. C. Forwell—Scottish Association of Master Bakers: Kirkcaldy Chamber of Commerce
Dr. J. B. Gallacher—St. Andrews Ambulance Association: West Fife Local Health Council: BMA: Dunfermline Medical Committee
Dr. A. A. H. Lawson—West Fife Local Health Council: Royal College of Physicians: BMA: Dunfermline Medical Committee: St. Andrews Ambulance Association
Mr. G. H. D. Mackie, OBE—CBI
Mr. J. Marshall—BMA: Royal College of GPs
Miss M. M. Nelson—Royal College of Midwives
Mr. G. Reid—Secretary of State

Members appointed to 31 March 1991
Mrs. S. L. Aitken—Constituency Member
Mr. W. Clarke—STUC
Mrs. C. Haddow—STUC: BMA: Constituency Member
Mr. J. H. Henderson—Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, West Fife Local Health Council
Dr. C. G. Ingram—University of St. Andrews
Dr. A. A. Marr—Rotary Club of Cupar
Mr. I. A. McCrone—Health Board: Kirkcaldy County Conservative Association
Mr. J. McMurdo—Fife Regional Council
Mr. R. P. Strugnell—Constituency Member
Mr. C. Whitlock—Dunfermline and West Fife Chamber of Commerce
Mrs. E. A. Young—Society of Radiographers: CPSM

FORTH VALLEY HEALTH BOARD
Members appointed to 31 March 1989
Mr. J. Cross—BMA: Health Board
Mr. A. B. Cruickshank—Health Board: Clackmannan District Council
Mr. T. Downs—Clackmannan District Council
Mr. L. Dunbar—BMA: Health Board
Mrs. J. Isbister—Secretary of State
Mrs. W. J. A. Macfarlane—STUC
Professor P. McEwen—University of Stirling
Mr. A. D. McNeill—BMA
Mrs. J. S. Young—College of Speech Therapists

Members appointed to 31 March 1991
Mr. J. F. C. Armstrong—CBI
Mr. F. J. Bell—Health Board
Mr. E. T. M. Bell-Scott—Health Board
Mrs. M. R. Ferguson—Scottish Health Visitors Association: Scottish Association of Nurse Administrators
Mr. H. M. Garland—Association of Directors of Social Work
Mr. K. Harding—Constituency Member
Mrs. E. D. Kennedy—Central Regional Council
Mr. W. D. M. Leithhead—CBI
Mr. I. M. Mullen—Pharmaceutical General Council for Scotland

GRAMPIAN HEALTH BOARD
Members appointed to 31 March 1989
Mr. P. S. Cook—Grampian Regional Council
Capt. C. A. Farquharson—Gordon Local Health Council
Dr. J. G. Henderson—Royal College of Psychiatrists: BMA: Grampian Area Committee for Hospital Medical Services
Mrs. C. Houldsworth—Scottish Office
Prof. M. C. Meston—Health Board
Mr. G. S. Peterkin, JP—STUC
Mr. J. Ramage—STUC
Miss E. A. Sheldon, MBE—Aberdeen Association for Mental Health: Society for Mentally Handicapped: Muscular Dystrophy Society: Robert Gordons Institute of Technology
Mrs. V. A. Stevenson—BDA: Area Dental Committee
Dr. A. J. Taylor—BMA

Members appointed to 31 March 1991
Prof. A. G. M. Campbell—University of Aberdeen
Mr. H. D. Cochran—General Synod of Scottish Episcopal Church and Diocese of Aberdeen
Mr. D. Davidson—Society of Radiographers (Scottish Branch): CPSM
Mr. N. Donald—Gordon District Council: Gordon Local Health Council
Mrs. R. Kemp—Grampian Regional Council
Mr. J. Murison—Scottish Health Visitors Association: Royal College of Nursing
Dr. E. A. Smith, CBE—Scottish Conservative Party: Secretary of State
Mr. J. Sorrie—Secretary of State
Prof. E. A. Tait—Secretary of State
Mrs. J. G. A. Wisely, JP—Women into Public Life Campaign

GREATER GLASGOW HEALTH BOARD
Members appointed to 31 March 1989
Lady Goold—Secretary of State: British Dental Association
Mr. J. Jackson—STUC
Mrs. A. Jarvis—Strathkelvin District Council
Prof. A. C. Kennedy—Royal Colege of Physicians and Surgeons: University of Glasgow
Rev. J. T. Lang—Church of Scotland
Mr. B. A. Maan—Glasgow District Council: South West Local Health Council
Dr. J. MacKay, OBE—BMA: Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons: British Dental Association: Royal College of Surgeons
Mr. L. Turpi—Secretary of State
Mr. C. Williams—BMA: British Association of Social Workers

Members appointed to 31 March 1991
Mr. F. S. Berkley—Prof. J. Ross Harper
Mrs. J. E. Cameron, JP—Bearsden and Milngavie District Council
Miss E. Donnachie—BMA: Scottish Association of Nurse Administration: Royal College of Midwives
Prof. A. T. Florence—Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain
Mr. A. D. Garland—CBI
Mrs. A. Gilchirst—Secretary of State
Mr. P. W. Holst—BMA: Western Joint Ophthalmic Committee
Mr. A. J. Mack—Secretary of State
Mrs. M. McGarry—Clydebank District Council
Prof. R. M. Mackie—University of Glasgow
Mr. J. A. Peel—BMA: Institute of Medical Laboratory Sciences

HIGHLAND HEALTH BOARD
Members appointed to 31 March 1989
Mrs. H. E. Betts-Brown—Health Board
Mr. R. J. B. Bryson, MBE—CPSM: Chartered society of Physiotherapy
Dr. R. S. C. Ferguson—BMA: Local Medical Committee
Miss M. T. Hadden—Royal College of Midwives: Royal College of Nursing: Scottish Health Visitors Association of Nurse Administrators
The Rt. Hon. Lord Macdonald of Sleat—Skye and Lochalsh District Council
Mr. A. I. MacDonald—Health Board: Caithness District Council
Mr. B. A. Merchant—Health Board
Dr. W. D. Murray—Royal College of Physicians: Royal College of Surgeons: Hospital Medical Staff Association
Mrs. S. M. C. South—Health Board

Members appointed to 31 March 1991
Mr. G. Bruce—Caithness Local Health Council
Mr. M. Cumming—STUC
Mrs. C. B. Fraser—Ross and Cromarty District Council: Council of Voluntary Service
Dr. C. A. S. Galloway—BMA: Royal College of Surgeons

Mr. W. G. Johnston—Sutherland Local Health Council
Mrs. V. MacIver—Ross and Cromarty District Council
Mr. A. K. Robertson—Area Dental Committee of Highland Health Board
Mrs. C. Thomson—Ross and Cromarty Local Health Council
Mrs. R. M. Tulloch—Scottish Society for Mentally Handicapped: Nairn Local Health Council

LANARKSHIRE HEALTH BOARD
Members appointed to 31 March 1989
Dr. G. A. Bell—Secretary of State
Mr. T. M. Bennet—Health Board
Mr. A. Braidwood—Health Board
Mrs. N. Cochrane—Hamilton and East Kilbride Local Health Council: Hamilton District Council
Mrs. A. S. Hinshalwood—Health Board: Secretary of State: Constituency Member
Mrs. J. H. Holmes—Secretary of State
Mr. A. A. McIlwain, CBE—Law Society of Scotland
Mrs. D. C. McGirr—Royal College of Physicians: Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons
Mr. G. McIntosh—CBI
Dr. A. Mathewson—BMA
Mr. J. Thomson—Voluntary Association for Mental Welfare

Members appointed to 31 March 1991
Miss J. E. Jarvie—Lanarkshire Branch Royal College of Nursing
Mr. R. J. Logan—Health Board
Mr. D. McClymont—Society of Radiographers
Dr. P. K. Mukherjee—BMA
Mr. W. J. O'Brien, JP—Cumbernauld and Kilsyth District Council
Mr. H. Porter, OBE—CBI
Mr. T. S. L. Reid—Health Board
Mr. J. P. Robson—Strathclyde Regional Council
Miss J. Rutherford—East Kilbride Local Health Council
Mr. W. Traynor—STUC: Western Joint Ophthalmic Committee

LOTHIAN HEALTH BOARD
Members appointed to 31 March 1989
Mrs. P. Bell—Conservative and Unionist Party
Mr. I. Capperauld—Secretary of State
Mr. A. T. Clark MBE MVO—Edinburgh District Council
Mrs. W. E. Donaldson—Lothian Regional Council: BMA
Sir J. D. Fraser—BMA
Mr. W. B. Herald—STUC
Dr. A. R. Milne—Health Board: Royal College of General Practitioners
Mr. J. F. Wilson—Bank of Scotland
Professor J. Williamson—Edinburgh University
Members appointed to 31 March 1991
Mrs. G. Barton—Lothian Regional Council: Edinburgh District Council
Dr. J. W. Baynham—CBI
Miss J. A. Brown—Society of Radiographers: CPSM
Mrs. E. Burnett—Royal College of Nursing
Mr. J. Campbell—Secretary of State
Mr. A. B. Dunlop—Scottish Conservative Party: Secretary of State
Mrs. J. Ferguson—Health Board
Mr. D. R. Findlay—The Faculty of Advocates
Dr. Jessie Gray—West Lothian District Local Council
Dr. R. I. Kennedy—Royal College of Psychiatrists
Mr. J. M. MacNeill CBE—CBI
Mr. G. S. Millar—Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain
Mrs. W. Sutherland—STUC

ORKNEY HEALTH BOARD
Members appointed to 31 March 1989
Mr. B. M. Clark—Health Board
Mr. F. J. Groundwater—STUC: BMA
Mrs. J. Marwick—Orkney Local Health Council: Health Board: Orkney Islands Council
Mr. J. W. R. Moar MBE—Secretary of State
Mrs. M. Porteous—Health Board
Dr. J. S. Walker—BMA

Members appointed to 31 March 1991
Mr. A. H. Bevan—Health Board
Mr. A. Bullen—Health Board
Mrs. M. J. B. Crichton—Orkney Local Health Council
Mr. J. Flett—Health Board
Mr. J. M. F. Groat—Health Board
Mrs. G. M. Leslie—Orkney Local Health Council
Mr. J. Leslie—Pharmaceutical General Council
Mrs. E. M. Street—Royal College of Midwives

SHETLAND HEALTH BOARD
Members appointed to 31 March 1989
Mr. A. G. Coutts—Health Board
Dr. M. D. Hunter—BMA
Mr. R. Leask—COHSE
Mr. D. M. Sinclair—Royal College of Nursing: Scottish Health Visitors Association
Captain G. Walterson—Secretary of State
Mrs. M. Williamson—Health Board
Mr. W. A. Smith, BEM—Shetland Islands Council

Members appointed to 31 March 1991
Mr. R. R. Bentley—Health Board: Joint Ophthalmic Committee
Mr. C. A. Cumming—ASTMS
Mr. A. G. Flaws—Scottish Conservative Party
Mr. A. H. George—BP Sullom Voe Terminal
Mrs. M. E. Irving—Former Health Board Member
Mr. J. A. T. Leslie—Area Pharmaceutical Committee
Mr. A. J. R. Tait—STUC

TAYSIDE HEALTH BOARD
Members appointed to 31 March 1989
Mr. E. W. Cameron, OBE—Scottish Office
Mr. J. Campbell-Smith—Perth and Kinross District Council
Mr. J. W. Duncan, MBE—Co-operative Union Ltd.: Dundee District Council: Constituency Member
Mrs. S. D. R. Kydd—Angus Local Health Council
Dr. A. G. R. Law—BMA
Mr. E. C. Lowson, MBE—Association of Scottish Chamber of Commerce
Professor D. G. McDevitt—University of Dundee
Miss S. D. Moncur—Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine: Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
Mr. I. W. Stevenson—Tayside Regional Council

Members appointed to 31 March 1991
Miss A. Allan—Royal College of Midwives
Dr. P. G. Aungle—Royal College of Psychiatrists
Professor J. S. Beck—University of Dundee
Mrs. R. J. T. Bolton—Perth and Kinross, British Red Cross Society
Mr. G. S. Cargill—Health Board
Mr. J. S. Fair—Secretary of State
Mr. A. H. Lynch—Dundee District Council: Dundee Local Health Council
Mr. J. C. MacFarlane, OBE—CBI
Mr. W. Stewart—Perth and Kinross Local Health Council

WESTERN ISLES HEALTH BOARD
Members appointed to 31 March 1986
Mr. D. A. Maclean—Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons: BMA
Mr. K. Maclennan—Health Board
Mr. J. McIntyre—Western Isles Islands Council
Mr. M. McLeod—Health Board
Mr. A. D. Millar—Health Board
Mr. J. M. Morrison—Lewis and Harris Local Health Council (Council for Social Services)
Mr. I. D. Sutherland—Health Board

Members appointed to 31 March 1991
Dr. N. W. Beresford—Health Board
Mr. J. H. Downie—Lewis and Harris Local Health Council
Mr. A. Matheson—Western Isles Island Council
Rev. M. A. McLeod—Health Board
Mrs. C. R. Macaskill—Health Board
Mr. A. A. McDonald—Western Isles Islands Council
Mrs. G. N. MacKillop—Health Board

NATIONAL FINANCE

Tax Evasion

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the total loss of tax revenue through evasion and or fraudulent returns in relation to payment of (i) income tax, (ii) national insurance contributions, (iii) corporation tax, (iv) capital transfer tax and (v) value added tax.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I regret that reliable estimates are not possible.

Inland Revenue

Mr. Sackville asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the Inland Revenue's plan to move work out of London.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Department has considered a number of proposals to reduce resignations of inspectors of taxes. One of the major reasons for resignations which it has identified is the generally unwelcome nature of a transfer to London. It has therefore decided to move from London to a number of cities elsewhere, over the period 1987 to 1991, 21 tax districts dealing with some of the largest commercial and industrial concerns; some head office sections responsible for training and technical and investigation work including half of the London special office and inquiry branch posts. A total of about 185 posts at higher levels and about 125 at lower levels will be involved. Suitable accommodation is being sought in Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Birmingham and Bristol. The Department will ensure that any inconvenience to companies and their advisers will be kept to a minimum. I recognise and accept the reasons underlying these proposals and I support the plans and hope that they will succeed in their aim.

Property Services Agency

Dr. Twinn asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether any changes are proposed in the financial and accounting responsibilities of the Property Services Agency and client departments for new civil works projects.

Mr. Major: Under existing arrangements client Departments are responsible for defining their accommodation needs precisely, economically and in good time. PSA is responsible for deciding how best to meet these requirements—whether by using existing property, or by leasing or new construction. Where new construction is the agreed solution the capital cost of such projects (and the cost of the design resources associated with them) is generally met from the client Department's public expenditure programme. But, with a few exceptions, expenditure on civil projects still falls on the PSA's vote (Class XX. 19). Most Departments are required to use PSA exclusively to provide accommodation services.

From 1 April 1988 Departments will be required to meet, directly from their votes, the cost of major civil building projects which are funded from their public expenditure programmes. This will bring the treatment of such expenditure in the public expenditure survey and in estimates into line. From the same date Departments will be able to test the market, and to use agents other than the PSA for design and project management of new construction where it appears cost effective and in the interests of good management to do so. These arrangements will apply to projects estimated to cost £150,000 or more. The property repayment services arrangements will continue to govern the provision of leased accommodation, minor works and maintenance.

These changes are part of a continuing process which is designed to clarify the respective responsibilities of client and agent to ensure completion of projects to time and within budget. The introduction of payment will improve the incentive for the client Department to ensure, for example, that late and potentially expensive changes to specification are avoided. The introduction of competition, by untying Departments from PSA, will provide an opportunity for Departments to test other sources of supply as well as an incentive for further improvement of the efficiency of services provided by PSA.

Under the new payment arrangements Departments will remain accountable for the requirement; PSA will remain accountable for the services which it provides. Departments will not be required to second-guess PSA's professional judgments. But the change in vote responsibilities will enable client Departments to discharge their role more effectively.

Under untying, Departments will not necessarily be expected to test the market from the outset or to use agents other than the PSA. The process is expected to be evolutionary for three reasons.

First, it will take time for Departments to acquire the necessary resources and skills; for some Departments, especially small Departments, or those with few building projects, it may not be economical for them to do so.

Secondly, Departments will need to satisfy the Treasury of their capacity to use alternative agencies.

Thirdly, it will be necessary to take into account the effects of changes in workload on PSA. Departments will therefore be expected to agree an advance programme of work with PSA.

PSA intends to move to a system of commercial accounting as soon as possible. When it does, PSA will be able to provide advance quotations on a comparable basis to those of outside agencies. In the interim it will be necessary for Departments to base their comparisons on the best estimates PSA can provide.

These arrangements will be reviewed in two years' time.

The Government will take account of this reply in their response to the Select Committee on the Environment, whose report earlier this year on PSA recommended charging on a repayment basis and untying of Departments for some of the functions carried out by PSA.

Cash Limits

Mr. Marland asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give revised cash limits for 1987-88 resulting from the carry-forward of capital underspends allowed under the end-year flexibility scheme for central Government and for local authority expenditure.

Mr. Major: A list of revised cash limits totalling £458·1 million is shown in the following table. The increases in cash limits on central Government votes are subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplement Estimates.

The total increase classified as public expenditure is £456·9 million. This sum will be met from the reserve and will therefore not add to the planned total of public expenditure.

Revisions to 1987-88 cash limits resulting from the carryforward of capital underspends

Class	Vote	Accounting Department	Description of expenditure	Current cash limit £ '000s	Increase £ '000s	Revised cash limit £ '000s
Cash limits on voted expenditure						
I	[1]2	Ministry of Defence	Defence procurement	8,551,837	350,815	8,902,652
II	1	Foreign and Commonwealth Office	Overseas representation	423,816	3,430	427,246
IV	2	Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce	Central administration	30,070	902	30,972
V	[2]5	Export Credit Guarantee Department	International trade	38,075	1,250	39,325
VII	1	Department of Employment	Employment programmes	1,394,511	300	1,394,811
VII	5	Department of Employment	Manpower Services Commission	1,986,128	2,000	1,988,128
VIII	1	Department of Transport	National roads, England	910,829	37,745	948,574
VIII	2	Department of Transport	Transport services and central administration	191,446	954	192,400
VIII	4	Department of Transport	Driver and vehicle licensing	114,179	2,000	116,179
X	4	Department of Environment	Royal palaces, royal parks, historic buildings, ancient monuments and the national heritage	85,876	571	86,447
XI	2	Home Office	Prisons, England and Wales	677,904	3,233	681,137
XI	3	Home Office	Central administrative, miscellaneous and community service and civil defence, England and Wales	406,320	2,000	408,320
XI	5	Lord Chancellor's Department	Administration of justice, England and Wales	127,529	2,000	129,529
XII	1	Department of Education and Science	Schools, further education and other education services	376,982	1,967	378,949
XII	3	Department of Education and Science	Universities etc.	1,707,933	95	1,708,028
XIV	3	Department of Health and Social Security	Miscellaneous health and personal social services, England	402,164	988	403,152
XVI	2	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland	Agricultural services and fisheries, Scotland	69,959	1,400	71,359
XVI	3	Industry Department for Scotland	Regional and general industrial support Scotland	124,787	853	125,640
XVI	6	Scottish Development Department	Roads, transport and environmental services, Scotland	165,061	3,610	168,671
XVI	14	Scottish Home and Health Department	Prisons, hospitals and community health services etc., Scotland	1,714,483	6,642	1,721,125
XVII	2	Welsh Office	Agricultural services, support for the fishing industry, regional and industrial development, Wales	53,887	1,076	54,963
XVII	9	Welsh Office	Central administration, Wales	38,595	105	38,700
XIX	7	Inland Revenue	Economic and financial administration	1,013,831	914	1,014,745
XIX	13	Her Majesty's Treasury	Central management of the Civil Service: computers and telecommunications	17,096	988	18,084
XX	[3]9	Land Registry	Records, registrations and surveys	2	1	3
XX	10	Ordinance Survey	Records, registrations and surveys	20,403	1,017	21,420
XX	16	Office of Fair Trading	Office of Fair Trading	9,362	223	9,585
XX	19	Property Services Agency	Civil accommodation, administration and miscellaneous services	228,075	2,301	230,376
Carryforward on voted expenditure					429,380	

Cash limits on non-voted expenditure

Cash block	Accounting Department	Description of expenditure	Current cash limit £ million	Increase £ million	Revised cash limit £ million
SO/LA1	Scottish Office	Capital expenditure in Scotland by local authorities on roads and transport water and sewerage, general services, urban programme police and social work, schools, further education and teacher training.	432·6	5·2	437·8
SO/LA2	Scottish Office	Capital expenditure in Scotland on housing by local authorities, new towns, the Scottish Special Housing Association and on schemes financed by the Housing Corporation and industrial and commercial investment by new towns.	567·6	13·6	581·2
HO/LA1	Home Office	Capital expenditure by local authorities on police courts and probation.	131·2	5·5	136·7

Cash block	Accounting Department	Description of expenditure	Current cash limit £ million	Increase £ million	Revised cash limit £ million
DOE/UA1	Department of the Environment	External financing requirements of Urban Development Corporations, capital expenditure on the urban programme and derelict land reclamation.	403·4	3·1	406·5
DOE/HC1	Department of the Environment	Capital expenditure in England on housing financed through the Housing Corporation.	637·0	1·3	638·3
Carryforward on non-voted expenditure				28·7	
Total carryforward (voted and non-voted) (of which public expenditure)				458·1 (456·9)	

Notes:

(1) The five cash-limited defence votes are each separate cash limits but, by agreement with the Treasury, are managed as a cash block. Underspend on expenditure eligible for the scheme in these cash limits has been carried forward to class I vote 2.

(2) Capital expenditure on this vote is not classified as public expenditure.

(3) This vote is a token one; carryforward will be taken in the form of increased appropriations-in-aid of £97,000.

Investment Trust

Mr. Chapman asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans to seek to amend the definition of an investment trust; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Under the Finance Bill the whole of section 93 of the Finance Act 1972 would be repealed. Most of the section is concerned with the arrangements which were introduced to secure a 30 per cent. rate on the capital gains of companies. These arrangements would be overtaken by the changes in the Bill for companies' capital gains, and therefore need to be repealed. Section 93(6), however, relates to the circumstances in which an investment trust can be approved under section 359 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act and hence qualify for tax exemption on its capital gains. The need for subsection (6) will remain. In the time available it has not been possible to correct the repeal schedule in the Finance Bill, but we shall be introducing in next year's Bill a provision to preserve subsection (6). This provision will be effective from 17 March 1987, the date from which the repeal of section 93 has effect under the Bill.

North Sea Oil

Mr. Mullin asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give details of the North sea oil revenue received by the Treasury for each year since 1979.

Mr. Lilley: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Corporations (Pre-privatisation Revenue)

Mr. Mullin asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give details of the revenue received by the Treasury from each privatised corporation for each of the last three years before privatisation.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The information available from published reports and accounts on the tax payments, net repayments of Government loans, interest payments on Government loans and public dividend capital dividends is as follows.

The figures do not show flows from central Government to the industries, for example, grants and net new borrowings, nor the receipts realised from privatisation. Nor do they represent the public expenditure of the corporations which would include, in addition to these flows, any market and overseas borrowings and leases. Definitions and information on the public expenditure of the industries can be found in the annual public expenditure White Papers, published by HMSO.

List of Treasury receipts from state enterprise for three years prior to privatisation

£ million

Corporation[1 3]	Date of Privatisation	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87
British Aerospace										
Tax Paid	1981	[2]31·2	1·0	2·0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Net Loan Repayment		1·8	—	2·9	—	—	—	—	—	—
Loan Interest		1·6	1·5	13·7	—	—	—	—	—	—
PDC Dividends		2·0	2·9	3·1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cable and Wireless	1981									
Tax Paid		15·3	23·7	18·9	25·1	—	—	—	—	—
Amersham International	1982									
Tax Paid		—	1·4	1·4	1·9	—	—	—	—	—
National Freight Corporation	1982									
Loan Interest		—	7·8	8·0	—	—	—	—	—	—

Corporation[1,3] Privatisation	Date of	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87
Britoil[5]	1982									
Tax paid		—	—	—	—	[2]396·4				
Associated British Ports	1983									
Tax paid		—	8·8	6·8	2·9	0·6				
Loan Repayment		—	—	8·2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Loan Interest		—	—	3·9	5·1	6·0	—	—	—	—
Enterprise Oil plc	1984									
Tax Paid		—	—	—	—	—	23·0	3·0	—	—
Jaguar plc	1984									
Corporation Tax		—	—	—	—	[4] —	[2]0·5	[2]1·7	—	—
British Telecom plc	1984									
Corporation Tax		—	—	—	—	—	—	4·0	—	—
Net Loan Repayment		—	—	—	—	112·4	153·8	—	—	—
Loan Interest		—	—	—	150·3	307·0	291·3	105·1	—	—
British Gas plc	1986									
Tax Paid		—	—	—	—	—	234·4	131·2	261·6	—
Gas Levy		—	—	—	—	—	521·5	499·9	525·3	—
Net Loan Repayment		—	—	—	—	—	40·0	—	—	—
Loan Interest		—	—	—	—	—	1·8	0·1	—	—
British Airways	1987									
Tax Paid		—	—	—	—	—	3·2	2·7	2·2	—
Net Loan Repayment		—	—	—	—	—	42·4	—	—	—
Loan Interest		—	—	—	—	—	2·7	—	—	—
Rolls Royce plc	1987									
Tax Paid		—	—	—	—	—	[2]4·0	[2]5·0	[2]6·0	—
British Airports Authority (BAA plc)	1987									
Tax Paid		—	—	—	—	—	3·0	0·2	0·1	23·5
Net Loan Repayment		—	—	—	—	—	4·7	4·7	4·7	—
Loan Interest		—	—	—	—	—	3·9	3·6	3·2	1·1

[1] Tax paid is the cash paid in the financial year and not the liability for tax in that year.
[2] These figures represent tax paid in the 12 months to the December of the financial year and not in the financial year itself eg. Rolls Royce figure of £5·0 million in 1984-85 represents tax paid in calendar year 1984. Other corporations have accounting year-ends on 31 March.
[3] Net loan repayments represents the gross borrowing from the National Loan Fund less gross repayments.
[4] No separate figures available. Jaguar was part of BLMC Ltd.
[5] Royalty payments by Britoil and Enterprise Oil, and VAT and PAYE payments are not included since they are not publicly available by individual corporation before privatisation.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Wareing asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has had concerning the levying of value added tax on pet foods; if he intends to seek to categorise pet foods in the same way as other foods for value added purposes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: I have received a few letters, including one from the Pet Food Manufacturers Association. The Government have no plans to relieve those items of pet food which are currently liable to VAT at the standard rate.

War Pensions

Mr. Corbett asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost of disregarding for tax purposes war pensions received by *(a)* those under 65 years and *(b)* those over 65 years; and what estimate he has made of the numbers in each category.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Payroll Giving Schemes

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many agencies have been approved by the Inland Revenue for the purpose of changing payroll giving schemes up to 30 June; and how many schemes were in operation at the same date.

Mr. Brooke: Up to 30 June, 13 agencies had been approved to operate payroll giving schemes. A further one has subsequently been approved. It is not possible to say precisely how many schemes were in operation on 30 June, but by 20 July the Inland Revenue had been notified that 1,125 employers planned to set up schemes.

Personal Incomes

Mr. Frank Field asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will provide figures comparable to those given to the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore), *Official Report*, 17 July, of the weekly earnings after tax, national insurance and child benefit at *(a)* actual prices and *(b)* constant prices at April of (i) a single person, (ii) a married couple, (iii) a married couple with two children under 11 years of age and (iv) a married couple with four children, two under 11 years of age and

one between 11 to 15 years of age and one over 16 years of age, whose gross earnings are not (1) lowest decile, (2) lowest quartile, (3) median, (4) upper quartile and (5) highest decile for April 1979 under the June 1979 tax-benefit regime at April 1987.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Clydesdale Bank

Mr. Salmond asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the answer of 17 July, why he will not specify the precise dates on which the Bank of England and his Department were first informed of the proposed purchase of the Clydesdale Bank by the National Australia Bank.

Mr. Lilley: The Bank of England in its supervisory role has confidential discussions with banks, other financial institutions and other interested parties throughout the year. In some cases, in the interests of depositors or in the wider public interest, information may be passed to the Treasury under the provisions of the Banking Act. The confidential nature of these discussions would be damaged if details, including dates, were routinely disclosed. If the hon. Member would like to write explaining any specific matter which concerns him about the dates in this case, I would be glad to consider the point.

Coinage

Mr. Shersby asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost to public funds of changing from existing coinage to the revised coinage proposed in option 4 as set out in "The United Kingdom Coinage", published by the Royal Mint.

Mr. Brooke: The new 5p and 10p coins proposed in option 4 are smaller than the existing coins and would be cheaper to produce. The total saving over a 10-year period, dependent on the demand for the new coins, would be of the order of £3 million at today's prices.

MV Silver Sea

Mr. Foulkes asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the result of the inquiries carried out by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise into the activities of the motor vessel Silver Sea; if he will publish its report; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: Work on the inquiry is continuing. I expect to be able to write to the hon. Member to advise him of the outcome before the end of the recess. A copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Hansard Press

Ms. Harman asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the prospects for retraining and redeployment for staff displaced by technological changes in the *Hansard Press*.

Mr. Brooke: Retraining options will be discussed with representatives of the trade unions involved in the event of any technological changes which affect jobs.

Departmental Staff

Ms. Richardson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men employed within each grade in his Department in each year since 1979.

Mr. Brooke: The information is not available in the form requested.

The tables show the number of non-industrial staff in post (full-time equivalents) by sex from January 1979 to January 1987 by grade level (broadly equivalent grades in the open structure/administration group based on a comparison of salary scales).

Table A shows the staff of Her Majesty's Treasury during the relevant period.

Table B shows the staff of the Civil Service Department for the period January 1979 to January 1982.

From January 1983 the Treasury numbers include some of the staff who were formerly in the Civil Service Department. The remaining staff of the Civil Service Department were absorbed into the Management and Personnel Office of the Cabinet Office and are included in the Cabinet Office's numbers.

Table A
Number of male and female staff employed 1979-87

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
Grade 1									
Male	5·0	3·0	5·0	5·0	4·0	5·0	4·0	4·0	5·0
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Grade 2									
Male	8·0	8·0	6·0	9·0	5·0	5·0	6·0	6·0	6·0
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Grade 3									
Male	19·0	18·0	19·0	21·0	19·0	20·0	19·0	22·0	19·0
Female	3·0	3·0	2·0	3·0	3·0	2·0	2·0	1·0	3·0
Grade 4									
Male	—	—	—	—	3·0	4·0	3·0	2·0	3·0
Female	1·0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Grade 5									
Male	50·0	46·0	41·0	40·0	57·0	55·0	55·0	55·0	55·0
Female	6·0	6·0	6·0	5·0	6·0	5·0	5·0	11·0	9·0
Grade 6									
Male	10·0	8·0	9·0	7·0	23·0	25·0	21·0	25·5	26·0
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Grade 7									

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Male	108·0	105·0	103·0	101·0	188·0	188·0	197·0	207·5	198·5
Female	9·0	9·5	10·5	12·5	16·5	22·5	24·5	30·0	29·0
SEO									
Male	31·0	29·0	24·0	24·0	203·5	203·5	198·5	193·0	197·0
Female	8·0	7·0	7·0	6·0	19·0	19·0	20·0	19·0	22·0
HEO									
Male	66·0	69·0	73·0	70·0	316·0	310·0	307·0	302·5	305·5
Female	18·0	23·0	19·0	18·0	67·5	73·5	80·5	84·0	89·0
EO									
Male	88·0	88·0	78·0	76·0	384·5	335·0	280·0	279·0	300·0
Female	72·5	72·5	64·0	65·0	220·5	221·5	188·0	197·0	228·0
Clerical, Typing, Messengerial and other grades									
Male	231·5	214·5	221·5	206·0	462·0	393·5	383·0	308·0	421·5
Female	319·5	310·0	320·5	310·0	807·5	735·5	710·0	682·0	675·0

Table B

	1979		1980		1981		1982	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Grade 1	3·0	—	3·0	—	3·0	—	2·0	—
Grade 2	12·0	—	10·0	—	10·0	1·0	11·0	1·0
Grade 3	18·5	2·0	19·5	2·0	17·0	2·0	14·0	3·0
Grade 4	3·0	—	3·0	—	4·0	1·0	6·0	1·0
Grade 5	63·0	4·0	67·0	3·0	61·5	2·0	55·5	7·0
Grade 6	42·0	3·0	38·0	3·0	36·0	5·0	34·0	3·0
Grade 7	181·5	18·0	187·0	16·5	193·0	25·0	171·0	28·0
SEO	232·0	31·0	233·0	30·0	271·0	29·0	247·0	26·5
HEO	347·0	79·0	354·0	77·0	331·0	75·5	305·0	76·0
EO	475·0	305·0	479·0	325·0	456·0	319·0	417·0	286·0
Clerical, typing, messengerial and other grades	544·5	1,226·5	538·0	1,215·5	499·0	1,107·5	480·5	1,010·0
Total	1,921·5	1,668·5	1,931·5	1,672·0	1,881·5	1,567·0	1,743·0	1441·5

AGRICULTURE

2,4,5-T

Mr. Alan W. Williams asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the European countries that have banned or restricted the use of the weedkiller 2,4,5-T.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The latest information we have available is that varying uses of 2,4,5-T products are permitted in Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Ireland, Denmark, Greece, Spain and Portugal. No uses are permitted in Holland, Italy or West Germany.

Food Storage (Prosecutions)

Mr. Hardy asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in how many cases criminal prosecutions have been carried out or commenced in relation to the storage of surplus foods within the United Kingdom during the last two years.

Mr. Donald Thompson: None.

New Zealand Butter

Mr. Grocott asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the quantity of New Zealand butter exports to the United Kingdom in *(a)* 1970, *(b)* 1979 and *(c)* the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested is as follows:

Year	Quantity (tonnes)
1970	158,190
1979	119,878
1986	76,238

Source: United Kingdom import figures from Department of Trade and Industry Overseas Trade Statistics

New Zealand Lamb

Mr. Grocott asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what were the quantities of New Zealand lamb exports to the United Kingdom in *(a)* 1970, *(b)* 1979 and *(c)* the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Donald Thompson: New Zealand lamb exports to the United Kingdom for the years requested were as follows:

	tonnes
(a) 1970	297,000
(b) 1979	200,000
(c) 1986	119,000

Source: Customs and Excise data.

Milk Quotas

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the milk quota cuts made in each European Community country in the years 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Wholesale quota allocations for 1984-85 were based on member states' deliveries in 1981,

plus 2 per cent., except for Ireland and Italy where quotas were based on 1983 deliveries. This required the following adjustments to member states 1983-84 wholesale deliveries:

Percentage adjustment to 1983-84 deliveries

	per cent.
Belgium	−4·01
Denmark	−6·59
Germany	−7·79
France	−2·52
Greece	+10·02
Ireland	−2·87
Italy	−2·55
Luxembourg	−4·96
Netherlands	−6·78
United Kingdom	−6·48

These figures do not include allocations from the Community reserve.

Wholesale quotas for all member states (other than Ireland and Italy) were reduced by a further 1 per cent. in 1985-86. No adjustment was made in 1986-87.

Information is not available to show the adjustments which were required in respect of direct sales quota.

Departmental Staff

Ms. Richardson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men employed within each grade in his Department in each year since 1979.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The number of non-industrial staff in post (full-time equivalent) by sex and by grade level based on comparison of salary scales, in each year at 1 January, was as follows:

	1979		*1980*		*1981*	
Grade level equivalent	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Senior Manager 1	1·0	—	1·0	—	1·0	—
Senior Manager 2	5·0	—	5·0	—	6·0	—
Senior Manager 3	26·0	2·0	27·0	2·0	25·0	1·0
Grade 4	3·0	—	5·0	—	4·0	—
Grade 5	153·0	4·0	152·0	4·0	154·0	3·0
Grade 6	95·0	6·5	104·5	7·5	99·5	8·0
Grade 7	784·5	42·5	765·5	43·5	765·5	39·5
SEO	1,261·5	123·5	1,212·0	128·5	1,260·0	143·0
HEO	1,473·0	240·5	1,467·5	247·5	1,491·0	253·5
EO	1,589·5	621·0	1,549·5	651·5	1,537·0	658·5
AO	1,273·5	1,849·5	1,192·5	1,823·5	1,156·0	1,778·0
AA	670·0	2,296·5	607·5	2,521·5	561·5	2,351·5
Other	163·0	453·5	89·5	43·0	17·0	14·5
Total	7,498·0	5,639·5	7,178·5	5,472·5	7,077·5	5,250·5

	1982		*1983*		*1984*	
Grade level equivalent	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Senior Manager 1	1·0	—	1·0	—	1·0	—
Senior Manager 2	5·0	—	5·0	—	5·0	—
Senior Manager 3	25·0	1·0	25·0	1·0	25·0	2·0
Grade 4	3·0	—	3·0	—	13·0	—
Grade 5	141·0	4·0	134·0	6·0	100·0	5·0
Grade 6	101·5	9·0	94·0	3·5	127·0	2·5
Grade 7	718·0	38·5	728·0	42·0	734·0	42·5
SEO	1,212·5	141·0	1,205·0	135·0	1,180·0	130·0
HEO	1,411·5	262·0	1,381·0	258·0	1,328·0	287·0
EO	1,457·0	604·0	1,398·0	631·5	1,336·0	687·0
AO	1,059·5	1,649·0	1,007·5	1,576·5	890·0	1,441·0
AA	521·5	2,193·5	561·0	2,116·5	558·0	2,039·0
Other	13·0	4·5	—	—	1·5	—
Total	6,669·5	4,906·5	6,542·5	4,770·0	6,298·5	4,636·0

	1985		*1986*		*1987*	
Grade level equivalent	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Senior Manager 1	1·0	—	1·0	—	1·0	—
Senior Manager 2	5·0	—	5·0	—	5·0	—
Senior Manager 3	23·0	2·0	23·0	2·0	24·0	1·0
Grade 4	12·0	—	12·0	—	13·0	—
Grade 5	99·0	6·0	98·0	6·0	105·0	7·5
Grade 6	128·0	5·5	118·0	5·5	113·0	5·0
Grade 7	710·0	36·0	696·0	41·0	656·0	46·0
SEO	1,164·0	131·5	1,171·0	137·5	1,101·0	134·0
HEO	1,286·0	309·0	1,333·0	368·5	1,311·0	375·0
EO	1,190·0	626·5	1,181·0	713·5	1,097·0	679·0
AO	869·0	1,482·5	795·5	1,368·5	730·0	1,273·0

Grade level equivalent	1985 Male	1985 Female	1986 Male	1986 Female	1987 Male	1987 Female
AA	553·5	1,935·0	551·0	1,881·5	532·0	1,767·5
Other	0·5		1·0		3·0	
Total	6,041·0	4,534·0	5,985·5	4,524·0	5,691·0	4,288·0

CAP

Mr. Corbett asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will list the financial contribution of the United Kingdom to the EEC common agricultural policy over the past five years.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The United Kingdom contributes to the Community budget as a whole rather than to individual items of Community expenditure. The following table gives the United Kingdom's contribution share of EC own resources, before any abatements, and details of Community expenditure and United Kingdom receipts under the CAP:

Year	United Kingdom contribution to budget per cent.	CAP expenditure £ million	United Kingdom receipts from CAP £ million
1982	24·2	7,294	757
1983	22·1	9,759	1,085
1984	21·8	11,150	1,311
1985	23·4	12,084	1,187
1986	[1]19·5	14,919	1,351

[1] Budget figure: outturn not available.

Mr. Grocott asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if, pursuant to his answer of 13 July, *Official Report*, column *350*, about the common agricultural policy, he will now state the average cost per head in the United Kingdom of the United Kingdom net contribution to the common agricultural policy in 1987.

Mr. MacGregor: I have nothing to add to my previous reply to the hon. Member.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for all common agricultural policy products the amount consumed in the United Kingdom and the difference between the world price and the threshold or other minimum price payable to United Kingdom producers;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for all common agricultural policy products the current levy, the monetary compensation amount, the threshold price and the world price.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Crop Production (Pollution)

Dr. David Clark asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether his Department is looking into the effects of air pollution on crop production; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Food Advisory Committee

Dr. David Clark asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will list the biographical details of the members of the Food Advisory Committee, including their connections with the food industry; how long they are appointed for; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Biographical details of the members of the Food Advisory Committee are publicly announced on their appointment. I am, however, happy to repeat this information here.

Members of the Food Advisory Committee are as follows:

Name and biographical notes	Date of appointment or re-appointment
Professor R. F. Curtis Director of Food Research at the Agriculture and Food Research Council, Institute of Food Research.	1 November 1986
Dr. Margaret Ashwell Principal of the Good Housekeeping Institute. She has previously worked for the Medical Research Council, at its Clinical Research Centre at Harrow and the Dunn Nutrition Unit, Cambridge. She is Secretary of the Nutrition Society.	1 November 1986
Michael J. Boxall Company Secretary, Tesco PLC, Chairman Tesco Group Health and Safety Committee, Director British Retailers Association, Food Policy Committee of Retail Consortium.	1 November 1986
Dr. Howard Eggins Director of Bioquest Ltd. a consultancy in industrial biology. He was formerly Director of the Biodeterioration Centre at Aston University. He is editor of International Biodeterioration.	1 November 1986
Dr. W. Fulton Senior Technical Member of the Food and Drinks Coordination Management Group, Unilever.	1 November 1986
Dr. T. T. Gorsuch Director of Research and Quality Control, Colmans of Norwich.	1 November 1986
Mr. A. J. Harrison Chief Scientific Adviser, Public Analyst and Official Agricultural Analyst, Avon and Gloucestershire County Councils.	1 November 1984
Professor W. P. T. James Director of the Rowett Research Institute, Aberdeen.	1 November 1985

Name and biographical notes	*Date of appointment or re-appointment*
Miss Patricia Mann Head of External Affairs, J. Walter Thompson Group, Vice-President J. W. T. International. Editor of Consumer Affairs and a member of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. She is also Information Committee member, British Nutrition Foundation.	1 November 1986
Mr. R. Manley Controller of Trading Standards, Cheshire County Council	1 November 1985
Mr. Tony J. H. Skrimshire General Manager, Research, Development and Quality Assurance, H. J. Heinz Co. Ltd. He is a member of the Council of Campden Food Preservation Research Association, the Leatherhead Food Research Association and the British Nutrition Foundation.	1 November 1986
Mrs. Anne Stamper Chairman of the Environment and Public Affairs Committee of the National Federation of Women's Institutes. She is also a lecturer in Environmental Studies at Lewes Technical College and a senior tutor and course writer in Biology at Wolsey Hall, Oxford.	1 February 1987
Mr. A. Turner Previously Chief Chemist Cadbury-Schweppes PLC.	1 November 1985
Professor P. Turner Professor of Clinical Pharmacology St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and Chairman of the Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment.	1 November 1985
Dr. Elspeth Young Senior Registrar (part time) in Dermatology at Wycombe General Hospital and the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford. She is a member of the Scottish Dermatological Society, and the British Association of Dermatology.	1 November 1986

The appointment of each member is reviewed at least every three years. Members are appointed for their personal knowledge and experience and do not represent particular factions. It is inevitable that some of the best technical expertise will come from the food industry.

Tuberculosis Eradication Programme

Dr. David Clark asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what has been the annual cost of the tuberculosis eradication programme to the Ministry since 1981; and how much of this has been spent in controlling the disease within the badger population.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Pesticides

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will provide a list of the organochlorine pesticides which are approved for use in agriculture, horticulture and forestry under the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986, together with details of the specific uses for which such approval has been granted.

Mr. Donald Thompson: It has been the policy of successive United Kingdom Governments to phase out the use of persistent organochlorine compounds when more suitable alternatives become available.

DDT, dieldrin and endrin no longer have any approved uses in agriculture, horticulture and forestry. Of the two remaining persistent organochlorines aldrin is only permitted for three minor agricultural uses - as a bulb dip to control narcissus fly, as a dust on compost to control vine weevil on ornamentals and for the control of wireworm on potatoes in former pasture - and chlordane may only be used as a treatment against worms on turf and lawns. These uses are kept under continuous review and will be replaced as soon as more suitable alternatives become available.

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if, in relation to the pesticide DDT, he will *(a)* give his estimate of the amount of DDT which is still held on farms in the United Kingdom, *(b)* make arrangements for the collection and safe disposal of any remaining stocks of DDT on farms in the United Kingdom and *(c)* issue advice to farmers on the safe disposal of any remaining stocks of DDT on farms in the United Kingdom; when he expects to produce a revised version of MAFF booklet 2198 on guidelines for the disposal of unwanted pesticides and containers on farms and holdings; and whether the revised booklet will be made available throughout the United Kingdom.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Forestry Commission (Land)

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the total area of land which was referred to his Department by the Forestry Commission under the forestry grant consultation procedures for each of the years ended 31 March 1986 and 31 March 1987; and if he will list in the *Official Report* in respect of each of the area officers of his Ministry the area of land which it advised was *(a)* acceptable to award forestry grant and *(b)* inappropriate to afforest on agricultural grounds.

Mr. Gummer: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

European Community (Membership)

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fishers and Food if he will publish in the *Official Report* an up-to-date revision of tables A and B of the memorandum on agriculture submitted to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee in Session 1984-85 in evidence on the financial and economic consequences of United Kingdom membership of the European Comminities (HC, 57-11, pages 64-65).

Mr. Donald Thompson: I will write to the hon. Member.

Priorities Board for Research and Development

Mr. Curry asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has received the second report from the Priorities Board for Research and Development; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: The Priorities Board for Research and Development in Agriculture and Food has submitted its second report to the Agriculture Ministers and to the chairman of the Agricultural and Food Research Council. We greatly appreciate the work which Sir Kenneth Durham and the members of the board have put into their report.

The report gives advice to the sponsors about future resource allocations and priorities for the publicly-funded agricultural and food R and D effort as a whole. It also discusses a number of matters related to the R and D programme. The board considers that the allocations suggested in its first report remain generally appropriate, but it recommends an increase in the percentage allocation of resources to the non-food crops sector. This reflects the board's view of the importance of diversification in agriculture and, in particular, of farm forestry as an alternative enterprise. The increased allocation is intended to allow for a larger programme in this area.

The sponsors are agreed that, subject to a full consideration of the resource implications, the recommendations should guide the allocation of resources to the future research and development programme. Discussions will be held between the sponsors to plan the implementation of the recommendations.

The sponsors have also agreed that the report should be published. This is now being arranged and advance copies are being placed in the Library of the House.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Pensions

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will set out figures showing the gross and net additional costs of awarding the full state basic pension, on the basis of citizenship or legal residence, *(a)* to the estimated 94,500 elderly people without entitlement to a contributory pension, and *(b)* to those whose contribution record is incomplete.

Mr. Scott: A residence or citizenship-based pension system would give all individuals satisfying those conditions entitlement to a full pension, irrespective of marital status or earnings history. Estimates therefore assume payment of the full rate of the single person's basic pension of £39.50 per week to all men and women, including married women currently receiving pensions based on their husbands' contribution records.

The estimated gross additional cost on retirement pensions of paying full basic pensions to those people receiving supplementary pension who are not in addition receiving any other contributory or non-contributory benefit, and to their spouses, would be about £230 million.[1] The gross additional cost of paying pensions to all pensioners in receipt of reduced-rate basic pension, graduated pension only or married women's pensions would be about £1,820 million.[2] A further £30 million would be needed to pay full-rate pensions to pensioners currently in receipt of non-contributory pensions.

Valid net costs cannot be given, as the system of income-related benefits would require some revision in the event of structural changes in the pensions system of this type.

Notes

(1) This estimate is based on a figure of 101,000 claimants with 10,000 dependent spouses and is derived from the February 1986 annual statistical inquiry. The figure of 94,500 comes from the quarterly inquiry, which does not contain details of dependants needed to calculate costs as specified in the question.

(2) Does not include the cost of paying pensions to women over 60 with no entitlement to pension based on their own contributions and who will receive married women's pensions when their husbands retire. There are no reliable estimates of numbers in this group.

Retirement Pension (Entitlement)

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish figures setting out by age, sex and marital status, the numbers of people above retirement age who have either no entitlement to the National Insurance retirement pension, or whose entitlement is less than the full amount.

Mr. Scott: Full information is not available in the form requested. The largest group of people over minimum pension age not receiving any form of pension are married women over 60 who have chosen to rely on their husbands' contributions for pension purposes and who have no personal entitlement until their husbands have reached age 65 and have retired, but we have no reliable estimate of their number. In addition a number of people who have chosen to defer retirement beyond minimum pension age are not receiving pensions, although they may be entitled to do so.

Table 1 shows the numbers of people above retirement age who are receiving supplementary pension and who are not in addition receiving any contributory or non-contributory benefit.

Table 2 shows the numbers receiving basic pension at less than the 100 per cent. rate, and the numbers receiving graduated pension without basic pension.

Table 3 shows the numbers receiving non-contributory pensions paid to people aged 80 or over with no entitlement to a contributory entitlement or with entitlement at less than the full rate of non-contributory pension. It also includes non-contributory pensions paid to people over pensionable age on 5 July 1948, and to the wives and widows of men entitled to receive such pensions. Non-contributory pensions are awarded subject to residence conditions.

Information in all tables has been broken down as far as possible as specified in the question.

Table 1 Numbers over pension age in Great Britain in receipt of supplementary pension excluding cases also in receipt of contributory or non-contributory benefits

Thousands

Age	*All cases*	*Couples*[1]	*Single men*	*Single women*
All ages	101	10	13	78
60-64	17	[2]		17
65-69	25	5	6	15
70-74	23	3	3	18
75-79	19	1	3	16
80-84	11		1	9
85-89	4	[2]	1	3

Age	All cases	Couples[1]	Single men	Single women
90 and over	1			1

Table 2 Numbers in Great Britain in receipt of a basic pension at less than 100 per cent. rate or of graduated pension only

Age	Total all cases	Basic pension entitlement less than 100 per cent.				Graduated[6] pension only	
		Men pension on own contributions[3]	Women pension on own contributions[3]	Married women[4]	Widows[5]	Men	Women
All Ages	952,870	118,700	582,000	39,320	55,370	2,340	155,140
60-64	450,210	—	327,670	9,330	3,180	—	110,030
65-69	230,480	46,530	133,500	12,380	5,620	640	31,810
70-74	119,660	30,120	55,430	10,450	13,570	950	9,140
75-79	90,490	27,060	37,960	6,580	15,160	490	3,240
80-84	39,410	10,660	18,020	520	9,290	210	710
85-89	16,150	3,290	7,140	50	5,430	40	200
90-94	5,260	850	1,950	—	2,440	10	10
95-99	1,070	190	310	10	560	—	—
100 and over	140	—	20	—	120	—	—

Table 3
Numbers in receipt of non-contributory pensions[7]

Age	All cases	Men	Women
All ages	38,960	5,640	33,320
60 to 64	10	—	10
65 to 69	—	—	—
70 to 74	30	—	30
75 to 79	130	—	130
80 to 84	17,410	3,770	13,640
85 to 89	10,930	1,210	9,720
90 to 94	6,400	430	5,970
95 to 99	3,380	190	3,190
100 and over	670	40	630

[1] Analysed according to the age of the head of the couple. Under 500 couples are recorded as being headed by a female.
[2] Indicates fewer than 500 cases.
[3] No information is available on the marital status of men and women receiving basic pensions based entirely on their own contributions.
[4] Numbers in receipt of the married women's pension based wholly or partly on their husbands' contributions at less than the 100 per cent. rate. (There are in addition about 1·5 million women who are receiving full-rate married women's pensions based entirely on their husbands' contributions with entitlement to a basic pension based on their own contributions records.)
[5] Widows in receipt of retirement pension based on their husbands' contributions.
[6] Most recipients of graduated pension without basic pension are married women who will receive a married woman's basic pension when their husbands retire.
[7] Includes overseas cases.

Sources:
Table 1: Information derived from the February 1986 annual statistical inquiry.
Table 2: September 1986 retirement pensions and widow's benefits biannual inquiry.

Child Abuse

Mr. Holt asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many children have been taken into care following paediatric diagnosis of sexual abuse in each of the past 10 years in *(a)* Cleveland, *(b)* Buckinghamshire, *(c)* Cheshire, *(d)* the London borough of Brent, *(e)* Essex and *(f)* Monmouth.

Mr. Newton: These figures are not at present held centrally. However in my statement to the House on 9 July at columns 526-7, I indicated our intention to arrange for the collection of national statistics on child abuse.

Dystrophic Epidermolysis Bullosa

Mr. Speller asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will consider setting up a special treatment unit for children suffering from dystrophic epidermolysis bullosa; and what assessment his Department has made as to the effectiveness of the private treatment being offered by establishments such as that of Professor Kozak in Gerona.

Mrs. Currie: No representations have so far been made that special treatment units for children suffering from dystrophic epidermolysis bullosa are required. The appropriate treatment of children suffering from this disorder is a matter for the doctor under his responsibility for the care of the individual patient.

NHS (Management)

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he is satisfied with the management of the National Health Service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moore: In 1984, the Government announced that they accepted the recommendations of the NHS management inquiry, launched under the leadership of Sir Roy Griffiths. Since then, in a continuing programme to strengthen management at all levels, the following significant achievements have been made:

over 800 general managers have been appointed at regional, district and unit level with a background embracing all the main disciplines employed in the NHS together with a healthy infusion of outside experience and talent;

within a framework of individual performance review and performance-related pay, incentives and rewards for outstanding managerial performance have been introduced;

a coherent and co-ordinated planning process has been put in place covering both the short term (annual programmes) and the strategic (10-year plans) periods;

accountability review processes have been strengthened and now extend from national through to unit levels;

central management in my Department has been strengthened with the establishment of the Health Services Supervisory Board under my chairmanship and the NHS Management Board under the chairmanship of my hon. Friend the Minister for Health. Both boards have an appropriate blend of professional, management, business and Civil Service expertise.

As a result of these and other measures, there have been marked gains in health authority performance and results, amongst the most notable are:

record numbers of patients treated for a wider range of conditions;

considerably more attention now being paid explicitly to improving the quality of services to patients, and to management development;

cost improvement programmes, of some £400 million to March 1987, and increased sales of surplus land releasing funds for other service development.

I am encouraged by the spirit of the new managers, and by what health authorities have achieved so far. I have no doubt that further improvements in performance are possible and that health authority managers will continue to set and achieve new objectives. Within the proper framework of accountability the Government will seek to secure that, through controlled delegation of responsibility, managers will have the freedom they need to run the service efficiently and effectively and bring about the further improvements in the quality of services to patients that we all desire.

Ambulance Services

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will state the percentage change for each year between 1979 and 1987 in *(a)* the number of patient miles for (i) emergency and (ii) non-emergency journeys and *(b)* the number of patient journeys for (i) emergency and (ii) non-emergency cases for each ambulance service in England;

(2) what has been the overall percentage change between 1979 and 1987 in *(a)* the number of patient miles for (i) emergency and (ii) non-emergency journeys and *(b)* the number of patient journeys for (i) emergency and (ii) non-emergency cases;

(3) what has been the overall percentage change for each year between 1979 and 1987 in *(a)* the number of patient miles for (i) emergency and (ii) non-emergency journeys and *(b)* the number of patient journeys for (i) emergency and (ii) non-emergency cases;

(4) what was, for each ambulance service in England for each year between 1979 and 1987 *(a)* the number of patient miles for (i) emergency and (ii) non-emergency journeys, and *(b)* the number of patient journeys for (i) emergency and (ii) non-emergency cases;

(5) what was the percentage change between 1979 and 1987 in *(a)* the number of patient miles for (i) emergency and (ii) non-emergency journeys and *(b)* the number of patient journeys for (i) emergency and (ii) non-emergency cases, for each ambulance service in England.

Mrs. Currie: The available information is given in the tables.

Ambulance Services 1979-1985
Number of Patient Journeys—Emergency Cases (Thousands)

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1979-85*
ENGLAND								
Number	1,579·8	1,787·3	1,788·2	1,895·1	1,814·2	1,890·2	1,963·8	—
Per cent. change	—	13·1	0·1	6·0	−4·3	4·2	3·9	24·3
Northern								
Cleveland								
Number	16·8	37·6	38·6	27·0	24·3	24·6	23·4	—
Per cent. change	—	123·8	2·7	−30·1	−10·0	1·2	−4·9	39·3
Cumbria								
Number	9·2	11·6	7·6	6·2	12·4	13·3	13·8	—
Per cent. change		26·1	−34·5	−18·4	100·0	7·3	3·8	50·0
Durham								
Number	30·5	30·0	29·7	31·2	32·2	34·3	34·5	—
Per cent. change	—	−1·6	−1·0	5·1	3·2	6·5	0·6	13·1
Northumbria								
Number	75·8	80·6	82·4	84·2	89·5	100·4	104·5	—
Per cent. change	—	6·3	2·2	2·2	6·3	12·2	4·1	37·9
Yorkshire								
Humberside								
Number	33·4	32·7	33·6	34·6	35·0	35·9	37·2	—
Per cent. change	—	−2·1	2·8	3·0	1·2	2·6	3·6	11·4
North Yorkshire								
Number	15·1	14·2	14·5	14·7	14·5	15·5	16·6	—
Per cent. change	—	−6·0	2·1	1·4	−1·4	6·9	7·1	9·9
West Yorkshire								
Number	85·9	129·3	95·8	95·7	96·9	100·2	101·2	—
Per cent. change	—	50·5	−25·9	−0·1	1·3	3·4	1·0	17·8

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1979–85
Trent								
Derbyshire								
Number	23·2	33·9	36·5	37·6	21·5	24·9	26·2	
Per cent. change		46·1	7·7	3·0	−42·8	15·8	5·2	12·9
Leicestershire								
Number	17·2	21·5	21·2	22·0	19·4	19·8	20·3	
Per cent. change	—	25·0	−1·4	3·8	−11·8	2·1	2·5	18·0
Lincolnshire								
Number	15·2	11·7	12·2	12·5	12·5	13·3	13·5	
Per cent. change	—	−23·0	4·3	2·5	0·0	6·4	1·5	11·2
Nottinghamshire								
Number	50·7	55·2	57·7	60·4	54·1	39·7	43·6	
Per cent. change	—	8·9	4·5	4·7	−10·4	−26·6	9·8	−14·0
South Yorkshire M.A.S.								
Number	74·8	76·5	79·2	85·1	87·4	90·5	95·3	
Per cent. change	—	2·3	3·5	7·4	2·7	3·5	5·3	27·4
East Anglia								
Cambridgeshire								
Number	13·7	13·6	15·0	12·7	9·6	12·4	22·7	
Per cent. change	—	−0·7	10·3	−15·3	−24·4	29·2	83·1	65·7
Norfolk								
Number	14·0	14·3	14·6	15·1	15·4	17·1	17·6	—
Per cent. change	—	2·1	2·1	3·4	2·0	11·0	2·9	25·7
Suffolk								
Number	7·9	7·6	7·8	8·2	8·2	9·0	9·3	—
Per cent. change	—	−3·8	2·6	5·1	0·0	9·8	3·3	17·7
North West Thames								
Bedfordshire								
Number	9·9	11·9	12·8	12·1	13·4	14·7	15·5	—
Per cent. change	—	20·2	7·6	−5·5	10·7	9·7	5·4	56·6
Hertfordshire								
Number	26·8	23·0	23·8	28·8	24·5	26·2	27·9	—
Per cent. change	—	−14·2	3·5	21·0	−14·9	6·9	6·5	4·1
North East Thames								
Essex								
Number	42·2	40·3	42·2	42·3	43·1	46·3	47·8	—
Per cent. change	—	−4·5	4·7	0·2	1·9	7·4	3·2	13·3
South East Thames								
East Sussex								
Number	29·7	32·0	34·1	35·5	35·8	37·7	39·9	—
Per cent. change	—	7·7	6·6	4·1	0·8	5·3	5·8	34·3
Kent								
Number	30·7	33·8	32·7	33·5	32·4	34·2	38·6	—
Per cent. change	—	10·1	−3·3	2·4	−3·3	5·6	12·9	25·7
South West Thames								
Surrey								
Number	22·0	22·7	23·4	23·3	23·2	24·5	25·6	—
Per cent. change	—	3·2	3·1	−0·4	−0·4	5·6	4·5	16·4
West Sussex								
Number	15·9	15·3	15·6	15·8	16·0	16·7	17·1	—
Per cent. change	—	−3·8	2·0	1·3	1·3	4·4	2·4	7·5
London								
Number	332·8	436·5	440·5	448·0	449·5	461·4	476·6	—
Per cent. change	—	31·2	0·9	1·7	0·3	2·6	3·3	43·2
Wessex								
Dorset								
Number	12·5	15·6	15·4	16·6	17·0	17·8	17·4	—
Per cent. change	—	24·8	−1·3	7·8	2·4	4·7	−2·2	39·2
Hampshire								
Number	28·2	28·9	29·8	30·4	30·6	32·8	33·2	—

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1979-85
Per cent. change	—	2·5	3·1	2·0	0·7	7·2	1·2	17·7
Wiltshire								
Number	12·8	10·9	11·3	13·1	12·2	11·9	10·1	—
Per cent. change	—	−14·8	3·7	15·9	−6·9	−2·5	−15·1	−21·1
Isle of Wight								
Number	2·6	2·7	2·2	2·4	3·0	3·2	3·3	—
Per cent. change	—	3·8	−18·5	9·1	25·0	6·7	3·1	26·9
Oxford								
Berkshire								
Number	13·3	15·4	15·8	15·9	16·2	17·8	18·5	—
Per cent. change	—	15·8	2·6	0·6	1·9	9·9	3·9	39·1
Buckinghamshire								
Number	10·6	8·8	8·8	9·4	9·3	10·1	11·4	—
Per cent. change	—	−17·0	0·0	6·8	−1·1	8·6	12·9	7·5
Northamptonshire								
Number	13·1	13·3	13·3	13·1	12·0	13·8	13·5	—
Per cent. change	—	1·5	0·0	−1·5	−8·4	15·0	−2·2	3·1
Oxfordshire								
Number	6·3	8·1	16·6	16·7	16·9	17·8	18·4	—
Per cent. change	—	28·6	104·9	0·6	1·2	5·3	3·4	192·1
South Western								
Avon								
Number	21·6	22·2	22·1	23·3	23·6	25·1	26·7	—
Per cent. change	—	2·8	−0·5	5·4	1·3	6·4	6·4	23·6
Cornwall/Isles of Scilly								
Number	12·4	10·8	10·8	11·4	10·7	11·5	11·9	—
Per cent. change	—	−12·9	0·0	5·6	−6·1	7·5	3·5	−4·0
Devon								
Number	20·6	20·3	22·3	22·4	25·1	26·2	26·8	—
Per cent. change	—	−1·5	9·9	0·4	12·1	4·4	2·3	30·1
Gloucestershire								
Number	8·8	9·7	9·9	10·9	11·2	12·0	11·9	—
Per cent. change	—	10·2	2·1	10·1	2·8	7·1	−0·8	35·2
Somerset								
Number	6·3	6·2	6·4	6·7	6·6	7·3	7·7	—
Per cent. change	—	−1·6	3·2	4·7	−1·5	10·6	5·5	22·2
West Midlands								
Hereford and Worcester								
Number	18·3	11·4	11·4	3·6	12·8	14·2	14·5	—
Per cent. change	—	−37·7	0·0	−68·4	255·6	10·9	2·1	−20·8
Shropshire								
Number	4·6	6·1	6·3	3·1	7·5	8·4	8·4	—
Per cent. change	—	32·6	3·3	−50·8	141·9	12·0	0·0	82·6
Staffordshire								
Number	33·8	25·5	26·2	28·0	28·3	29·6	29·9	—
Per cent. change	—	−24·6	2·7	6·9	1·1	4·6	1·0	−11·5
Warwickshire								
Number	8·6	7·8	7·7	7·7	7·7	8·4	8·8	—
Per cent. change	—	−9·3	−1·3	0·0	0·0	9·1	4·8	2·3
West Midlands Metropolitan								
Number	76·8	81·9	81·3	167·6	84·2	87·4	89·5	—
Per cent. change	—	6·6	−0·7	106·2	−49·8	3·8	2·4	16·5
Mersey								
Cheshire								
Number	27·4	25·9	26·4	27·1	27·3	28·4	29·5	—
Per cent. change	—	−5·5	1·9	2·7	0·7	4·0	3·9	7·7
Mersey M.C.								
Number	80·8	89·3	90·8	93·9	94·1	99·3	103·2	—
Per cent. change	—	10·5	1·7	3·4	0·2	5·5	3·9	27·7
North Western								
Lancashire								
Number	53·8	53·4	53·2	54·3	55·0	56·2	56·9	—
Per cent. change	—	−0·7	−0·4	2·1	1·3	2·2	1·2	5·8
Greater Manchester M.A.S.								
Number	113·1	127·1	128·5	131·0	132·2	138·5	143·4	—
Per cent. change	—	12·4	1·1	1·9	0·9	4·8	3·5	26·8

Ambulance Services 1979-85 Number of Patient Journeys - Non-Emergency Cases (Thousands)

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1979-85
ENGLAND								
Number	15,791·7	18,562·6	18,712·5	18,213·4	19,456·9	19,391·5	19,400·4	
Per cent. change		17·5	0·8	−2·7	6·8	−0·3	0·05	22·9
Northern								
Cleveland								
Number	183·1	216·4	214·6	120·6	237·8	239·2	242·0	
Per cent. change	—	18·2	0·8	−43·8	97·2	0·6	1·2	32·2
Cumbria								
Number	196·5	262·4	179·3	136·2	238·2	248·7	253·0	
Per cent. change	—	33·5	−31·7	−24·0	74·9	4·4	1·7	28·8
Durham								
Number	193·6	245·2	252·1	245·5	272·5	263·8	278·5	
Per cent. change	—	26·7	2·8	−2·6	11·0	−3·2	5·6	43·9
Northumbria								
Number	572·5	712·8	695·4	674·2	703·5	643·6	650·9	
Per cent. change	—	24·5	−2·4	−3·0	4·3	−8·5	1·1	13·7
Yorkshire								
Humberside								
Number	463·3	482·0	478·8	463·5	484·5	478·5	473·6	
Per cent. change	—	4·0	−0·7	−3·2	4·5	−1·2	−1·0	2·2
North Yorkshire								
Number	214·1	269·7	261·2	243·6	261·8	259·2	255·0	
Per cent. change	—	26·0	−3·2	−6·7	7·5	−1·0	−1·6	19·1
West Yorkshire								
Number	771·1	899·2	916·6	845·0	954·8	951·2	990·0	
Per cent. change	—	16·6	1·9	−7·8	13·0	−0·4	4·1	28·4
Trent								
Derbyshire								
Number	290·0	326·7	294·9	288·8	320·4	315·9	315·7	
Per cent. change	—	12·7	−9·7	−2·1	10·9	−1·4	−0·1	8·9
Leicestershire								
Number	217·9	251·5	271·3	272·8	295·0	312·8	333·2	
Per cent. change	—	15·4	7·9	0·6	8·1	6·0	6·5	52·9
Lincolnshire								
Number	214·9	274·6	236·8	192·6	213·5	222·9	220·7	
Per cent. change	—	27·8	−13·8	−18·7	10·9	4·4	−1·0	2·7
Nottinghamshire								
Number	294·0	338·3	354·3	357·0	398·7	432·3	405·6	
Per cent. change	—	15·1	4·7	0·8	11·7	8·4	−6·2	38·0
South Yorkshire M.A.S.								
Number	301·1	364·3	404·6	336·4	379·4	366·2	403·6	
Per cent. change	—	21·0	11·1	−16·9	12·8	−3·5	10·2	34·0
East Anglia								
Cambridgeshire								
Number	200·0	244·1	234·2	240·3	222·1	236·0	247·9	
Per cent. change	—	22·0	−4·1	2·6	−7·6	6·3	5·0	24·0
Norfolk								
Number	251·5	333·5	351·1	374·5	395·8	427·8	417·8	
Per cent. change	—	32·6	5·3	6·7	5·7	8·1	−2·3	66·1
Suffolk								
Number	264·4	289·6	280·5	295·1	302·7	295·1	301·4	
Per cent. change	—	9·5	−3·1	5·2	2·6	−2·5	2·1	14·0
North West Thames								
Bedfordshire								
Number	113·4	147·6	157·1	147·9	172·2	165·2	165·8	
Per cent. change	—	30·2	6·4	−5·9	16·4	−4·1	0·4	46·2
Hertfordshire								
Number	266·9	304·0	320·0	323·4	266·3	263·5	255·0	
Per cent. change	—	13·9	5·3	1·1	−17·7	−1·1	−3·2	−4·5

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1979-85
North East Thames								
Essex								
Number	404·7	503·7	481·8	494·2	504·9	501·4	511·5	
Per cent. change	—	24·5	−4·3	2·6	2·2	−0·7	2·0	26·4
South East Thames								
East Sussex								
Number	366·8	450·9	434·4	430·0	428·5	439·9	425·1	
Per cent. change	—	22·9	−3·7	−1·0	−0·3	2·7	−3·4	15·9
Kent								
Number	504·1	569·0	623·6	627·6	628·2	616·3	551·2	
Per cent. change	—	12·9	9·6	0·6	0·1	−1·9	−10·6	9·3
South West Thames								
Surrey								
Number	445·7	506·7	510·4	528·3	518·7	492·1	483·6	
Per cent. change	—	13·7	0·7	3·5	−1·8	−5·1	−1·7	8·5
West Sussex								
Number	225·8	277·7	296·9	310·9	336·7	357·4	321·2	
Per cent change	—	23·0	6·9	4·7	8·3	6·1	−10·1	42·2
London								
Number	1,675·7	2,240·1	2,317·2	2,291·6	2,305·0	2,272·3	2,204·1	
Per cent. change	—	33·7	3·4	−1·1	0·6	−1·4	−3·0	31·5
Wessex								
Dorset								
Number	322·0	321·6	328·0	338·9	363·4	360·5	362·1	
Per cent. change	—	−0·1	2·0	3·3	7·2	−0·8	0·4	12·5
Hampshire								
Number	543·7	483·2	517·9	525·0	577·0	604·5	610·1	
Per cent. change	—	−11·1	7·2	1·4	9·9	4·8	0·9	12·2
Wiltshire								
Number	232·6	272·7	314·6	295·0	322·7	339·9	377·9	
Per cent. change	—	17·2	15·4	−6·2	9·4	5·3	11·2	62·5
Isle of Wight								
Number	76·8	30·9	28·9	28·2	34·1	37·4	40·4	
Per cent. change	—	−59·8	−6·5	−2·4	20·9	9·7	8·0	−47·4
Oxford								
Berkshire								
Number	175·9	237·9	234·1	237·3	196·7	235·9	235·5	
Per cent. change	—	35·2	−1·6	1·4	−17·1	19·9	−0·2	33·9
Buckinghamshire								
Number	158·9	195·8	192·8	210·8	204·0	198·0	199·9	
Per cent. change	—	23·2	−1·5	9·3	−3·2	−2·9	1·0	25·8
Northamptonshire								
Number	185·2	222·8	221·7	231·3	231·2	224·0	244·5	
Per. cent. change	—	20·3	−0·5	4·3	−0·04	−3·1	9·2	32·0
Oxfordshire								
Number	171·8	224·5	200·1	195·0	210·9	197·5	193·2	
Per cent. change	—	30·7	−10·9	−2·5	8·2	−6·4	−2·2	12·5
South Western								
Avon								
Number	360·2	410·4	402·0	401·8	412·0	409·0	402·5	
Per cent. change	—	13·9	−2·0	−0·05	2·5	−0·7	−1·6	11·7
Cornwall/Isles of Scilly								
Number	259·0	261·2	264·3	270·8	275·4	269·4	253·3	
Per cent. change	—	0·8	1·2	2·5	1·7	−2·2	−6·0	−2·2
Devon								
Number	511·6	642·6	645·3	637·0	660·1	712·6	736·3	
Per. cent. change	—	25·6	0·4	−1·3	3·6	8·0	3·3	43·9
Gloucestershire								
Number	251·6	287·2	290·6	286·8	314·0	314·5	305·4	
Per cent. change	—	14·1	1·2	−1·3	9·5	0·2	−2·9	21·4

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1979-85
Somerset								
Number	132·4	156·8	165·1	167·3	178·7	180·0	177·8	—
Per cent. change	—	18·4	5·3	1·3	6·8	0·7	−1·2	34·3
West Midlands								
Hereford and Worcester								
Number	294·0	323·7	330·6	220·9	334·0	336·8	334·3	—
Per cent. change	—	10·1	2·1	−33·2	51·2	0·8	−0·7	13·7
Shropshire								
Number	119·0	171·1	164·4	110·2	147·3	148·5	146·0	—
Per cent. change	—	43·8	−3·9	−33·0	33·7	0·8	−1·7	22·7
Staffordshire								
Number	287·9	303·6	304·1	305·4	329·5	316·4	317·2	—
Per. cent. change	—	5·5	0·2	0·4	7·9	−4·0	0·3	10·2
Warwickshire								
Number	100·8	120·4	122·4	121·4	131·3	129·6	129·5	—
Per cent. change	—	19·4	1·7	−0·8	8·2	−1·3	−0·1	28·5
West Midlands Metropolitan								
Number	813·3	927·7	892·5	825·3	930·3	921·0	931·2	—
Per cent. change	—	14·1	−3·8	−7·5	12·7	−1·0	1·1	14·5
Mersey								
Cheshire								
Number	278·6	352·7	360·5	383·6	429·0	440·7	445·5	—
Per cent. change	—	26·6	2·2	6·4	11·8	2·7	1·1	59·9
Mersey M.C.								
Number	369·6	513·3	517·7	528·6	576·4	535·4	569·3	—
Per cent. change	—	38·9	0·9	2·1	9·0	−7·1	6·3	54·0
North Western								
Lancashire								
Number	601·6	593·2	564·1	589·3	624·5	618·1	621·4	—
Per cent. change	—	−1·4	−4·9	4·5	6·0	−1·0	0·5	3·3
Greater Manchester M.A.S.								
Number	914·4	999·6	1,083·9	1,063·9	1,083·0	1,051·3	1,061·0	—
Per cent. change	—	9·3	8·4	−1·8	1·8	−2·9	0·9	16·0

Ambulance Services 1979-86
Number of Patient Miles—Emergency Cases (Thousands)

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984-85[1]	1985-86[1]	1979-1986
ENGLAND								
Number	14,685·4	15,844·9	16,171·3	17,227·8	17,775·9	19,410·7	19,402·2	—
Per cent. change	—	7·9	2·1	6·5	3·2	9·2	−0·04	32·1
Cleveland								
Number	184·0	219·3	231·8	237·4	269·6	249·5	215·8	—
Per cent. change	—	19·2	5·7	2·4	13·6	−7·5	−13·5	17·3
Cumbria								
Number	161·0	195·5	131·9	107·2	215·7	245·9	239·8	—
Per cent. change	—	21·4	−32·5	−18·7	101·2	14·0	−2·5	48·9
Durham								
Number	398·3	379·0	379·6	405·1	416·2	460·3	385·4	—
Per cent. change	—	−4·8	0·2	6·7	2·7	10·6	−16·3	−3·2
Northumbria								
Number	672·3	661·4	668·9	867·6	936·3	1,102·0	1,165·7	—
Per cent. change	—	−1·6	1·1	29·7	7·9	17·7	5·8	73·4
Yorkshire								
Humberside								
Number	277·5	275·2	283·0	296·8	300·5	220·8	317·8	—
Per cent. change	—	−0·8	2·8	4·9	1·2	−26·5	43·9	14·5

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984-85[1]	1985-86[1]	1979-1986
North Yorkshire								
Number	187·8	176·5	184·6	188·1	181·5	190·5	240·2	—
Per cent. change	—	−6·0	4·6	1·9	−3·5	5·0	26·1	27·9
West Yorkshire								
Number	688·3	712·0	780·7	777·0	790·3	838·7	852·1	—
Per cent. change	—	3·4	9·6	−0·5	1·7	6·1	1·6	23·8
Trent								
Derbyshire								
Number	163·6	170·5	203·3	221·2	223·8	334·0	335·9	—
Per cent. change	—	4·2	19·2	8·8	1·2	49·2	0·6	105·3
Leicestershire								
Number	243·0	296·5	299·1	342·5	333·3	346·8	370·7	—
Per cent. change	—	22·0	0·9	14·5	−2·7	4·1	6·9	52·6
Lincolnshire								
Number	301·9	208·3	212·3	211·6	216·8	229·8	239·0	—
Per cent. change	—	−31·0	1·9	−0·3	2·5	6·0	4·0	−20·8
Nottinghamshire								
Number	498.3	712·3	770·1	822·1	793·9	751·4	763·0	—
Per cent. change	—	42·9	8·1	6·8	−3·4	−5·4	1·5	53·1
South Yorkshire M.A.S.								
Number	806·7	814·2	845·3	890·1	926·6	945·1	1,009·1	—
Per cent. change	—	0·9	3·8	5·3	4·1	2·0	6·8	25·1
East Anglia								
Cambridgeshire								
Number	117·7	98·4	108·6	112·0	114·4	114·2	n.a	—
Per cent. change	—	−16·4	10·4	3·1	2·1	−0·2	—	err
Norfolk								
Number	142·4	156·0	160·2	174·8	256·3	308·6	299·5	—
Per cent. change	—	9·6	2·7	9·1	46·6	20·4	−2·9	1103
Suffolk								
Number	108·9	103·0	106·9	114·6	113·9	126·2	133·3	—
Per cent. change	—	−5·4	3·8	7·2	−0·6	10·8	5·6	22·4
North West Thames								
Bedfordshire								
Number	186·1	140·6	138·2	132·8	149·7	166·7	178·0	—
Per cent. change	—	−24·4	−1·7	−3·9	12·7	11·4	6·8	−4·4
Hertfordshire								
Number	255·6	215·7	222·2	231·0	246·4	270·4	293·6	—
Per cent. change	—	−15·6	3·0	4·0	6·7	9·7	8·6	14·9
North East Thames								
Essex								
Number	407·3	365·4	381·9	371·0	375·5	407·0	443·0	—
Per cent. change	—	−10·3	4·5	−2·9	1·2	8·4	8·8	8·8
South East Thames								
East Sussex								
Number	234·3	209·1	220·1	226·7	227·6	250·3	253·8	—
Per cent. change	—	−10·8	5·3	3·0	0·4	10·0	1·4	8·3
Kent								
Number	413·8	425·0	432·7	459·0	446·2	489·0	473·6	—
Per cent. change	—	2·7	1·8	6·1	−2·8	9·6	−3·1	14·5
South West Thames								
Surrey								
Number	267·0	292·5	300·2	306·6	361·9	477·9	526·3	—
Per cent. change	—	9·6	2·6	2·1	18·0	32·1	10·1	97·1
West Sussex								
Number	218·9	211·9	212·2	218·2	212·1	230·0	232·4	—
Per cent. change	—	−3·2	0·1	2·8	−2·8	8·4	1·0	6·2

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984-85[1]	1985-86[1]	1979-1986
London								
Number	2,365·5	3,098·3	3,132·1	3,246·4	3,389·7	3,594·6	3,692·5	
Per cent. change	—	31·0	1·1	3·6	4·4	6·0	2·7	56·1
Wessex								
Dorset								
Number	119·3	136·1	160·6	140·1	142·0	271·1	n.a.	
Per cent. change	—	14·1	18·0	−12·8	1·4	90·9		127
Hampshire								
Number	279·2	287·6	306·7	314·8	320·0	367·7	368·6	
Per cent. change		3·0	6·6	2·6	1·7	14·9	0·2	32·0
Wiltshire								
Number	87·9	146·3	147·8	139·2	132·8	185·7	179·1	
Per cent. change		66·4	1·0	−5·8	−4·6	39·8	−3·6	103·8
Isle of Wight								
Number	39·0	39·5	33·1	32·8	41·6	47·6	46·0	
Per cent. change	—	1·3	−16·2	−0·9	26·8	14·4	−3·4	17·9
Oxford								
Berkshire								
Number	169·9	203·5	215·2	218·3	222·1	239·3	255·6	
Per cent. change	—	19·8	5·7	1·4	1·7	7·7	6·8	50·4
Buckinghamshire								
Number	156·5	123·0	124·9	127·8	129·5	109·2	122·4	
Per cent. change	—	−21·4	1·5	2·3	1·3	−15·7	12·1	−21·8
Northamptonshire								
Number	184·5	197·2	192·7	188·8	180·1	201·8	213·4	
Per cent. change	—	6·9	−2·3	−2·0	−4·6	12·0	5·7	15·7
Oxfordshire								
Number	99·1	130·3	204·4	258·3	284·2	169·8	264·1	
Per cent. change	—	31·5	56·9	26·4	10·0	−40·3	55·5	166·5
South Western								
Avon								
Number	113·4	141·7	140·6	172·3	152·3	137·7	172·5	
Per cent. change	—	25·0	−0·8	22·5	−11·6	−9·6	25·3	52·1
Cornwall/Isles of Scilly								
Number	257·9	175·9	173·5	185·0	172·7	191·6	192·1	
Per cent. change	—	−31·8	−1·4	6·6	−6·6	10·9	0·3	−25·5
Devon								
Number	207·9	171·6	—	—	—	248·6	N.A.	
Per cent. change	—	−17·5	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gloucestershire								
Number	N.A.	123·1	129·4	154·8	164·0	172·0	171·0	
Per cent. change	—	—	5·1	19·6	5·9	4·9	−0·6	—
Somerset								
Number	103·4	104·7	106·5	112·6	109·9	130·9	143·5	
Per cent. change	—	1·3	1·7	5·7	−2·4	19·1	9·6	38·8
West Midlands								
Hereford & Worcester								
Number	172·8	150·2	149·0	47·4	183·5	200·9	200·2	
Per cent. change	—	−13·1	−0·8	−68·2	287·1	9·5	−0·3	15·9
Shropshire								
Number	65·2	92·0	126·5	56·7	169·5	204·3	210·2	
Per cent. change	—	41·1	37·5	−55·2	198·9	20·5	2·9	222·4
Staffordshire								
Number	310·9	292·6	303·0	316·8	312·8	349·1	330·6	
Per cent. change	—	−5·9	3·6	4·6	−1·3	11·6	−5·3	6·3
Warwickshire								
Number	87·1	76·9	74·1	71·5	72·9	82·9	84·6	
Per cent. change	—	−11·7	−3·6	−3·5	2·0	13·7	2·1	−2·9

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984-85[1]	1985-86[1]	1979-1986
West Midlands Metropolitan								
Number	675·1	688·2	682·5	1,121·4	732·1	814·3	821·2	
Per cent. change		1·9	0·8	64·3	-34·7	11·2	0·8	21·6
Mersey								
Cheshire								
Number	311·3	301·6	311·7	330·7	333·4	362·5	367·6	
Per cent. change		-3·1	3·3	6·1	0·8	8·7	1·4	18·1
Mersey M.C.								
Number	652·3	731·2	755·7	816·6	878·1	957·8	939·1	
Per cent. change		12·1	3·4	8·1	7·5	9·1	-2·0	44·0
North Western								
Lancashire								
Number	479·1	504·8	508·4	556·2	568·3	581·9	594·9	
Per cent. change	—	5·4	0·7	9·4	2·2	2·4	2·2	24·2
Greater Manchester M.A.S.								
Number	813·3	890·3	919·0	905·9	975·9	1,034·6	1,064·7	
Per cent. change		9·5	3·2	-1·4	7·7	6·0	2·9	30·9

[1] Figures supplied by York health authority, for financial years.

Ambulance Services 1979-1986
Number of Patient Miles—Non-Emergency Cases (Thousands)

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	[1]1984-85	[1]1985-86	1979-86
ENGLAND								
Number	108,522·3	123,932·9	123,253·8	121,433·6	129,626·8	87,527·4	84,359·3	
Per cent. change	—	14·2	-0·5	-1·5	6·7	-32·5	-3·6	-22·3
Northern								
Cleveland								
Number	985·5	1,174·9	1,138·0	804·0	1,191·7	1,244·4	1,112·8	
Per cent. change	—	19·2	-3·1	-29·3	48·2	4·4	-10·6	12·9
Cumbria								
Number	1,833·4	2,290·6	1,630·6	1,245·6	2,046·3	1,684·3	1,738·6	
Per cent. change	—	24·9	-28·8	-23·6	64·3	-17·7	3·2	-5·2
Durham								
Number	1,202·4	1,497·0	1,695·4	1,773·5	1,889·3	1,578·2	1,623·6	
Per cent. change	—	24·5	13·3	4·6	6·5	-16·5	2·9	35·0
Northumbria								
Number	3,454·5	3,886·3	3,823·7	3,583·1	3,671·6	2,982·7	2,858·0	
Per cent. change	—	12·5	-1·6	-6·3	2·5	-18·8	-4·2	-17·3
Yorkshire								
Humberside								
Number	2,915·6	3,023·1	2,950·8	2,938·2	3,041·4	2,804·7	2,720·4	
Per cent. change	—	3·7	-2·4	-0·4	3·5	-7·8	-3·0	-6·7
North Yorkshire								
Number	1,570·9	1,768·1	1,775·1	1,736·3	1,856·9	1,679·4	1,414·1	
Per cent. change	—	12·6	0·4	-2·2	6·9	-9·6	-15·8	-10·0
West Yorkshire								
Number	4,377·5	5,238·1	5,058·0	4,742·4	5,226·0	4,542·2	4,526·0	
Per cent. change	—	19·7	-3·4	-6·2	10·2	-13·1	-0·4	3·4
Trent								
Derbyshire								
Number	1,992·6	2,206·1	2,060·4	2,083·0	2,193·9	2,127·1	2,472·2	
Per cent. change	—	10·7	-6·6	1·1	5·3	-3·0	16·2	24·1
Leicestershire								
Number	1,436·3	1,796·9	1,837·4	1,871·8	2,117·7	2,271·1	2,344·0	
Per cent. change	—	25·1	2·3	1·9	13·1	7·2	3·2	63·2
Lincolnshire								
Number	2,130·6	2,633·0	2,323·5	1,983·6	2,134·7	1,479·5	1,391·5	
Per cent. change	—	23·6	-11·8	-14·6	7·6	-30·7	-5·9	-34·7

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	[1]1984-85	[1]1985-86	1979-86
Nottinghamshire								
Number	1,668·6	2,041·1	2,043·1	2,051·8	2,449·5	2,663·7	1,647·6	
Per cent. change	—	22·3	0·1	0·4	19·4	8·7	−38·1	−1·3
South Yorkshire M.A.S.								
Number	1,570·2	1,798·6	1,690·1	1,694·2	1,884·0	1,599·3	2,009·2	
Per cent. change	—	14·5	−6·0	0·2	11·2	−15·1	25·6	28·0
East Anglia								
Cambridgeshire								
Number	2,070·2	2,509·7	2,154·2	2,128·9	2,283·7	911·6	1,055·4	
Per cent. change	—	21·2	−14·2	−1·2	7·3	−60·1	15·8	−49·0
Norfolk								
Number	2,818·1	3,951·0	4,043·0	4,311·1	4,566·2	1,827·6	1,633·1	—
Per cent. change	—	40·2	2·3	6·6	5·9	−60·0	−10·6	−42·0
Suffolk								
Number	2,672·8	2,896·6	2,660·8	2,640·4	2,684·6	1,107·8	1,223·3	—
Per cent. change	—	8·4	−8·1	−0·8	1·7	−58·7	10·4	−54·2
North West Thames								
Bedfordshire								
Number	1,059·8	1,184·9	1,288·5	1,253·8	1,346·6	904·7	895·8	—
Per cent. change	—	11·8	8·7	−2·7	7·4	−32·8	−1·0	−15·5
Hertfordshire								
Number	2,177·9	2,287·9	2,353·9	2,331·8	1,945·1	1,561·5	1,451·5	—
Per cent. change	—	5·1	2·9	−0·9	−16·6	−19·7	−7·0	−33·4
North East Thames								
Essex								
Number	3,992·5	4,607·4	4,427·5	4,434·9	4,631·4	2,780·6	3,237·1	—
Per cent. change	—	15·4	−3·9	0·2	4·4	−40·0	16·4	−18·9
South East Thames								
East Sussex								
Number	2,724·8	3,104·3	3,029·4	3,013·2	3,024·2	1,214·8	1,200·3	—
Per cent. change	—	13·9	−2·4	−0·5	0·4	−59·8	−1·2	−55·9
Kent								
Number	3,780·7	3,825·1	4,292·6	4,413·5	4,338·4	3,082·0	2,157·1	—
Per cent. change	—	1·2	12·2	2·8	−1·7	−29·0	−30·0	−42·9
South West Thames								
Surrey								
Number	3,520·8	3,805·1	3,788·7	3,764·8	3,972·2	1,939·7	1,920·8	—
Per cent. change	—	8·1	−0·4	−0·6	5·5	−51·2	−1·0	−45·4
West Sussex								
Number	2,151·1	2,548·7	2,671·5	2,747·7	2,905·1	955·3	1,022·1	—
Per cent. change	—	18·5	4·8	2·9	5·7	−67·1	7·0	−52·5
London								
Number	7,163·8	9,486·7	9,997·3	9,785·0	9,805·0	8,065·0	7,472·6	—
Per cent. change	—	32·4	5·4	−2·1	0·2	−17·7	−7·3	4·3
Wessex								
Dorset								
Number	2,911·4	2,943·3	2,890·0	3,111·8	3,313·4	968·3	1,225·6	—
Per cent. change	—	1·1	−1·8	7·7	6·5	−70·8	26·6	−57·9
Hampshire								
Number	4,380·2	4,106·6	4,149·0	4,247·2	4,488·6	2,185·2	2,174·1	—
Per cent. change	—	−6·2	1·0	2·4	5·7	−51·3	−0·5	−50·4
Wiltshire								
Number	2,109·8	2,353·2	2,512·7	2,223·3	2,829·7	901·5	807·5	—
Per cent. change	—	11·5	6·8	−11·5	27·3	−68·1	−10·4	−61·7
Isle of Wight								
Number	568·3	244·3	239·6	238·4	295·2	204·5	171·8	—
Per cent. change	—	−57·0	−1·9	−0·5	23·8	−30·7	−16·0	−69·8

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*[1]1984-85*	*[1]1985-86*	*1979-86*
Oxford								
Berkshire								
Number	1,516·8	1,901·2	1,837·0	1,947·9	2,000·6	1,221·2	1,212·4	—
Per cent. change	—	25·3	−3·4	6·0	2·7	−39·0	−0·7	−20·1
Buckinghamshire								
Number	1,361·9	1,510·2	1,554·7	1,677·0	1,706·1	1,180·1	1,212·0	—
Per cent. change	—	10·9	2·9	7·9	1·7	−30·8	2·7	−11·0
Northamptonshire								
Number	1,084·3	1,202·5	1,239·4	1,267·5	1,303·0	1,242·9	1,237·3	—
Per cent. change	—	10·9	3·1	2·3	2·8	−4·6	−0·5	14·1
Oxfordshire								
Number	1,323·6	1,674·0	1,511·7	1,455·4	1,540·5	824·4	605·9	—
Per cent. change	—	26·5	−9·7	−3·7	5·8	−46·5	−26·5	−54·2
South Western								
Avon								
Number	2,273·1	2,376·4	2,318·2	2,377·9	2,447·0	1,984·7	1,812·2	—
Per cent. change	—	4·5	−2·4	2·6	2·9	−18·9	−8·7	−20·3
Cornwall/Isles of Scilly								
Number	3,456·8	3,243·6	3,322·6	3,509·8	3,583·7	1,348·9	1,353·5	—
Per cent. change	—	−6·2	2·4	5·6	2·1	−62·4	0·3	−60·8
Devon								
Number	4,215·9	4,940·6	5,197·4	5,086·5	5,240·4	1,823·3	2,040·0	—
Per cent. change	—	17·2	5·2	−2·1	3·0	−65·2	11·9	−51·6
Gloucestershire								
Number	910·3	2,127·7	2,074·6	2,065·2	2,111·2	1,292·9	1,310·9	—
Per cent. change	—	133·7	−2·5	−0·5	2·2	−38·8	1·4	44·0
Somerset								
Number	1,353·7	1,539·2	1,589·0	1,666·1	1,777·3	935·0	596·0	—
Per cent. change	—	13·7	3·2	4·9	6·7	−47·4	−36·3	−56·0
West Midlands								
Hereford and Worcester								
Number	2,597·6	2,694·8	2,692·2	2,079·1	2,625·5	1,149·6	945·5	—
Per cent. change	—	3·7	−0·1	−22·8	26·3	−56·2	−17·8	−63·6
Shropshire								
Number	1,263·4	1,645·0	1,565·6	1,447·4	1,478·7	1,058·0	664·9	—
Per cent. change	—	30·2	−4·8	−7·5	2·2	−28·5	−37·2	−47·4
Staffordshire								
Number	1,642·8	1,877·1	1,853·5	1,892·9	2,081·2	1,905·3	1,687·1	—
Per cent. change	—	14·3	−1·3	2·1	9·9	−8·5	−11·5	2·7
Warwickshire								
Number	798·5	874·8	872·0	890·5	959·0	847·0	852·1	—
Per cent. change	—	9·6	−0·3	2·1	7·7	−11·7	0·6	6·7
West Midlands Metropolitan								
Number	4,457·7	4,646·7	4,526·8	4,102·6	4,472·5	3,622·1	3,877·8	—
Per cent. change	—	4·2	−2·6	−9·4	9·0	−19·0	7·1	−13·0
Mersey								
Cheshire								
Number	1,876·2	2,234·0	2,215·3	2,307·8	2,829·7	2,381·3	2,372·7	—
Per cent. change	—	19·1	−0·8	4·2	22·6	−15·8	−0·4	26·5
Mersey Metropolitan Council								
Number	1,739·7	2,248·6	2,309·7	2,354·7	2,827·9	2,424·2	2,521·2	—
Per cent. change	—	29·3	2·7	1·9	20·1	−14·3	4·0	44·9
North Western								
Lancashire								
Number	3,316·1	3,231·5	3,097·2	3,257·5	3,441·9	2,640·2	2,457·2	—
Per cent. change	—	−2·6	−4·2	5·2	5·7	−23·3	−6·9	−25·9
Greater Manchester M.A.S.								
Number	4,093·5	4,756·3	4,952·3	4,894·9	5,068·3	4,379·5	4,094·5	—
Per cent. change	—	16·2	4·1	−1·2	3·5	−13·6	−6·5	0·02

[1] Figures supplied by York health authority for financial years.

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average response time for ambulances answering emergency calls for each ambulance authority in the last year for which figures are available.

Mrs. Currie: Regional and district health authorities are responsible for the day-to-day operational management and monitoring of National Health Service ambulance services, and I regret that the information requested is not available centrally.

Hospital Complaints Procedure

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to respond to comments on the implementation of the Hospital Complaints Procedures Act 1985, requested in circular DA(86)14; and what is the reason for the delay since September 1986 in responding.

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects the Hospital Complaints Procedure Act 1985 to be implemented.

Mrs. Currie: The analysis of the comments received in response to the consultation paper, on non-clinical complaints sent under cover of circular DA(86)14 has been substantially completed. We are encouraged to find that many authorities are already following the procedures advocated in that circular. The comments also show that many health authorities wish to see the voluntary guidelines dealing with clinical complaints procedures also incorporated within the directions to be issued.

Discussions are continuing with the joint consultants committee on the latter proposals. We hope to issue directions later this year.

Radiation Unit (Southend)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many letters he has received from the genaral public about the proposal by the North East Thames regional health authority to close the radiation unit at Southend general hospital.

Mrs. Currie: We have received 15 letters which have been referred by hon. Members, together with about 6,020 letters direct from members of the public.

Mobility Allowance

Mr. Baldry asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if there are any circumstances in which mobility allowance has been paid in respect of a period prior to the date on which a claim has been made.

Mr. Scott: The regulations enable a claim for mobility allowance to be treated as having been received on a date up to three months earlier than that on which it was received where there has been a delay in the post; and up to six months earlier where it is a claim for the renewal of a previous award which has ended during this period.

Abortions

Mr. Ken Hargreaves asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many abortions have been carried out on handicapped persons since 1968.

Mr. Newton: I regret that the statistics are not available in the form requested; information on whether the woman is handicapped is not requested on the abortion notification form.

NHS (Waiting Times)

Mr. Galbraith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will seek to procure figures on total average waiting time for National Health Service in-patient treatment in each surgical specialty in each hospital in England and Wales on a similar basis to those figures available in Scotland.

Mr. Newton: We have no plans to do so.

Mr Galbraith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table showing what sample numbers he has and for the total average waiting time for National Health Service in-patient treatment in each surgical specialty in England and Wales.

Mr. Newton: Information on the estimated median interval between the date a patient was placed on the waiting list and the date of admission, according to specialty of treatment, is included in the annual publication "Hospital In-Patient Enquiry, Main Tables", copies of which are available in the Library.

AIDS

Mr. Butler asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what estimates his Department has made of the growth in AIDS infections in the United Kingdom; and if he will publish these.

Mr. Newton: I refer my hon Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) on 7 July at column *123*.

Drownings

Mr. Squire asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many deaths by drowning in England and Wales there have been in the past 10 years.

Mrs. Currie: The information is shown in the table.

Deaths from Drowning as Underlying Cause, England and Wales, 1977-86.

	Number
1977	1,081
1978	1,090
1979	1,156
1980	1,194
1981	1,134
1982	1,116
1983	1,077
1984	971
1985	985
[1]1986	914

Drowning: International Classification of Diseases (8) N994.1 (9) 994.1.

[1] Provisional, aged 28 days and over.

NHS (Laboratory Services)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy not to privatise National Health Service laboratory services; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: We have no plans to privatise National Health Service laboratory services. Where local circumstances indicate there may be advantages in obtaining particular services externally, decisions on this are a matter for the health authority concerned.

Departmental Staff

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the number of (*a*) women and (*b*) men employed within each grade in his Department in each year since 1979.

Mr. Portillo: The tables show the number of staff in post by sex and grade level at 1 January each year since 1979.

The figures in the tables have been derived from personnel records and may differ from other published manpower totals.

DHSS Grade Level	*Sex* *Male*	*Female*	*Other*	*Total*
1 January 1979				
Grade 1	3·0			3·0
Grade 2	10·0	2·0		12·0
Grade 3	51·0	3·0		54·0
Grade 4	25·0	3·0		28·0
Grade 5	283·5	39·5		323·0
Grade 6	373·0	66·5		439·5
Grade 7	886·0	165·5		1,051·5
SEO	1,474·0	179·5		1,653·5
HEO	4,045·0	916·5		4,961·5
EO	11,051·5	9,288·5		20,340·0
AO CO	12,224·5	32,570·5		44,795·0
AA CA	5,086·0	17,006·0		22,092·0
Others	391·5	884·0		1,275·5
Total	35,904·0	61,124·5		97,028·5
1 January 1980				
Grade 1	3·0	—	—	3·0
Grade 2	10·0	2·0	—	12·0
Grade 3	54·0	2·0	—	56·0
Grade 4	22·0	3·0	—	25·0
Grade 5	280·0	40·5	—	320·5
Grade 6	378·5	68·5	—	447·0
Grade 7	901·0	167·5	—	1,068·5
SEO	1,439·0	178·5	—	1,617·5
HEO	4,074·0	976·5	—	5,050·5
EO	10,915·5	9,423·5	—	20,339·0
AO CO	11,218·5	31,190·5	—	42,409·0
AA CA	4,893·5	17,582·0	—	22,475·5
Others	443·0	161·0	—	604·0
Total	34,632·0	59,795·5	—	94,427·5
1 January 1981				
Grade 1	3·0	—	—	3·0
Grade 2	12·0	2·0	—	14·0
Grade 3	51·0	4·0	—	55·0
Grade 4	22·0	1·0	—	23·0
Grade 5	261·0	37·5	—	298·5
Grade 6	348·5	64·5	—	413·0
Grade 7	855·5	160·0	—	1,015·5
SEO	1,367·5	166·5	—	1,534·0
HEO	3,959·0	1,018·0	—	4,977·0
EO	11,058·5	9,995·0	—	21,053·5
AO CO	11,437·0	32,295·0	—	43,732·0
AA CA	5,064·5	18,510·5	—	23,575·0
Others	380·0	76·0	—	456·5
Total	34,819·5	62,330·5	—	97,150·0
1 January 1982				
Grade 1	3·0	—	—	3·0
Grade 2	12·0	2·0	—	14·0
Grade 3	44·0	3·5	—	47·5
Grade 4	21·0	1·0	—	22·0
Grade 5	237·0	40·0	—	277·0
Grade 6	317·0	57·5	—	374·5
Grade 7	792·5	159·5	—	952·0
SEO	1,259·5	166·5	—	1,426·0
HEO	3,797·0	1,050·0	—	4,847·0

DHSS Grade Level	*Sex* *Male*	*Female*	*Other*	*Total*
EO	10,654·0	10,172·0		20,826·0
AO CO	11,638·5	31,813·0		43,451·5
AA CA	5,441·5	18,215·5		23,657·0
Others	70·5	45·5		116·0
Total	34,287·5	61,726·0		96,013·5
1 January 1983				
Grade 1	3·0			3·0
Grade 2	9·5	2·0		11·5
Grade 3	37·0	5·0		42·0
Grade 4	20·0	3·0		23·0
Grade 5	231·5	42·0		273·5
Grade 6	311·0	58·0		369·0
Grade 7	767·5	164·0		931·5
SEO	1,154·0	153·0		1,307·0
HEO	3,772·5	1,124·0		4,896·5
EO	10,632·0	10,365·5		20,997·5
AO CO	11,529·5	30,879·0		42,408·5
AA CA	5,514·5	16,951·5		22,466·0
Others	114·0	76·0		190·0
Total	34,096·0	59,823·0		93,919·0
1 January 1984				
Grade 1	3·0			3·0
Grade 2	9·5	2·0		11·5
Grade 3	37·0	7·0		44·0
Grade 4	21·0	2·0		23·0
Grade 5	197·0	42·0		239·0
Grade 6	321·5	58·0		379·5
Grade 7	745·5	155·5		901·0
SEO	1,035·0	155·0		1,190·0
HEO	3,533·0	1,136·5		4,669·5
EO	10,161·0	10,260·5		20,421·5
AO CO	10,987·0	28,980·5		39,967·5
AA CA	5,472·5	15,553·5		21,026·0
Others	4·0	2·0		6·0
Total	32,527·0	56,354·5		88,881·5
1 January 1985				
Grade 1	2·0			2·0
Grade 2	9·5	1·0		10·5
Grade 3	35·0	7·0		42·0
Grade 4	20·0	4·0		24·0
Grade 5	194·0	46·5		240·5
Grade 6	314·0	62·5		376·5
Grade 7	783·0	159·5		942·5
SEO	1,113·0	171·5		1,284·5
HEO	3,548·0	1,348·0		4,896·0
EO	10,183·0	10,902·5		21,085·5
AO CO	11,632·5	30,790·5		42,423·0
AA CA	5,910·0	15,849·5		21,759·5
Others	5·0	2·0		7·0
Total	33,749·0	59,344·5		93,093·5
1 January 1986				
Grade 1	3·0			3·0
Grade 2	10·0	1·0		11·0
Grade 3	32·0	8·0		40·0
Grade 4	22·0	3·0		25·0
Grade 5	189·0	45·0		234·0
Grade 6	323·5	68·5		392·0
Grade 7	800·5	170·0		970·5
SEO	1,106·5	189·0		1,295·5
HEO	3,620·5	1,459·0		5,079·5
EO	10,185·0	11,260·5		21,445·5
AO CO	11,425·0	30,188·0		41,613·0
AA CA	5,971·5	15,580·5		21,552·0
Others	4·0			4·0
Total	33,692·5	58,972·5		92,665·0

DHSS Grade Level	Sex: Male	Female	Other	Total
1 January 1987				
Grade 1	3·0	—	—	3·0
Grade 2	8·0	2·0	—	10·0
Grade 3	36·0	6·0	—	42·0
Grade 4	24·0	3·0	—	27·0
Grade 5	195·5	49·0	—	244·5
Grade 6	340·0	68·5	—	408·5
Grade 7	818·5	180·0	—	998·5
SEO	1,151·5	233·0	—	1,384·5
HEO	3,757·0	1,691·5	—	5,448·5
EO	10,214·5	12,139·5	—	22,354·0
AO/CO	11,850·0	31,066·5	—	42,916·5
AA/CA	6,216·5	15,573·0	1·0	21,790·5
Others	5·0	—	—	5·0
Total	34,619·5	61,012·0	1·0	95,632·5

Notes:
SEO—Senior Executive Officer.
HEO—Higher Executive Officer.
EO—Executive Officer.
AO/CO—Administration Officer/Clerical Officer.
AA/CA—Administration Assistant/Clerical Assistant.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Bowis asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the reasons for the pocket money differential in supplementary benefit payments to long-term patients in mental hospitals and to boarders in residential care accommodation of £7·90 and £11·50 per week respectively; and if he will explain how these figures are calculated.

Mr. Portillo: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Stanbrook asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what checks are made on the authenticity of claims for supplementary benefit made by persons known to be itinerants who claim to be resident on property which they occupy as trespassers.

Mr. Portillo: Itinerant claimants, provided they satisfy the normal rules, are entitled to benefit in the same way as other people who claim benefit. They are required to prove their identity and, where necessary, to provide documentary evidence in support of their claim before benefit is paid.

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish an estimate using the Family Expenditure Survey 1985 of how many two-parent families with children would be on supplementary benefit level or below if the wives were not in paid work.

Mr. Scott: Since the husband might decide to increase his earnings if the wife ceased paid work, it is not possible to provide a precise estimate of how many families might then have net incomes on or below their supplementary benefit scale rates.

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many claims for supplementary benefit were made in each year since 1979 by *(a)* people over pension age, *(b)* unemployed people and *(c)* others; and what proportion was successful in each category.

Mr. Scott: The information requested is shown in the table.

	Claims from people over pension age	Per cent. successful	Claims from unemployed people	Per cent. successful	Claims from others	Per cent. successful
1979-80	277,328	65·8	3,444,005	75·9	1,785,305	75·8
1980-81	303,313	66·6	4,192,426	73·9	992,660	71·0
1981-82	319,749	67·8	4,441,554	72·6	892,028	70·8
1982-83	320,658	68·5	4,697,770	74·8	903,396	71·0
1983-84	367,748	58·3	4,549,870	82·0	1,089,789	66·2
1984-85	386,491	52·9	4,404,368	82·6	1,384,252	77·1
1985-86	460,167	40·8	4,327,657	81·1	1,093,966	55·9
1986-87	462,042	39·3	4,139,814	79·9	1,011,467	55·7

"Health and Personal Social Services Statistics"

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he intends to publish "Health and Personal Social Services Statistics" for England.

Mr. Newton: "Health and Personal Social Services Statistics" for England 1987 edition will be published at the end of August.

Social Security (Agreements)

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will state for each country in the European Community any provisions of any bilateral agreement with the United Kingdom on social security which are different from the general agreement with member states, setting out the circumstances when the differences could benefit people *(a)* with contributions in the United Kingdom scheme, *(b)* living in the United Kingdom, *(c)* who are United Kingdom citizens or *(d)* anyone else.

Mr. Scott: The United Kingdom has bilateral agreements on social security with each of the other member states of the European Community (excluding Greece). The provisions of each differ in detail as necessary to take account of the characteristics of the social security schemes concerned. The principles underlying them are the same; they are also the same as those underlying the EEC regulations on social security for migrant workers.

With the accession of the United Kingdom to the European Community, the bilateral agreements now apply only to people and matters not covered by the EEC regulations. The EEC regulations apply to all employed or self-employed people who are nationals of a member state, or who are stateless persons or refugees residing in the European Community, and to their survivors or dependents.

Generally, therefore, the bilateral agreements help only people who are not workers or, in the case of the agreements with Ireland and Germany, which are not restricted to nationals of the countries concerned, those

who are not EC nationals. For such people, who move from the United Kingdom to the other country, and vice versa, the agreements regulate where their contribution liability lies, provide for aggregation of both countries' insurance under specified conditions to assist title to benefit, preserve rights to benefit and, in particular, provide for pension entitlement to be unaffected. Their provisions differ from those of the EEC regulations on points of detail only.

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will set out for each country for which he has information *(a)* in the European Community, *(b)* in the Council of Europe and *(c)* with which the United Kingdom has a reciprocal agreement on social security, the conditions under which they pay retirement, old age or widows' pensions to those qualifying but currently living in the United Kingdom, and showing, in particular, whether those pensions are increased by some measure of inflation in the same way as when paid in the country concerned.

Mr. Scott: For people living in the United Kingdom, who are covered by the European Community social security regulations, all EC member states award their pensions on the same terms as if the pensioners were living in the country of payment and pay them in full, including cost of living increases.

The bilateral social security conventions which the United Kingdom has with other countries—including all the member states of the Council of Europe—vary in scope. It is normal, though, for such agreements *(a)* to ensure that neither country operates any discrimination on nationality grounds in access to benefits and *(b)* to provide for award of pensions by each country to people in the other on the same basis as if the pensioner were living in the awarding country, with cost of living increases being paid as they become due.

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will set out separately the dates since June 1979 on which his officials have met their counterparts from *(a)* Australia, *(b)* New Zealand and *(c)* Canada to discuss the relevant reciprocal agreement on social security; what specific aspects of the relevant agreement they discussed; when future meetings are planned; and what specific matters are on the agenda.

Mr. Scott: Since June 1979 officials from the Department have met their counterparts from Australia, Canada and New Zealand on the following dates:

Australia
September 1980
March 1981
April/May 1982
September 1983
September 1986

Canada
May 1979
December 1982
February 1983
August 1983

New Zealand
March 1981
November 1982

Officials meet to discuss the operation of the agreements and what changes, if any, may be needed. Details of the negotiations are confidential. In addition to the meetings listed there is regular informal contact. The only planned future meeting is with officials of the Department of Social Security, Australia, next month.

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will set out for each other country for which he has information, apart from any country with which the United Kingdom has a reciprocal agreement on social security, the conditions under which their citizens living in the United Kingdom can be paid a retirement, old age or widow's pension.

Mr. Scott: This information, which is not readily available, could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Retirement Pensioners

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will bring up to date the answer he gave to the hon. Member for Barking on 15 May 1986, *Official Report*, column *523-526*.

Mr. Scott: The answer given to the hon. Member has already been updated in my predecessor's reply to the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) on 14 May 1987 at columns *349-352*.

Radiologists and Radiographers

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many radiologists have been employed in *(a)* the National Health Service and *(b)* the private health sector, from 1979 to the latest available year.

Mrs. Currie: Numbers of consultant radiologists in the National Health Service in England are set out in the table. Information is not held on numbers of radiologists in the private sector.

Number of consultant radiologists[1] in post in the National Health Service at 30 September each year
England

Year	*Number*
1979	763
1980	779
1981	804
1982	816
1983	841
1984	883
1985	916
1986	952

[1] Including Senior House Medical Officers with allowance.

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services now many radiographers have been employed in *(a)* the National Health Service and *(b)* the private health sector from 1979 to the latest available year.

Mrs. Currie: Information about the number of radiographers employed in the private sector is not collected centrally. For the National Health Service figures are as follows.

National Health Service staff in post—radiographers
England

At 30 September	*Whole time equivalents*[1]
1979	6,690
1980	6,840

At 30 September	Whole time equivalents[1]
1981	7,090
1982	7,290
1983	7,580
1984	7,750
1985	7,990

Source: DHSS Annual Census of National Health Service Non-Medical Manpower.

Note:

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 whole-time equivalent.

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many *(a)* radiographers, and *(b)* radiologists have been in training in the National Health Service, from 1979 to the latest available year.

Mrs. Currie: For *(a)* information is not available in the form requested. However the number of students entering schools of radiography each year since 1979 was as follows:

Annual intake: Great Britain

Year	Intake
1979	885
1980	802
1981	967
1982	[1]1,001
1983	980
1984	859
1985	794
1986	679

[1] In 1982 the training course for student radiographers was extended from just over 2 to 3 academic years.

For *(b)* numbers are as follows:

National Health Service—Hospital medical staff in the specialty of radiography—30 September 1986
England: Doctors[1] in training in radiography

Year	Number
1979	397
1980	439
1981	445
1982	469
1983	476
1984	461
1985	474
1986	496

[1] Includes Senior Registrars, Registrars, Senior House Officers, House Officers.

Health Authority (McColl Report)

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Social Services which organisations were consulted about the membership of the new health authority which was set up by his Department arising from the McColl report.

Mr. Scott: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) on 21 July.

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what arrangements have been made to ensure that the views of consumers of disablement services are taken into account by the new health authority which was set up by his Department arising from the McColl report.

Mr. Scott: The Disablement Services Authority is responsible for making its own arrangements for taking into account the views of its patients. I am confident that the authority will do so effectively.

Disabled People (Representatives)

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he intends to issue for consultation draft regulations under section 1 of the Disabled Persons Act 1986.

Mr. Scott: We intend to consult interested parties before any regulations are made. No decision has yet been made on the timing of the implementation of section 1.

NHS (Hospitals)

Mr. Arnold asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list all National Health Service hospitals: *(a)* of over 900 beds and *(b)* which have been built, or added to since 1980 to make the combined old and new buildings over 900.

Mrs. Currie: Information available centrally shows that the acute/general hospitals listed provide over 900 beds. Of these Ipswich hospital, Queens medical centre and Leicester general hospital have had phases added since 1980 to bring their total number of beds over 900.

North Tees General Hospital.
St. James University Hospital, Leeds.
Leicester General Hospital.
Nottingham City Hospital.
University Hospital Nottingham (Queens Medical Centre).
Northern General (Sheffield).
Ipswich Hospital.
East Birmingham General Hospital.
Walsgrave General (Coventry).
Fazakerley (South Sefton).
North Manchester General Hospital.
Withington Hospital (South Manchester).

Clinical and Non-clinical Academic Staff

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will state the implications for his Department's research programme of the pay settlement for non-clinical academic staff and the more recent pay settlement for clinical academic staff.

Mr. Newton: The Department estimates that these pay settlements will increase the salary costs of the research programme by £950,000 in 1987-88.

Maternity and Death Grants

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the current levels of *(a)* universal maternity grant, uprated in line with inflation since 1969 and *(b)* death grant, uprated in line with inflation since 1957.

Mr. Portillo: On the basis of the movement of the retail price index, the value in April 1987 of *(a)* the former maternity grant would be £144·25 compared to its value in November 1969 and *(b)* the former death grant would be about £210 compared to its value in January 1958.

Cook-chill Catering

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will carry out an investigation into the use of cook-chill catering in the National Health Service.

Mrs. Currie: No. Cook-chill is a well-established catering system. The available scientific evidence is that,

providing existing guidelines on its operation are followed, it is microbiologically and nutritionally sound. The Department published guidelines for cook-chill in 1980, and further material was included in the 1986 manual "Health Service Catering – Hygiene".

Departmental Records, Newcastle

Mr. Matthew Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) which Government Departments have access to his Department's records at the Newcastle office; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will make a statement on the degree of confidentiality of his Department's records at Newcastle; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: The rules governing the confidentiality of personal information in social security records apply equally to all the Department's offices – both local and central.

Information obtained from an individual for social security purposes is treated as confidential and to be used only for that purpose. It is not normally made available to other Government Departments.

There has to be close liaison between our offices and the Department of Employment and Inland Revenue because they act as agents for the Department in the payment of unemployment benefit and the collection of contributions respectively. Information from social security records necessary to the carrying out of these statutory functions may be disclosed to them.

In other circumstances, where there is no statutory function, requests for information from social security records made by other Government Departments are considered only if the information would prevent the duplication of public funds, would help in the prosecution of a serious crime or would meet the welfare needs of the individual concerned.

Social Fund

Mr. Squire asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if, further to his reply of 2 July, *Official Report*, column *148*, to the hon. Member for Hornchurch, there are any plans for funding independent research into the social fund.

Mr. Scott: There are no such plans at present.

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services in what respects the conditions for obtaining emergency payments from the social fund will be more restrictive than the provisions of the Supplementary Benefit (Urgent Cases) Regulations.

Mr. Scott: Our proposals for emergency payments from the social fund were set out in part 6 of the consultation paper "The Social Fund Manual: Draft Guidance and Directions for DHSS Social Fund Officers", a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

Deliveries

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list for the years 1985 and 1986 the estimated percentages of women delivering in *(a)* England and *(b)* England and Wales (i) whose labours were induced, (ii) whose labours were of spontaneous onset and (iii) who had elected caesarean sections;

(2) if he will list for the years 1985 and 1986 the estimated percentages of women delivered in *(a)* England and *(b)* England and Wales whose deliveries were (i) spontaneous, including abnormal presentation of head and breach spontaneous, (ii) instrumental including forceps vacuum and breach extractions, (iii) caesarean section and (iv) other and unspecified means.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Pension and Benefit Payments (Millom)

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make an urgent inquiry into the financial hardship and distress being experienced by people in Millom, Cumbria, whose pension and benefit payments are being delayed as a result of the industrial dispute at his Department's office in Barrow in Furness; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: An emergency payment centre is open at Barrow in Furness to handle claims from people in need of financial assistance. Voluntary organisations, including the Citizens Advice Bureau in Millom, Cumbria, have been advised about the arrangements and supplies of emergency claim forms have been distributed to them and other organisations in the area covered by the emergency centre. Special arrangements have also been made with the post office to ensure that people who are normally paid by order book can continue to receive their benefit allowances.

Mammography Facilities (Devon)

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether his Department intends to make additional funds available in the current financial year to facilitate the provision of mammography facilities in Devon in addition to the updating of the Devon family practitioner committee computer so that it can be used for both cytology and mammography recall and monitoring.

Mrs. Currie: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply today to my hon. Friend the Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs).

The South Western regional health authority has chosen Cornwall as the location for its first centre for breast cancer screening. Services to cover the remainder of the region are planned for the next two years; no additional funds for Devon are therefore required this year.

Computer Facilities (Devon)

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop asked the Secretary of State for Social Services by what date his Department's contribution of £25,000 will have been paid to the Devon family practitioner committee to update its computer so that it is able to perform the four functions set out in the letters to the family practioner committee from his Department dated 26 June, and from his Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the hon. Member for Tiverton; and what proportion of the cost will be paid by each of the four district health authorities in Devon, Exeter, Torbay, Plymouth and North Devon, respectively.

Mrs. Currie: As my noble Friend the Baroness Trumpington explained in her letter the question of

funding for the upgrading of Devon family practitioner committee's computer is under consideration. It is not yet possible to specify when funds may be available nor what proportion of costs may be contributed by the health authorities concerned.

Severe Disablement Allowance

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many *(a)* favourable and *(b)* unfavourable decisions on applications for severe disablement allowance have been made to date.

Mr. Scott: As at 7 April 1987, 29,525 and 23,175 respectively.

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will classify awards of severe disablement allowance to *(a)* men, *(b)* single women and *(c)* married women according to whether they (i) were exempt from the 80 per cent. test on the grounds of age, (ii) were passported to the 80 per cent. test or (iii) passed the 80 per cent. test.

Mr. Scott: The available information as at 7 April 1987 is as follows:

	Men	*Single and Divorced Women and Widows*	*Married Women*
Exempt from disablement condition (under 20 when incapacity arose or claim links with non-contributory invalidity pension or housewives non-contributory invalidity pension)	7,715	5,713	694
Passported to disablement condition	1,689	1,298	6,173
Disablement condition satisfied	1,466	900	3,877
Total	10,870	7,911	10,744

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will classify refusals of severe disablement allowance to *(a)* men, *(b)* single women and *(c)* married women according to the following reasons (i) over pension age, (ii) not incapable of work, (iii) failed the 80 per cent. test, (iv) failed residence and presence conditions and (v) other.

Mr. Scott: The available information as at 7 April 1987 is as follows:

	Men	*Single and Divorced Women and Widows*	*Married Women*
Over pension age	451	277	992
Not incapable of work	261	188	424
Disablement condition not satisfied	3,629	2,202	10,111
Other	1,997	961	1,682
Total	6,338	3,628	13,209

Separate information is not available on the number who failed the residence or presence conditions. These cases are included under "Other".

Supplementary Benefit Claimants (Mortgage Interest Payments)

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many supplementary benefit claimants have had only half their mortgage interest payments met up to the latest date for which information is available.

Mr. Scott: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Personal Pensions

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he is taking to ensure that independent advice is available to anyone considering whether to contribute to a personal pension scheme.

Mr. Scott: Rules made under the Financial Services Act will impose stringent requirements on investment businesses, including firms advising on and selling personal pensions in the form of insurance policies and authorised unit trusts. The rules aim at ensuring high standards of integrity, fairness and skill in dealing with customers and the provision of adequate information to individuals contemplating taking out a personal pension. In particular, the rules will require firms advising on and selling life insurance policies and authorised unit trusts to do so either as representatives of a single company or group or on a fully independent basis and to make their status clear. Banks and building societies, who may provide deposit-based personal pensions, are already regulated under separate legislation: as noted in the Department's policy statement "Investor Protection Requirements for Personal and Occupational Pension Schemes", published in April, these arrangements are being supplemented by special measures in relation to personal pensions.

Income Support

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services where the general and transitional draft regulations on income support are available; to what groups; and on what basis.

Mr. Scott: The draft general and transitional regulations on income support have not formally been laid before the House and therefore are not available through the usual outlets for statutory instruments. However, when copies of the draft regulations were placed in the Library, they were also sent to the departmental trade unions and to certain organisations which had been involved in discussions on income support earlier. In addition, the Department has been making available copies of the draft regulations to interested bodies and organisations within reason on request. The same arrangements exist for the draft family credit regulations.

Benefits (Deductions)

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will consider altering the social security regulations to prevent deductions from benefits based on the assumption of income from a capital endowment from which actual income is legally restricted.

Mr. Scott: If the hon. Member would care to let me have more details I shall write to him.

Social Fund Commissioner

Ms. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he has taken to appoint a social fund commissioner; whether the post will be advertised; whether it will be a full-time appointment; and what salary will be offered.

Mr. Scott: We are currently considering these and other matters relating to the appointment of the social fund commissioner.

Medicines Commission (Annual Report)

Mr. Malins asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to receive the Medicines Commission's annual report for 1986.

Mr. Newton: I have received the report and copies have today been laid before both Houses of Parliament in accordance with section 5(2) of the Medicines Act 1968. Bound volumes will shortly be placed in the Library, containing the 1986 reports of the Medicines Commission, the Committee on Safety of Medicines, the Veterinary Products Committee, the British Pharmacopoeia Commission, the Committee on the Review of Medicines and the Committee on Dental and Surgical Materials.

District Health Authorities (Chairmen)

Mr. Chapman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he will be appointing new chairmen to district health authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The term of office of 90 chairmen of district health authorities ends on 31 March 1988 and we are currently seeking nominations for new chairmen. If hon. Members wish to recommend any individuals as chairmen I invite them to write to me over the next month or so. Reappointments and changes will be announced in due course.

Breast Cancer Screening

Mr. Simon Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will make a statement on the national breast cancer screening programme.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 30 June 1987, c. *364-5*]: Regional health authorities have now decided on the locations of their first breast cancer screening centres to be operational by March 1988. The locations are:

Regional health authority	*Locations*
North Western	Manchester[1]
Trent	Nottingham[1]
South East Thames	Camberwell[1]
South West Thames	Guildford[1]
North West Thames	Barnet
North East Thames	Epping[2]
Mersey	Liverpool
West Midlands	Stoke-on-Trent
Northern	Gateshead
Wessex	Southampton
Yorkshire	Huddersfield[2]
Oxford	Aylesbury Vale[2]
East Anglian	Suffolk[2]
South Western	Cornwall[2]

[1] Centres which will provide a national training service.
[2] With mobile unit.

Some regional health authorities are planning to start further centres before March 1988. My March 1990 there will be sufficient centres to provide a nationwide service.

Private Patients

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each year since 1979 *(a)* in both money terms and real terms the income received from private in-patients and *(b)* the number of such patients in each payment category.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 13 July 1987, c. *375*]: The available information is as follows:

Services in England under section 65 of the National Health Services Act 1977

Year	*In-patient cases treated*[1]	*Income (£'000)*	*Income (£'000 in 1985-86 prices)*
1979-80	91,128	33,320	53,783
1980-81	98,565	42,619	57,990
1981-82	97,739	49,344	61,113
1982-83	80,686	46,164	53,319
1983-84	82,938	49,494	54,709
1984-85	77,489	48,687	51,610
1985-86	70,782	51,787	51,787

Notes:
1. In-patient cases treated ([1]discharges and deaths) relate to calendar years, not financial years. (Figures shown against 1979-80 is of patients for 1979, and so on.)
2. Information on income derived from annual accounts of health authorities.
3. Actual income expressed in 1985-86 prices by the use of the gross domestic product deflator.
4. Later information is not yet available.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what arrangements exist to ensure that no profits accrue from national charges to private patients as a result of health authorities with relatively high private patient costs opting out of the national system and establishing their own charges.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 13 July 1987, c. *375*]: The central list of charges for private patient treatment is calculated to recover the estimated national average full cost of treating patients in each class of hospital; no element for profit is included. No health authority, as far as is known, has opted to move entirely away from the central list of charges for 1987-88 and therefore we would not expect this year's overall income to exceed costs. We intend when preparing the central list of charges for coming years to review each time the basis on which it is calculated and will make any changes necessary to ensure that balance between cost and income is maintained.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list *(a)* those health authorities which have chosen to set their own charges to private patients for all treatment and *(b)* those health authorities which have chosen to set their own charges to private patients for some treatments.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 13 July 1987, c. *375*]: No health authority has reported yet that it has chosen to set charges to private patients in the current financial year which differ in every respect from the central list of charges. Health authorities which are known to have set charges which differ in some respects from those in the central list are as follows:

Newcastle
North Tyneside
Airedale
Leeds Eastern
Cambridge
Huntingdon
Hillingdon
Paddington and North Kensington
Riverside
Tower Hamlets
Camberwell
Lewisham and North Southwark
Wandsworth
Aylesbury Vale
East Berkshire
West Berkshire
Northampton
Oxfordshire
Bristol and Western
North Birmingham
Sandwell
Walsall
South Manchester
Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's Special Health Authority
Moorfields Eye Hospital
The National Heart and Chest Hospitals
The National Hospitals for Nervous Diseases
The Royal Marsden Hospital
The Hospital for Sick Children

Severe Weather Payments

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many exceptionally cold weather payments were made by region in 1986-87.

Mr. Scott [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 July 1987 c. *381*]: The number of £5 exceptionally cold weather payments made by each region in the winter of 1986-87, is as follows:

Region	*Number of £5 payments*
London South	195,673
London North	300,790
Midlands	397,828
Wales and South West	243,298
North-East	324,914
North-West	286,692
Scotland	291,177
Total	2,040,372

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 24 July 1987

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Special Education

Mr. Hannam asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he will respond to the recommendations for the training of further education staff with responsibilities for special educational needs made in his report "A Special Professionalism."

Mr. Dunn: This report, the result of a study sponsored by the Department, puts forward a set of training programmes to meet the requirements of groups of staff with different degrees of special needs involvement, as its core recommendation. As the report recognises the full possibilities envisaged could be achieved only over the longer term. The Government will carefully consider these, and any steps that might be taken meantime. It has encouraged the development of some of the programmes by designating special needs training for local authority advisers, college managers and special needs co-ordinators as a national priority area for local education authority training grants in the present financial year. I am pleased to report that the Manpower Services Commission has alocated £40,000 to the further education unit for the development of a programme for mainstream teaching staff with a major special needs involvement in collaboration with the National Bureau for Handicapped Students.

Schools (Financial Delegations)

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list those local education authorities which operate schemes of financial delegations to schools.

Mr. Dunn: A summary undertaken last year indicated that among the local education authorities operating schemes of financial delegation to some or all of their schools are the following:

Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Cambridgeshire
Cheshire
Cornwall
Cumbria
Devon
East Sussex
Gloucestershire
Hereford and Worcester
Hertfordshire
Humberside
Lincolnshire
Norfolk
Northumberland
Oxfordshire
Somerset
Surrey
West Sussex
Calderdale
ILEA
Solihull

Since then a pilot scheme has been introduced in some schools in Kent.

Ethnic Pupils

Mr. Oppenheim asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he will issue for consultation the draft circular on the collection of ethnically based statistics on school pupils.

Mr. Dunn: The draft circular has been issued for consultation today and copies have been placed in the Library. In addition, 4 local education authorities — Berkshire, Bradford, Cleveland and Wolverhampton — have been invited to set up pilot schemes for the collection of ethnically based statistics on school pupils during the academic year 1987-88.

Lecturers

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to increase the number of lecturers in higher education in order to meet the Government's projected increase in student access outlined in the White Paper, "Meeting the Challenge"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: The number of lecturers in higher education is a matter for those who employ them, in the light of the various demands on the resources available and taking into account such factors as the range of provision and the number of students in each institution. The Government will continue to make funds available for higher education overall at a realistic level, in line with what the nation can afford.

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has on average pay levels of higher and further education lecturers, and higher education lecturers, respectively, in each or all the the following *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* Great Britain, *(c)* universities in the United Kingdom, *(d)* polytechnics in England and Wales and *(e)* all non-university higher education in Great Britain; and what equivalent information he has, converted to pound sterling, in relation to (i) France, (ii) Spain, (iii) Italy, (iv) West Germany and (v) the United States of America.

Mrs. Rumbold: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Higher Education (Access)

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science by how much he intends to increase the projected resources outlined in Cm. 56 in public sector higher education in order to finance the projected increase in access outlined in the Government's White Paper, "Meeting the Challenge".

Mr. Jackson: The Government's public expenditure plans for 1988-89 and the two succeeding years are under review. Funding for the polytechnics and colleges in 1988-89 will be determined in the context of overall decisions about local authority expenditure this autumn. The number of students in the system will be one of the factors taken into account in this process.

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether it is his intention that the projected increase in student access outlined in the Government White Paper, "Meeting the Challenge", will

be concentrated in institutions presently under local education authority control; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: The Government are planning for a further overall increase of 50,000 in the number of higher education students by 1990. Actual numbers, and where they study, will depend on various factors, in particular on the recruitment decisions of individual institutions.

Higher Education

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will provide figures relating to the cost to central and local government of higher education, full-tine equivalent students in the university (United Kingdom) and non-university (England and Wales) sectors, respectively, for 1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82, 1982-83, 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86; and what is the estimate for 1986-87.

Mr. Jackson: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Physical Education

Mr. Denis Howell asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he intends to set up a working group to recommend attainment targets and programmes of study for physical education, within the framework of the Government's proposals for a national curriculum.

Mrs. Rumbold: The first subject working groups are being set up in science, mathematics and English. Other groups will be set up as soon as possible. My right hon. Friend is still considering the sequence of working groups for the foundation subjects other than science, mathematics and English.

Working Group on Physical Education

Mr. Denis Howell asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he intends to include representatives of swimming associations in the working group on physical education to be set up within the framework of the Government's proposals for a national curriculum.

Mrs. Rumbold: Members of subject working groups are being appointed for their personal knowledge and expertise, not as representatives of institutions or bodies. Each subject working group will have a small membership comprising a chairman and members drawn mainly from the headteachers and teachers of primary and secondary schools, local education authority advisers, higher education and the world of exployment. The intention is that, between them, members will have knowledge of and expertise in all the major aspects of their foundation subjects.

School Meals

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) how many children in each education authority area received free school meals in 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986 and the current year;

(2) how many children in each education authority area received free school meals in 1987; and what are the equivalent figures for 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986.

Mr. Dunn: The figures requested are collected annually in October as part of the school meals census. The data are published and copies of the relevant reports are in the Library of the House. It was not possible to collect this information in October 1985. The results of the 1987 census will not be available until early 1988.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what are the total numbers of staff employed in the school meals service by education authority area in the current year, and what are the equivalent figures for 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986.

Mr. Dunn: The precise information requested is not collected by my Department. The annual school meals census for October 1986, a copy of which is in the Library, gives a breakdown of the number of kitchen and canteen staff; midday supervisors and other adults present on the day of the census. This information was not collected in previous years.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the estimated expenditure of his Department in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

Mrs. Rumbold: Estimated expenditure on management and computer consultancy in the current financial year is £414,112. In addition we estimate expenditure of approximately £400,000 associated with the privatisation of the Plant Breeding Institute.

Pupil-Teacher Ratio

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in tabular form *(a)* the number of teachers in each local education authority in England and Wales, *(b)* the number of pupils in each and *(c)* the teacher-pupil ratio of each.

Mr. Dunn: The information requested for each local education authority in England in January 1986 is given in the following table: Figures for local education authorities in Wales are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Teachers, pupils and pupil/teacher ratios in each LEA in England. January 1986

	[1] *Teachers*	[2] *Pupils*	*Pupil teacher ratio*
Barking	1,382	23,694	17·1
Barnet	2,524	39,681	15·7
Bexley	1,776	32,759	18·4
Brent	2,456	33,919	13·8
Bromley	2,071	37,386	18·1
Croydon	2,547	43,651	17·1
Ealing	2,262	36,716	16·2
Enfield	2,210	38,437	17·4
Haringey	1,929	26,086	13·5
Harrow	1,575	26,216	16·6
Havering	2,135	36,965	17·3
Hillingdon	1,732	32,221	18·6
Hounslow	1,867	30,407	16·3
Kingston-upon-Thames	1,035	17,396	16·8
Merton	1,236	21,419	17·3
Newham	2,317	34,985	15·1
Redbridge	1,673	29,996	17·9
Richmond-upon-Thames	928	15,857	17·1

	[1]Teachers	[2]Pupils	Pupil teacher ratio
Sutton	1,162	22,044	19·0
Waltham Forest	2,073	31,042	15·0
Inner London	20,395	275,590	13·5
Birmingham	9,621	170,453	17·7
Coventry	2,972	49,268	16·6
Dudley	2,668	46,929	17·6
Sandwell	3,001	50,467	16·8
Solihull	1,882	34,308	18·2
Walsall	2,918	47,832	16·4
Wolverhampton	2,674	42,565	15·9
Knowsley	1,779	28,511	16·0
Liverpool	4,829	79,284	16·4
St. Helens	1,882	32,437	17·2
Sefton	2,556	46,657	18·3
Wirral	2,919	52,670	18·0
Bolton	2,496	45,141	18·1
Bury	1,598	27,104	17·0
Manchester	4,402	69,654	15·8
Oldham	2,145	38,186	17·8
Rochdale	2,204	36,177	16·4
Salford	2,287	38,455	16·8
Stockport	2,478	44,743	18·1
Tameside	2,020	35,888	17·8
Trafford	1,601	29,807	18·6
Wigan	3,303	53,701	16·3
Barnsley	2,118	36,389	17·2
Doncaster	2,810	49,256	17·5
Rotherham	2,495	44,160	17·7
Sheffield	4,614	76,574	16·6
Bradford	4,835	81,503	16·9
Calderdale	1,914	32,473	17·0
Kirklees	3,576	64,186	18·0
Leeds	6,454	108,935	16·9
Wakefield	2,689	50,126	18·6
Gateshead	1,832	31,116	17·0
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	2,527	39,446	15·6
North Tyneside	2,090	30,741	14·7
South Tyneside	1,562	24,644	15·8
Sunderland	2,898	51,544	17·8
Isles of Scilly	25	278	11·1
Avon	7,325	135,133	18·5
Bedfordshire	4,703	83,899	17·8
Berkshire	6,028	107,388	17·8
Buckinghamshire	4,970	95,428	19·2
Cambridgeshire	5,036	95,944	19·1
Cheshire	8,271	151,474	18·3
Cleveland	5,540	99,728	18·0
Cornwall	3,733	67,601	18·1
Cumbria	4,415	75,804	17·2
Derbyshire	8,087	143,397	17·7
Devon	7,150	131,325	18·4
Dorset	4,429	79,784	18·0
Durham	5,186	96,346	18·6
East Sussex	4,356	80,441	18·5
Essex	11,971	230,484	19·3
Gloucestershire	4,072	75,562	18·6
Hampshire	11,364	216,297	19·0
Hereford and Worcester	5,317	97,416	18·3
Hertfordshire	8,462	151,651	17·9
Humberside	8,163	141,684	17·4
Isle of Wight	911	16,981	18·6
Kent	11,813	224,680	19·0
Lancashire	11,618	214,675	18·5
Leicestershire	7,879	138,743	17·6
Lincolnshire	4,519	84,707	18·7
Norfolk	5,716	104,292	18·3
North Yorkshire	5,561	100,292	18·0
Northamptonshire	5,423	93,468	17·2
Northumberland	2,711	48,706	18·0
Nottinghamshire	8,854	153,833	17·4
Oxfordshire	4,354	75,083	17·2
Shropshire	3,608	62,934	17·4
Somerset	3,345	63,625	19·0
Staffordshire	9,102	164,294	18·0
Suffolk	4,990	91,437	18·3
Surrey	6,925	125,392	18·1
Warwickshire	4,000	74,253	18·6
West Sussex	4,870	91,802	18·
Wiltshire	4,206	79,781	

[1] The total number of teachers paid by local education authorities including the full-time equivalent of all qualified teachers, student teachers and instructors employed for service in maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools.

[2] The total number of full-time equivalent pupils in maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools.

Technology and Computers

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on present measures to increase instruction and application of technology and computers in schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 22 July to my hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves).

Grant-maintained Schools

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he is able to give more information about the Government's plans for grant-maintained schools.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I intend to bring forward legislation to enable the governors of county and voluntary maintained schools, with the support of the parents, to apply for maintenance by grant from central Government instead of maintenance by local education authorities. The Government believe that this proposal, which will extend to all secondary schools and to larger primary schools, will add a new and powerful dimension to the ability of parents to exercise choice within the publicly provided sector of education.

I am today publishing a consultation paper which explains the Government's proposals in detail. I should be glad to receive comments in response to it by 30 September 1987. Copies of the consultation paper have been placed in the Library and the Vote Office.

National Curriculum

Mr. Patrick Thompson asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about the Government's plans to introduce a national curriculum in schools.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and I propose to bring forward legislation in the autumn to introduce a national curriculum for pupils age 5 to 16 in maintained schools in England and Wales. We are today publishing a consultation document which develops in more detail the proposals I announced to the Education, Science and Arts Select Committee on 7 April.

This historic reform represents the culmination of over 10 years of debate which has resulted in general agreement about the aims of school education and widespread support for the idea of a national curriculum. Our legislation will now secure for pupils of all abilities and in all areas the benefits of a good and relevant curriculum, which is essential if standards are to be raised. A national

curriculum will also ensure that clear objectives are set for all pupils within a framework which pupils, teachers, parents, employers and others understand and can support. Pupils' progress towards their objectives will be measured so as to ensure that they are achieving the best they can.

Comments on the main legislation are being invited by 30 September. There will be further consultations as more detailed proposals come forward in relation to individual subjects.

Copies of the consultation document have been placed in the Library and the Vote Office.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Tuvalu (International Trust Fund)

Mr. Wells asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what provision he is making to pay the United Kingdom contribution of 8·5 million Australian dollars to the International Trust Fund for Tuvalu.

Mr. Chris Patten: Ratification of the agreement establishing the trust fund, which was laid before the House on 25 June for the requisite 21 days, can now be given effect. Financial provision will be sought in a winter supplementary estimate for the overseas aid vote. Pending that vote, urgent expenditure estimated at about £3·86 million will be met by a repayable advance from the contingencies fund.

Technical Co-operation Training Programme

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many awards and of what amount were made under the technical co-operation training programme in the most recent year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: A total of 10,500 awards were held under the technical co-operation training programme during the financial year 1986-87 at a cost of £58·7 million.

Training Schemes

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish a list of the various training schemes abroad for foreign nationals which have been financed by his Department; if he will further give in each case the object of the training courses; and what have been the total sums involved, in each of the most recent three years for which figures are available.

Mr. Chris Patten: I shall write to my hon. Friend and place copies in the Library of the House.

Development Aid

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the present level of overseas development aid given to *(a)* Africa, *(b)* South and South East Asia and *(c)* Latin America.

Mr. Chris Patten: Gross public expenditure on overseas aid in 1986 was:

	£ million
Africa	285
South and South East Asia	302
Latin America	22

Somalia and Mozambique

Ms. Quin asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he will make to his European colleagues within the Council of Ministers concerning the granting of extra emergency food aid from the European Economic Community to Somalia and Mozambique; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: The Community agreed earlier this month to allocate another 55,000 tonnes of food aid to Mozambique, in addition to 60,000 tonnes allocated in March, and to provide 13,500 tonnes to Somalia. We are monitoring the situation in both countries closely, and will urge further Community help if required.

Ms. Quin asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what extra emergency aid the Government is planning to provide for Somalia and Mozambique in view of the shortage of food in both countries at the present time.

Mr. Chris Patten: We are already delivering 7,000 tonnes of bilateral food aid to Mozambique, and we have pledged a further 30,000 tonnes. In all, we are providing nearly £14 million of bilateral emergency help this year. For Somalia, we provided veterinary drugs and other emergency aid during the drought, as well as tarpaulins when the drought was ended by floods. The latest Food and Agriculture Organisation report shows that at the end of June the overall food supply situation remained satisfactory. I am ready to consider providing further emergency aid to both Somalia and Mozambique in the light of their needs and what other donors are doing.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Parliamentary Pension Scheme

Mr. Hanley asked the Lord Privy Seal whether he proposes to refer the parliamentary pension scheme to the Top Salaries Review Body.

Mr. Wakeham: I have today written to the chairman of the TSRB asking the TSRB to review the parliamentary pension scheme. In my letter I drew his attention to the anomalies in the scheme which had been raised during the passage of the Parliamentary and Other Pensions Act 1987. I referred also to specific issues about which Members have expressed concern during our discussion of the proposals in that Act, and to a particular point which had been raised earlier in the House of Lords. In addition, I have asked the TSRB to consider the pension arrangements for the Lord Chancellor, the Speaker and the Prime Minister, and to look at the possibility of introducing severance payments for Ministers and officeholders other than those in the House of Lords who can already receive them.

A copy of the letter has been placed in the Library of the House.

EC Reports (Debates)

Mr. Robertson asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will make arrangements for debates on the six-month reports on the European Community to take place within two months of them being placed before the House.

Mr. Wakeham: It is the Government's policy to arrange for debates on the six-monthly White Papers on developments in the European Community to be held as soon as practicable after publication. The exact timing will depend on the pressure of other business before the House.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Law Centres

Mr. Vaz asked the Attorney-General if he will list the number of law centres currently in existence; how many are in receipt of central Government funds; how many are known to have closed since 1970 due to lack of funds; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: There is no central Government register of law centres, nor is information held centrally on how many have closed since 1970 due to lack of funds. However, there are 57 members of the Law Centres Federation (this includes Small Heath community law centre from which local authority funding is, I understand, being withdrawn); and I know of three others which are not members of the federation.

Seven law centres and the Law Centres Federation receive funds from the Lord Chancellor's Department. A further seven law centres received urban programme support during the last financial year.

The Government accept that law centres may, depending on local circumstances, have a part to play in the provision of legal services as a supplement to the legal aid and legal advice and assistance schemes. The establishment of and provision of support for law centres, are, however, seen as essentially matters for local decision and initiative.

Solicitors

Mr. Vaz asked the Attorney-General how much public money has been paid to private solicitors through *(a)* the criminal legal aid scheme, and *(b)* the civil legal aid scheme in each of the last 10 years.

The Attorney-General: The table gives the gross amounts paid to solicitors through *(a)* the criminal legal aid scheme and *(b)* the civil legal aid scheme in each of the last 10 years. It is not possible to separate the amounts paid to solicitors and to counsel for criminal legal aid in the higher courts for the years before 1984-85.

Amounts paid to solicitors under the criminal and civil legal aid schemes

Year	*Criminal*		*Civil*	
	Criminal-magistrates courts[1] Green Form (criminal) Court and 24 hour duty solicitor schemes[2]	*Criminal legal aid in the higher courts*	*Green Form (civil) ABWOR[3] Summary jurisdiction*	*Civil legal aid*
	£ million	*£ million*	*£ million*	*£ million*
1977-78	21·3	[4]24·3	37·1	
1978-79	25·9	[4]26·4	43·1	
1979-80	31·4	[4]31·5	48·1	
1980-81	41·1	[4]43·0	65·9	
1981-82	48·6	[4]48·2	87·9	
1982-83	57·6	[4]51·6	110·9	
1983-84	64·6	[4]58·3	132·9	
1984-85	73·1	[5]33·7	159·3	
1985-86	89·9	[5]36·4	181·1	
1986-87	109·6	[5]42·6	197·2	

[1] Amounts paid to solicitors for criminal legal aid in magistrates courts include counsels' fees where counsel are not separately assigned.
[2] Court duty solicitor scheme from 1984-85 onwards and 24-hour duty solicitor scheme from 1985-86 onwards.
[3] ABWOR from 1980-81 onwards.
[4] Solicitors and counsel.
[5] Solicitors only.

Council for Licensed Conveyancers

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Attorney-General what arrangements will be made for hon. Members and other interested persons to make representations about the scheme provided for in paragraph 4 of schedule 3 to the Administration of Justice Act 1985 and comments on it *(a)* while the preparation of that scheme is under consideration by the Council for Licensed Conveyancers, *(b)* when a draft for that scheme has been prepared by the Council for Licensed Conveyancers but has not yet been submitted to the Lord Chancellor and *(c)* when the draft for that scheme has been submitted to the Lord Chancellor and is or is about to be under consideration by him.

The Attorney-General: *(a)* None; *(b)* the Council for Licensed Conveyancers will send a draft of the scheme to licensed conveyancers and other interested parties, seeking their views; *(c)* a draft of the scheme will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Attorney-General whether an appointment will be made to bring up to 10 the number of members of the Council for Licensed Conveyancers as is provided for in paragraph 3 of schedule 3 to the Administration of Justice Act 1985; and whether a practising conveyancer will be appointed to fill the vacancy.

The Attorney-General: Mr. Peter Davis, a practising licensed conveyancer and the secretary of the National Association of Conveyancers, was appointed to the Council for Licensed Conveyancers as from 16 July 1987. There are now 11 members of the council, including the chairman.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Attorney-General what was the cost of the Council for Licensed Conveyancers for the first year of its operation from March 1986.

The Attorney-General: The cost for licensed conveyancers for the year from 1 April 1986 to 31 March 1987 was £102,996·83. The financial year of the council runs from 1 April to 31 March and disproportionate cost would be involved in trying to obtain figures for 1 March 1986 to 28 February 1987.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Attorney-General what staff the Council for Licensed Conveyancers has; what are the ages and qualifications of the secretary and assistant secretary and the education/examinations officer of that council; and what was the total for wages and salaries and employer's national insurance contributions paid out by that council in its first year since March 1986.

The Attorney-General: The Council for Licensed Conveyancers has six staff comprising the secretary, the assistant secretary (who is also the education and examination officer), two administrative officers and two administrative assistants.

The secretary is aged 38, holds an LLB degree and is a barrister; the assistant secretary is aged 25 and holds a BA degree (in law and economics).

The wages and salaries and employers' national insurance contributions paid out by the council in the year 1 April 1986 to 31 March 1987 totalled £47,102·84. The council's financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March and disproportionate cost would be incurred in trying to obtain figures for year 1 March 1986 to 28 February 1987.

Land Registries

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Attorney-General if he will bring up to the latest convenient date the information about the average completion times in working days taken by each of the district land registries to act on applications relating to title which he gave in an answer on 9 April, *Official Report*, columns 355 and 356.

The Attorney-General: The table shows for each district land registry the average completion times in working days at the end of June 1987 for each category of substantive application.

Office	*First Registrations*	*Transfer of Part/ Dispositionary First Lease*	*Dealing*	*All Categories*
Croydon	56	100	57	77
Harrow	49	136	60	90
Tunbridge Wells	180	215	56	114
Lytham	140	107	65	113
Nottingham	170	115	20	95
Gloucester	165	165	65	114
Stevenage	155	115	42	82
Durham	102	97	49	83
Plymouth	130	129	75	120
Swansea	135	85	44	103
Birkenhead	116	123	60	98
Weymouth	154	99	48	91
Peterborough	138	87	33	89

Judges

Mr. Vaz asked the Attorney-General what information the Lord Chancellor's Department collects on the previous political activities, including standing for Parliament, of people being considered for appointment as High Court judges.

The Attorney-General: The Lord Chancellor's policy is to appoint (or recommend for appointment) to every judicial post the candidate who appears to him best qualified to fill it and to perform its duties, regardless of political allegiance. In the course of considering candidates for appointment, information is often received from the candidate himself about his past and present political activities (including, for example, whether he has ever stood for Parliament) as part of the information he gives about his general background and interests.

Mentally Handicapped Persons

Mr. Ken Hargreaves asked the Attorney-General how many successful prosecutions for unlawful sexual intercourse with a defective there have been since June 1987.

The Attorney-General: None.

Mr. Ken Hargreaves asked the Attorney-General how many cases are under consideration by the Director of Public Prosecutions and Crown Prosecution Service relating to alleged unlawful sexual intercourse with a defective; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: Three cases relating to alleged unlawful sexual intercourse with a mental defective are under consideration by the Crown Prosecution Service. Five cases are at present before the courts.

Civil Justice Review

Mr. Fatchett asked the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on the progress the Lord Chancellor's Department is making with the housing aspects of its review of civil justice; what timetable it is working to with regard to further action; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: Good progress is being made on every aspect of the review and it is hoped that recommendations on all the matters it has covered will be available to my noble and learned Friend early in 1988.

Mr. Fatchett asked the Attorney-General if he will list the organisations which submitted responses to the Lord Chancellor's Department's civil justice review's housing

cases consultation paper; if he will place copies of these submissions in the Library; and if he will make available the summary of these submissions prepared for the civil justice review's advisory committee.

The Attorney-General: Once the review is completed, for which the target is early 1988, my noble and learned Friend will consider how much information about the responses should be made available; there have so far been some 700 responses to the six consultation papers, and some have been offered on the understanding that they would not be published.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Attorney-General what is the estimated expenditure of the Lord Chancellor's Department in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

The Attorney-General: The estimated expenditure of the Lord Chancellor's Deprtment in the current financial year on management and computer consultancy is £367,500.

Wills (Publication)

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson asked the Attorney-General what representations he has received relating to the disadvantages of the practice of publication of wills; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: The Lord Chancellor receives representations from time to time that embarrassment is caused to testators' families by the publication of wills in newspapers. However, wills are available for public inspection both to prevent fraud and abuse and to enable benficiaries and creditors to discover whether it is worth making any claim against the estate concerned.

Mortgage Repossessions

Mr. Battle asked the Attorney-General how many court actions relating to mortgage repossessions occurred in Leeds, West in each year since 1979.

The Attorney-General: Figures relating solely to Leeds, West are not available. The number of mortgage actions for possession entered in Leeds county court in each year since 1982 (the first year for which figures are available for individual county courts) were:

	Number
1982	803
1983	508
1984	558
1985	800
1986	773

Immigration

Mr. Corbyn asked the Attorney-General if he will provide a table of the number of appeals to immigration adjudicators allowed, dismissed or withdrawn in 1986 and in the first quarter of 1987, broken down by category of appeal and nationality of applicant.

The Attorney-General: For 1986 and the first quarter of 1987, statistics for the number of appeals to the immigration adjudicators which were referred, allowed, dismissed or withdrawn are as shown in the table, with a breakdown by category of appeal, and information regarding the origin of the applicant. Information regarding the precise nationality of individual applicants is not available.

Immigration Act 1971—Appeals to Adjudicators
Pakistan

Appeal categories	*Number of appeals referred*	*Number allowed*	*Number dismissed*	*Number withdrawn*
1 January 1986–31 December 1986				
1. Exclusion—Appeal at Port	12	—	3	3
2. Exclusion—External Appeals	73	12	44	7
3. Refusal of Certificate Entitlement	—	—	—	—
4. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Temporary purposes (not husbands or wives or fiances or fiancees)	16	7	20	3
5. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Employment, Business or Independent Means (not husbands, wives, fiances or fiancees)	3	1	6	1
6. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by Wives and Children, other dependent relatives and returning residents	867	307	527	175
7. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by female fiancees	1	1	—	—
8. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by husbands	111	36	42	15
9. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by male fiances	418	148	202	58
10. Variation of Landing Conditions (including curtailment of stay or duration or conditions of leave to remain given to persons previously exempted (S.14(2))	22	—	3	6
11. Refusal to Vary Leave to Enter	277	30	141	120
12. Decision to make Deportation Order	27	1	17	4
13. Refusal to Revoke Deportation Order	4	1	1	1
14. Giving of Removal Directions	2	—	2	—
15. Destination Only Appeal	2	—	4	—
Total	1,835	544	[1]1,012	393

Appeal categories	Number of appeals referred	Number allowed	Number dismissed	Number withdrawn
1 January 1987–31 March 1987				
1. Exclusion—Appeal at Port	3	—	1	2
2. Exclusion—External Appeals	12	—	15	4
3. Refusal of Certificate Entitlement	1	—	—	—
4. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Temporary purposes (not husbands or wives or fiances or fiancees)	153	—	6	3
5. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Employment, Business or Independent Means (not husbands, wives, fiances or fiancees)	4	—	2	1
6. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by Wives and Children, other dependent relatives and returning residents	73	48	110	22
7. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by female fiancees	—	3	—	—
8. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by husbands	28	17	11	2
9. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by male fiances	91	55	54	20
10. Variation of Landing Conditions (including curtailment of stay or duration or conditions of leave to remain given to persons previously exempted (S.14(2))	—	—	2	—
11. Refusal to Vary Leave to Enter	63	12	24	20
12. Decision to make Deportation Order	3	3	4	2
13. Refusal to Revoke Deportation Order	—	—	1	1
14. Giving of Removal Directions	—	—	1	—
15. Destination Only Appeal	1	—	2	2
Total	432	138	233	79

[1] There was, in addition, 1 case where the Immigration Adjudicators had no jurisdiction to hear the appeal.

Bangladesh

Appeal categories	Number of appeals referred	Number allowed	Number dismissed	Number withdrawn
1 January 1986—31 December 1986				
1. Exclusion—Appeal at Port	49	1	22	3
2. Exclusion—External Appeals	70	2	46	7
3. Refusal of Certificate Entitlement	68	—	10	—
4. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Temporary purposes (not husbands or wives or fiances or fiancees)	192	30	88	13
5. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Employment, Business or Independent Means (not husbands, wives, fiances or fiancees)	5	1	1	2
6. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by Wives and Children, other dependent relatives and returning residents	2,833	886	1,697	291
7. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by female fiancees	—	—	—	1
8. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by husbands	47	18	13	1
9. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by male fiances	11	1	1	1
10. Variation of Landing Conditions (including curtailment of stay or duration or conditions of leave to remain given to persons previously exempted (S.14(2))	5	—	4	—
11. Refusal to Vary Leave to Enter	91	6	48	34
12. Decision to make Deportation Order	4	1	3	—
13. Refusal to Revoke Deportation Order	1	—	1	—
14. Giving of Removal Directions	2	1	3	—
15. Destination Only Appeal	1	—	1	—
Total	3,379	947	1,938	353
1 January 1987—31 March 1987				
1. Exlusion—Appeal at Port	37	1	9	1
2. Exclusion—External Appeals	40	1	11	4
3. Refusal of Certificate Entitlement	19	—	—	—
4. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Temporary purposes (not husbands or wives or fiances or fiancees)	83	4	24	6
5. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Employment, Business or Independent Means (not husbands, wives, fiances or fiancees)	—	—	8	1
6. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by Wives and Children, other dependent relatives and returning residents	551	192	348	66
7. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by female fiancees	—	—	—	—
8. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by husbands	4	5	3	1
9. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by male fiances	—	2	1	—
10. Variation of Landing Conditions (including curtailment of stay or duration or conditions of leave to remain given to persons previously exempted (S.14(2))	1	—	—	—
11. Refusal to Vary Leave to Enter	21	1	15	4
12. Decision to make Deportation Order	1	—	2	—
13. Refusal to Revoke Deportation Order	—	—	—	—
14. Giving of Removal Directions	—	—	—	—

Appeal categories	Number of appeals referred	Number allowed	Number dismissed	Number withdrawn
15. Destination Only Appeal	—	—	—	—
Total	757	206	421	83

India

Appeal categories	Number of appeals referred	Number allowed	Number dismissed	Number withdrawn
1 January 1986–31 December 1986				
1. Exclusion – Appeal at Port	1	1	—	1
2. Exclusion—External Appeals	91	2	36	10
3. Refusal of Certificate Entitlement	4	—	1	—
4. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Temporary purposes (not husbands or wives or fiances or fiancees)	66	23	45	14
5. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Employment, Business or Independent Means (not husbands, wives, fiances or fiancees)	9	1	5	1
6. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by wives and children, other dependant relatives and returning residents	237	64	113	49
7. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by female fiancees	5	—	—	—
8. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by husbands	156	36	85	19
9. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by male fiances	416	89	197	60
10. Variation of Landing Conditions (including curtailment of stay or duration or conditions of leave to remain given to persons previously exempted (S.14(2))	22	—	19	3
11 Refusal to Vary Leave to Enter	354	18	196	120
12. Decision to make Deportation Order	30	1	32	8
13. Refusal to Revoke Deportation Order	6	—	3	—
14. Giving of Removal Directions	2	—	4	—
15. Destination Only Appeal	5	—	4	1
Total	1,404	235	740	286
1 January 1987–31 March 1987				
1. Exlusion—Appeal at Port	—	—	1	—
2. Exclusion—External Appeals	15	—	15	3
3. Refusal of Certificate Entitlement	—	—	—	—
4. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Temporary purposes (not husbands or wives or fiances or fiancees)	30	3	11	4
5. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Employment, Business or Independent Means (not husbands, wives, fiances or fiancees)	—	—	5	6
6. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by wives and children, other dependant relatives and returning residents	30	2	24	15
7. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by female fiancees	3	—	—	—
8. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by husbands	57	7	21	1
9. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by male fiances	81	31	50	33
10. Variation of Landing Conditions (including curtailment of stay or duration or conditions of leave to remain given to persons previously exempted (S.14(2))	1	—	1	2
11 Refusal to Vary Leave to Enter	70	12	50	40
12. Decision to make Deportation Order	9	2	3	2
13. Refusal to Revoke Deportation Order	1	—	—	—
14. Giving of Removal Directions	1	1	—	—
15. Destination Only Appeal	—	—	—	—
Total	298	58	[1]181	106

[1] There was, in addition, 1 case where the Immigration Adjudicators had no jurisdiction to hear the appeal.

EEC

Appeal categories	Number of appeals referred	Number allowed	Number dismissed	Number withdrawn
1 January 1986–31 December 1986				
1. Exclusion—Appeal at Port	—	—	—	—
2. Exclusion—External Appeals	37	2	28	8
3. Refusal of Certificate Entitlement	—	—	—	—
4. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Temporary purposes (not husbands or wives or fiances or fiancees)	2	—	—	1
5. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Employment, Business or Independent Means (not husbands, wives, fiances or fiancees)	—	1	3	1
6. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by Wives and Children, other dependent relatives and returning residents	3	1	2	1

Appeal categories	Number of appeals referred	Number allowed	Number dismissed	Number withdrawn
7. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by female fiancees	—	—	—	—
8. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by husbands	1	—	1	—
9. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by male fiances	1	—	—	1
10. Variation of Landing Conditions (including curtailment of stay or duration or conditions of leave to remain given to persons previously exempted (S.14(2))	7	—	16	2
11. Refusal to Vary Leave to Enter	70	2	35	35
12. Decision to make Deportation Order	5	—	1	5
13. Refusal to Revoke Deportation Order	1	—	2	—
14. Giving of Removal Directions	—	—	—	—
15. Destination Only Appeal	2	—	1	—
Total	129	6	89	54
1 January 1987–31 March 1987				
1. Exclusion—Appeal at Port	—	—	3	5
2. Exclusion—External Appeals	22	—	15	1
3. Refusal of Certificate Entitlement	—	—	—	—
4. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Temporary purposes (not husbands or wives or fiances or fiancees)	3	—	—	—
5. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Employment, Business or Independent Means (not husbands, wives, fiances or fiancees)	—	—	2	—
6. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by Wives and Children, other dependent relatives and returning residents	1	—	—	—
7. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by female fiancees	—	—	—	—
8. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by husbands	—	—	—	—
9. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by male fiances	—	—	—	—
10. Variation of Landing Conditions (including curtailment of stay or duration or conditions of leave to remain given to persons previously exempted (S.14(2))	1	—	—	—
11. Refusal to Vary Leave to Enter	25	—	5	6
12. Decision to make Deportation Order	—	—	—	2
13. Refusal to Revoke Deportation Order	—	—	—	—
14. Giving of Removal Directions	2	—	—	—
15. Destination Only Appeal	1	—	2	1
Total	55	—	27	15

All other countries

Appeal categories	Number of appeals referred	Number allowed	Number dismissed	Number withdrawn
1 January 1986–31 December 1986				
1. Exclusion—Appeal at Port	69	5	41	26
2. Exclusion—External Appeals	611	37	434	61
3. Refusal of Certificate of Entitlement	52	1	8	9
4. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Temporary purposes (not husbands or wives or fiances or fiancees)	1,246	248	594	183
5. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Employment, Business or Independent Means (not husbands, wives, fiances or fiancees)	76	6	34	24
6. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by Wives and Children, other dependant relatives and returning residents	536	73	227	120
7. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by female fiancees	22	1	3	8
8. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by husbands	25	3	13	4
9. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by male fiances	26	3	13	5
10. Variation of Landing Conditions (including curtailment of stay or duration or conditions of leave to remain given to persons previously exempted (S.14(2))	286	12	87	95
11. Refusal to Vary Leave to Enter	3,229	189	1,341	1,289
12. Decision to make Deportation Order	262	23	187	78
13. Refusal to Revoke Deportation Order	47	2	28	3
14. Giving of Removal Directions	36	—	26	5
15. Destination Only Appeal	73	—	52	19
Total	6,596	603	3,088	1,929
1 January 1987–31 March 1987				
1. Exclusion—Appeal at Port	11	1	13	11
2. Exclusion—External Appeals	206	11	125	21
3. Refusal of Certificate Entitlement	7	—	3	2

Appeal categories	Number of appeals referred	Number allowed	Number dismissed	Number withdrawn
4. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Temporary purposes (not husbands or wives or fiances or fiancees)	354	76	207	46
5. Refusal of Entry Clearance for Employment, Business or Independent Means (not husbands, wives, fiances or fiancees)	13	2	6	3
6. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by Wives and Children, other dependant relatives and returning residents	69	16	52	21
7. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by female fiancees	5	2	15	2
8. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by husbands	8	—	1	2
9. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by male fiances	3	—	5	
10. Variation of Landing Conditions (including curtailment of stay or duration or conditions of leave to remain given to persons previously exempted (S.14(2))	54	3	10	21
11. Refusal to Vary Leave to Enter	514	46	288	285
12. Decision to make Deportation Order	39	10	33	13
13. Refusal to Revoke Deportation Order	11	2	2	1
14. Giving of Removal Directions	14	—	13	5
15. Destination Only Appeal	2	—	2	1
Total	1,310	169	[2]775	434

[1] There were, in addition, 5 cases where the Immigration Adjudicators had no jurisdiction to hear the appeals.
[2] There was, in addition, 1 case where the Immigration Adjudicators had no jurisdiction to hear the appeal.

ENERGY

Magnox Reactors

Mr. Flynn asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether any British electricity board magnox reactors have ever been modified to optimise military grade plutonium production.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Croydon, Central (Mr. Moore) on 24 February 1982 at column *397*.

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if he will update to 31 March 1987 the information on thermal energy generated and spent fuel discharged by each of the Central Electricity Generating Board magnox reactors given in reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy on 26 June 1987, *Official Report*, column *269*;

(2) if he will update to 31 March the information on the allocation of plutonium produced in the Central Electricity Generating Board and South of Scotland Electricity Board magnox reactors given in reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy on 21 July 1986, *Official Report*, columns *10-11*.

Mr. Michael Spicer [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 July 1987, c. *128*]: The information is as follows:

Station	Thermal output (Gwh)	Fuel discharged (tonnes u)
Bradwell	6,624	60
Berkeley	4,264	34
Hinkley Point A	14,487	123
Trawsfynydd	12,453	90
Dungeness A	9,207	68
Sizewell	8,825	71
Oldbury	11,048	97
Wylfa	21,948	47

Allocation or use of plutonium produced in CEGB or SSEB Magnox reactors (position at 31 March 1987)

	Tonnes (to nearest half tonne)
Plutonium in irradiated fuel	
(a) estimated in fuel in CEGB SSEB Magnox reactors	10·0
(b) estimated plutonium in fuel discharged from CEGB SSEB Magnox reactors, but not yet processed	4·0
Separated plutonium	
(c) in stock at British Nuclear Fuels plc as oxide	24·5
(d) in process at British Nuclear Fuels in intermediate other forms (eg nitrate)	0·5
(e) sold or leased to UKAEA for fast reactor R & D since 1969	5·5
(f) exported for civil purposes to countries other than the United States	0·5
	45·0
Sub-total	
(g) Balance (see note (g) below)	

Notes:
(a) These figures are derived from the known tonnage of fuel elements and their estimated overall average irradiation and cannot be accurately calculated.
(b) As for (a) About 20 per cent. of amount shown was held by BNFL.
(c) and (d) This material is held at Sellafield on behalf of CEGB and SSEB.
(e) About 20 per cent. of amount shown was held by BNFL.
(g) The balance of plutonium produced in the boards Magnox reactors was consigned to the United States before 1971 under the United States/United Kingdom defence agreement and as stated by the Prime Minister on 21 April 1964 was used by the United States for civil purposes. Because of the barter arrangements under which plutonium was consigned it would not be in the national interest to publish the figure.

Plutonium

Mr. Flynn asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) whether he has any information subsequent to the

statement by the then Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, on 2 April 1964, concerning the specific use to which the electricity board magnox plutonium consigned to the United States has been put since this date; and whether there are any plans for future export of electricity board plutonium to the United States of America;

(2) whether all consignments of plutonium arising from British civil electricity board magnox reactors and exported to the United States of Ameria have been covered by bilateral peaceful end use restriction nuclear safeguards or International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards;

(3) whether all exports of plutonium arising from British Nuclear Fuels Ltd., United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, Central Electricity Generating Board or South of Scotland Electricity Board reactors exported to the United States since May 1979 have been covered by peaceful end use safeguards.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Mr. Mullin asked the Secretary of State for Energy if British Nuclear Fuels plc has physically separate stores for plutonium arising from: *(a)* Calder hall and Chapelcross magnox reactors, *(b)* Central Electricity Generating Board magnox reactors and *(c)* South of Scotland Electricity Board magnox reactors after its processing through the Windscale B205 reprocessing plant at Sellafield; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Calder hall and Chapelcross material is segregated from safeguarded stocks.

Mr. Mullin asked the Secretary of State for Energy what specific safeguarding arrangements apply to plutonium stored at Sellafield.

Mr. Michael Spicer: All civil plutonium stored at Sellafield is under Euratom safeguards. The main elements of the safeguards inspection arrangements for Sellafield agreed with Euratom were given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Worcester (Mr. Walker) in reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Penrith and The Border (Mr. Maclean) on 4 June 1986 at columns *594-95*.

Mr. Morley asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to make an announcement on the publication of plutonium production figures.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to the hon. Member for Meirionydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas) on 22 April, at column *547*, and 5 May, at column *304*. Information relating to the allocation of plutonium from generating board reactors for 1986-87 is given in an answer today to the hon. Member for Meirionydd Nant Conwy.

Sellafield (Inspections)

Mr. Flynn asked the Secretary of State for Energy on how many occasions, in what numbers, and for what length of time Euratom safeguards inspectors have been present at British Nuclear Fuels plc Sellafield nuclear site since March 1986; and whether Euratom inspectors have access to the B205 reprocessing plant at the Windscale works, Sellafield.

Mr. Michael Spicer: As stated in replies to questions from my hon. Friend the Member for Penrith and The Border (Mr. Maclean) on 4 June 1986, at columns *594-95*, and from my hon. Friend the Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) on 30 January 1987, at column *404*, Euratom inspectors have access to all civil material at Sellafield on a continuing basis. On average, three Euratom inspectors attend inspections.

British Coal Corporation

Mr. Illsley asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether there are any plans to sell in part or in whole the British Coal Corporation workshops.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I am not aware of any plans.

Sullom Voe

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he intends to meet members of Shetland Islands council to discuss the licence of the Sullom Voe oil terminal; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: No.

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has any plans to meet members of the Sullom Voe Association to discuss the operation of the oil terminal.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I have no such plans at present.

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Energy what, over the last 12 months, has been the average current daily oil throughput of the Sullom Voe oil terminal.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The latest published figure is for 1986 when the terminal received 54·8 million tonnes of crude oil, an average of 150,137 tonnes per day.

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is the expected throughput of oil of the Sullom Voe oil terminal from now to 31 December 1999.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The throughput is declining; 1986 was probably the peak year, but the outturn to 1999 will depend on the performance of those fields currently feeding the terminal, existing discoveries which may be connected, and new discoveries which may be made and tied into the Brent and Ninian pipeline systems in the interim.

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he last discussed the operation of the Sullom Voe oil terminal with the participants.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I have had no such discussion, but my officials are in frequent touch both with BP, which operates the Ninian pipeline system and also operates the Sullom Voe terminal on behalf of the Ninian and Brent pipeline groups, and with Shell/Esso which operates the Brent pipeline system.

Coal Industry

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many manshifts were worked by persons on British Coal Corporation colliery books in 1986-87.

Mr. Michael Spicer: A total of 26,407 deep-mined revenue manshifts were worked during 1986-87.

Nuclear Power

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is the precise nature of the programme of further work that

the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate has requested the Central Electricity Generating Board to carry out at the Bradwell nuclear power station; how long this programme of work will take; which other magnox stations are having long-term safety reviews; and when they will be complete.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Nuclear Installations Inspectorate's requirements including time scales for further work are set out in its report, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Completion is a matter for the Central Electricity Generating Board.

The Nuclear Installations Inspectorate has asked for long-term safety reviews to be carried out for each magnox station and will be pressing the licensees concerned to keep to agreed timetables.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Energy why the International Atomic Energy Agency has not been asked to inspect the British magnox reactors; whether any of the Central Electricity Generating Board staff who produced the long-term safety review of Bradwell nuclear power station ever worked at Bradwell; and whether any staff from the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate visited Bradwell in the course of assessing the Central Electricity Generating Board's long-term safety review.

Mr. Hardy asked the Secretary of State for Energy if, in the light of the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate's report on the Bradwell power station, the International Atomic Energy Agency will now be invited to survey an older magnox station in fulfilment of the United Kingdom's obligations to co-operate internationally on such matters; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I am considering how the United Kingdom might participate in the agency's programme of reviews of operational safety. The deployment of staff by the Central Electricity Generating Board and the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate is a matter for those organisations, but naturally Nuclear Institutions Inspectorate review team staff visited Bradwell.

Mr. Mullin asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has regarding disquiet expressed by the management of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority Dounreay nuclear establishment over the mislabelling of consignments of fast reactor fuel pins by British Nuclear Fuels plc staff at Sellafield and sent to Dounreay for reprocessing.

Mr. Michael Spicer: No consignments of fuel pins have been sent from Sellafield to Dounreay for reprocessing. The hon. Member may have in mind shipments of residues containing plutonium from Sellafield to Dounreay and I refer him to the answer given in the other place by Lord Gray of Contin in response to a question from Lord Brockway on 17 June 1986, at column 727.

Mr. Mullin asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list each occasion since April on which a Minister in his Department has made a statement encouraging members of the public to visit British Nuclear Fuels plc's Sellafield nuclear complex.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My colleagues and I are always happy to encourage the public to visit the Sellafield site and exhibition centre, as my hon. Friend the Member for Eddisbury (Mr. Goodlad) did in the Second Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, etc., on 5 May 1987, at column 6.

Mr. Mullin asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will publish all evidence or papers submitted by his Department to the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Mr. Morley asked the Secretary of State for Energy what steps he has taken to satisfy himself that the Central Electricity Generating Board has published all relevant information about construction difficulties at the Heysham 2 nuclear power station; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: General information about the progress of construction at the station is a matter for the CEGB.

Allegations about standards of workmanship and working practices at Heysham 2 made by former construction workers at the site have been thoroughly investigated by the independent Nuclear Installations Inspectorate. The NII confirms that none of the allegations provides a cause for concern about the safety of Heysham 2. The NII's report will be published in due course.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if he will publish a weekly input/output from 1 January of spent magnox fuel arising from civil magnox reactors, together with the arisings of resulting depleted uranium and plutonium stocks for the throughput at the Windscale B205 reprocessing plant at British Nuclear Fuels plc, Sellafield;

(2) why he will not publish input/output details of spent magnox reactor fuel and depleted uranium/plutonium stocks at Sellafield.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Mr. Mullin asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is the latest information he has on the final estimated cost for the Sizewell B pressurised water reactor.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Member for Eddisbury (Mr. Goodlad) to the right hon. Member for Salford, East (Mr. Orme) on 27 April at column *16*.

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has about progress by British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. in carrying out safety improvements at Sellafield stipulated in the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate's audit reports.

Mr. Michael Spicer [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: I have not yet received the progress report.

Hospitality

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Energy how much has been spent by his Department on official hospitality in each of the last two financial years.

Mr. Parkinson: My Department spent the following amounts on official hospitality in the last two financial years:

	£'000
1985-86	39·9
1986-87	45·4

Research and Development

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones asked the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace), of 13 July, *Official Report*, column *341*, if he will *(a)* list all the research and development projects mentioned in his answer and *(b)* give details of those projects specifically carried out in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Details of the United Kingdom's participation in the European fast reactor R and D collaboration are a matter for the UKAEA. I shall ask the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

Oil and Gas Technology

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is the current amount of the budget available to the Offshore Supplies Office for the promotion abroad of British expertise in oil and gas technology; in which countries these promotions are made; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: During 1987-88, the Offshore Supplies Office budget for overseas promotion of the British offshore supplies industry is £443,000. This is more than 80 per cent. of OSO's total promotional budget. The office will take part in major industry events in Angola, Canada, China, Norway, the USA, and the USSR.

I intend to play the fullest role in supporting the export drive of British offshore supply companies through my overseas visits and through my meetings with all sectors of the oil and gas industry.

British Coal (Management Consultancy Contracts)

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has about management consultancy contracts awarded by British Coal in each of the last three years.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a matter for the British Coal Corporation.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is the estimated expenditure of his Department in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

Mr. Parkinson: My Department has made provision for an estimated expenditure of £270,000 on management and computer consultancies in the current financial year.

Electricity and Telephone Cables

Mr. Yeo asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many schemes have been implemented to replace overhead electricity and telephone cables with underground cables in conservation areas and areas of outstanding natural beauty.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This information is not readily available in respect of electricity cables and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Telephone cables are a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Magnox Reprocessing Plant

Mr. Flynn asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will publish a full input/output table of spent nuclear fuel and uranium and plutonium arising from the operation of the B205 magnox reprocessing plant since 1 January 1987.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I have given today to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas).

Spent Nuclear Fuel

Mr. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will publish a table of the annual amount of spent nuclear fuel dispatches, by date and amount, for each year since 1979, including the first half of 1987 for the Trawsfynydd magnox nuclear station; and which local emergency planning authorities in Wales are given prior notice of spent fuel consignments transported through their area of responsibility from both the Trawsfynydd and Wylfa nuclear plants.

Mr. Michael Spicer [*pursuant to his reply*, 10 July 1987, c. *288-89*]: The quantity of spent fuel dispatched is as follows:

Financial year	*Tonnes*
1979-80	76
1980-81	64
1981-82	132
1982-83	118
1983-84	144
1984-85	118
1985-86	108
1986-87	108

Local emergency planning authorities are not specifically notified of movements of spent nuclear fuels through their areas as national procedures exist to respond to any transport radiological emergencies which might arise. Details of these procedures have been circulated by the Home Office to all chief constables, chief fire officers and chief executives of local authorities.

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is Her Majesty's Government's policy on returning nuclear waste arising in low, intermediate and high level categories from the reprocessing of *(a)* imported thermal oxide fuel and *(b)* imported magnox fuel to each country of origin; what are the volumes involved in each waste category for contracts for spent nuclear fuel imported for reprocessing so far signed; and if he will make a statement on the impact on Nirex of managing spent nuclear fuel imported for reprocessing from other countries.

Mr. Michael Spicer [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Member for Eddisbury (Mr. Goodlad) to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) on 2 May 1987 at columns *502-3*.

I am asking the chairman of BNFL to write to the hon. Member with the detailed figures requested.

ESCOM (South Africa)

Mr. Boateng asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether there has been any withdrawal of uranium of South African or Namibian origin from international safeguards for national security reasons *(a)* before May 1979 and *(b)* since May 1979.

Mr. Michael Spicer [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 July 1987, c. *647-48*]: I am not able to answer for previous Administrations. There have been withdrawals of uranium from safeguards since 1979. It is possible that some of this material was of South African origin.

Offshore Technology Board

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will list the members of the Offshore Technology Board, giving their occupations and working backgrounds, their remuneration, and an estimate of how many hours a year each spends, by name, on the board's behalf.

Mr. Peter Morrison [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: The current membership of the Offshore Energy Technology Board is:

Chairman:

Hon. Peter Morrison, MP, Minister of State, Department of Energy

Members:

George C. Band, Director-General, UKOOA
William E. Bell, Chairman, Enterprise Oil plc
Kelvin A. Bray OBE, Managing Director, Ruston Gas Turbines Ltd.
Carl J. Burnett Jnr., Chairman and President, Mobil North Sea Ltd.
Basil Butler, Managing Director, The British Petroleum Company plc
Ron H. Campbell, Managing Director, Babcock Power Ltd.
J. E. d'Ancona, Director General, OSO
Professor Sir Sam Edwards FRS, Chief Scientific Adviser, Department of Energy
Peter Everett, Managing Director, Shell UK Exploration and Production
Allan Gormly, Director, Trafalgar House plc
John M. Houlder CBE, Chairman, Houlder Offshore
Dr. Harold W. D. Hughes, Director and General Manager, Exploration Companies, British Gas plc
Roger Kingdon, Chief Executive, Davy Corporation
Dick Morris, Chairman, Brown and Root Vickers Technology Ltd.
Professor Tom Patten CBE
Keith H. Taylor, Managing Director, Esso UK plc
David B. Walker, Chief Executive, Britoil
P. J. Walmsley, Head Petroleum Engineering Division, Department of Energy
Ian C. Wood CBE, Chairman, John Wood Group plc

Secretary:

C. P. Carter, Director Research and Development, OSO

As membership of the board, which meets three or four times per year, is unpaid, my Department does not keep a record of the time spent by each member on the board's business.

Interviews (Tape Recording)

Mr. Robert B. Jones asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if, following his meeting with the Association of Chief Police Officers on 18 May, he will now publish a circular on the subject of the tape recording of interviews.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Consultations about the circular are continuing. We shall issue a circular when consultations are complete.

St. Luke with St. James, St. Helier

Mr. Robert B. Jones asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to complete the procedures necessary for the appointment of a new incumbent for the parishes of St. Luke with St. James, St. Helier.

Mr. Hurd: It is not the normal practice to answer questions about appointments to livings in Jersey within the gift of Her Majesty the Queen.

Police Assault Incident (Holloway)

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will indicate the numbers of police officers, by rank and department, who were assigned to investigate the assault in August 1983 of five youngsters in George's road, Holloway, at each stage of the three investigations into the incident; and what were the dates on which their reports were submitted and to whom.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The first investigation was conducted by a detective chief inspector who reported on 16 March 1984. The second was conducted by a detective chief inspector who reported on 24 August 1984. The third was conducted by a detective chief superintendent who reported on 12 February and 23 April 1985. Each of these officers was attached to the Metropolitan police complaints investigation bureau and was assisted by a detective sergeant throughout his investigation and by other officers from time to time as the need arose. Their reports were submitted to the commander of the complaints investigation bureau. In February 1986, the Commisioner of Police of the Metropolis instituted a further review of the case. This was led by a deputy assistant commissioner who was assisted by a team of officers and civilian staff. The size of this team varied in accordance with particular requirements, but at one time included over 20 individuals.

Firearms

Mr. Lawrence asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many shotguns were reported stolen in each of the past five years; how many have been recovered; and how many were later found to have been used to commit a criminal offence.

Mr. John Patten: The available information relates to the number of notifiable offences of burglary and theft recorded by the police in which shotguns were reported to have been the principal weapon stolen; more than one firearm may have been stolen in each offence. The figures for 1975 to 1985 are published in table 3.11 of "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales, 1985" (Cm. 10), and in 1986 there were 804 such offences. Chief officers of police do not record the numbers of stolen firearms recovered or of those subsequently found to have been used in crime.

Parole

Mr. Lawrence asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will either *(a)* use his powers of executive release or *(b)* take new powers so that an exemption can be made for those convicted of crimes of violence from any order he may make resulting in the premature release of prisoners.

Mr. Hurd: I have no present plans to exercise the power of executive release. My decision to provide for increased remission for good conduct and industry in the case of prisoners serving 12 months or less will not benefit those who have committed crimes of violence serious enough to merit a sentence of more than 12 months. I shall consider my hon. and learned Friend's proposal that we should amend the Prison Act to enable different periods of remission for good conduct and industry according to offence, a matter which could be referred to the parole review.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what changes have been made in the presentation of homicide and manslaughter statistics by his Department since 1957.

Mr. John Patten: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average cost of apprehending, remanding and trying a person believed guilty of a criminal act; and what is the annual cost of keeping such a person in prison.

Mr. John Patten: The available estimated costs per person are Crown Prosecution Service £100 in 1987-88; Crown court trials £860 in 1986-87; legal aid for Crown court cases £327 and for magistrates' courts cases £213 in 1986-87. Where employed in 1986-87, duty solicitors cost £29, 24-hour duty solicitors £84 and "green form" assistance £39 per defendant. Costs of imprisonment in 1985-86 were £12,792 per prisoner per year in all establishments and £11,700 per prisoner per year in remand centres and local prisons. I regret that costs per person to the police and costs per defendant in magistrates' courts are not available.

Isle of Wight

Mr. Barry Field asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the Parliamentary Boundary Commission to report on the Isle of Wight.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Parliamentary Boundary Commission is due to report on all the constituencies in England, including the Isle of Wight, between 1993 and 1998.

Magistrates' Courts (Adjournments)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the annual number of adjournments of cases for sentence in magistrates' courts in England and Wales solely because of the absence of a driver's licence printout from the Swansea driver and vehicle licensing centre; what plans he has to improve the service to the courts and to reduce costs; and what is the estimated cost of such adjournments.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested is not available centrally and could not be obtained without disproportionate cost. I understand that inquiries made of DVLC are ordinarily dealt with promptly, but if my hon. Friend has any particular difficulty in mind I should be very ready to arrange for it to be considered further.

Mr. Antonas Gecas

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will investigate further allegations against Antonas Gecas contained in the new Scottish television film about him and other suspected war criminals living in the United Kingdom;

(2) if he will initiate investigations into new information provided to him concerning alleged war criminals living in the United Kingdom;

(3) whether he will now take action concerning the further allegations against Antonas Gecas and other suspected war criminals living in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Hurd: The allegations made in the Scottish Television programme are being studied together with the material supplied to us on 17 July by the Simon Wiesenthal Centre.

Criminal Proceedings

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received concerning criminal proceedings pursued by the police against a violent party, if the victim is reluctant to pursue the matter; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We cannot trace the receipt of any such representations. The investigation of offences and decisions on whether to initiate a prosecution are operational matters for chief officers of police.

Metropolitan Police

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the policy of the Metropolitan police on breathalysing officers involved in accidents when driving police vehicles.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that police officers who are involved in vehicle accidents, whether on or off duty, are required to undergo a breath test whenever there is reason to believe that they have consumed alcohol prior to the accident.

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Metropolitan police officers were breathalysed while on duty in 1986; and in how many cases the test was positive.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that details of the number of breath tests administered to police officers and the results are not recorded separately. However, in 1982 two Metropolitan police officers were convicted for drink-drive offences committed while on duty.

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any Metropolitan police officers were *(a)* dismissed or *(b)* disciplined for drinking while on duty in 1986.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In disciplinary proceedings completed in 1986, two officers were found guilty of the police discipline code offence of drinking on duty. One who was at the same time found guilty of criminal conduct, in that he had been convicted by a court of a drink-driving offence, was required to resign from the force as an alternative to dismissal. The other was awarded a lesser penalty.

Police Vehicles (Accident Statistics)

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* police officers and *(b)* members of the public were killed in accidents involving police vehicles in 1986 for England and Wales.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested is not currently available centrally. However, arrangements have been made for police forces to collect information on accidents involving police vehicles which cause death or serious injury from 1 January this year. The information will be collected centrally through annual returns from forces beginning early in 1988.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board

Mr. Ground asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many cases were awaiting resolution by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board at the end of each month since October 1986;

(2) how many cases were resolved by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board during each month since October 1986;

(3) how many staff were employed by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board at the end of each month since October 1986.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested is given in the table.

Month	*Cases awaiting resolution at the end of each month*	*Cases resolved during each month*	*Staff in post (part-time staff being each counted as one half)*
October 1986	60,600	2,815	211·5
November 1986	59,800	3,882	208·5
December 1986	61,400	2,030	214·5
January 1987	62,100	2,365	212·5
February 1987	63,100	2,432	212·5
March 1987	64,200	2,854	214·5
April 1987	66,000	1,949	215·5
May 1987	67,300	1,713	217·5
June 1987	68,600	2,023	218·5

Licensing Hours

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will estimate the effect of liberalising public house opening hours in England and Wales will have on the price of alcohol sold in those establishments; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I am not aware of any evidence to suggest that the introduction of flexible licensing hours will have a direct effect on the price of alcoholic drinks.

Crime Prevention Roadshow

Mr. Fearn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what towns and cities the crime prevention roadshow will visit when it tours the United Kingdom.

Mr. John Patten: I understand that visits to Merseyside, London, Cardiff and Coventry have been confirmed; a suitable place is still being sought in the north-east. The crime prevention roadshow is being organised by the local authority associations and the Association of Chief Police Officers, with the full support of the Government.

Detention Centre, Usk

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total capacity of the senior detention centre at Usk in Glamorgan; how many persons are currently imprisoned there; what is the capacity of the youth custody centre; and how many are currently held there.

Mr. John Patten: The certified normal accommodation (CNA) of the senior detention centre at Usk is 120. On 22 July 1987, 71 young offenders were detained there. The CNA of the youth custody centre at Usk is 120. On 22 July 1987, 104 young offenders were detained there.

Hospitality

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent by his Department on official hospitality in each of the last two financial years.

Mr. Hurd: The information requested is as follows:

	£
1985-86	29,618
1986-87	45,456

Immigration

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the dates and places since 1 March 1986 where *(a)* major joint immigration-police operations were carried out in the whole of the United Kingdom and *(b)* joint operations were carried out in the Metropolitan police area; how many police officers and immigration officers, and of what rank, were involved for each operation; how many people, and of what nationalities, were *(a)* interviewed and *(b)* detained in each operation, for how long and where; and with regard to what breaches of immigration law these people were interviewed and charged.

Mr. Renton: There have been five major joint immigration-police operations since 1 March 1986, all in the Metropolitan police area. They are as follows:

(1) At British Telecom, 81 Newgate Street, London, EC1, on 14 March 1986.

The number and ranks of police and immigration officers who visited the British Telecom building were:

Police
- 1 superintendent
- 1 inspector
- 1 sergeant
- 19 constables

Immigration Service
- 1 deputy chief inspector
- 1 inspector
- 2 chief immigration officers
- 10 immigration officers

One further chief immigration officer and five further immigration officers were subsequently used to pursue inquiries in relation to those arrested.

A total of 24 people were interviewed. Nineteen people were arrested with the following results:

Nine were judged to be illegal entrants (three Ghanaians, three Portuguese, two Nigerians and one Colombian), one (a Ghanaian) was charged as an overstayer, seven were charged with working in breach of

conditions (five Nigerians, one Ghanaian and one Portuguese), and two (both Ghanaians) were formerly cautioned for working in breach of conditions. Of the other five who were not arrested, one, a Nigerian, was an overstayer who was served with a notice of intention that he should be deported and with a restriction order, and four (two Ghanaians and two Nigerians) were found not to be in breach of the immigration laws.

Five of the illegal entrants detected at the British Telecom building were taken initially to Wood street police station but subsequently transferred to Latchmere house remand centre, pending removal from the United Kingdom. In the other cases the period spent in custody in Wood street police station were:

	Number
Four hours or less	4
Over four hours but under six hours	5
Over six hours but under nine hours	2
Over nine hours but under 14 hours	3

(2) At J. Paxton Ltd., South road, Wimbledon, on 6 June 1986. The available information is as follows:

The numbers and ranks of police and immigration officers who visited the factory were:

Police
1 chief superintendent
1 chief inspector
13 constables

Immigration service
1 deputy chief inspector
1 chief immigration officer
6 immigration officers

Thirteen people were arrested and taken to Wimbledon police station with the following results:

Nine were judged to be illegal entrants (all Ghanaians). One was charged with working in breach of his conditions. One cautioned for working in breach of conditions. One was found to be the subject of a deportation order. One released without charge. One further person was interviewed later at his home as a result of the operation and he was also found to be an illegal entrant.

(3) At the Celostyle factory, Dalston, London E8, on 11 June 1986. The available information is as follows:

The number and ranks of police and immigration officers who visited the factory were as follows:

Police
1 superintendent
2 inspectors
6 constables

Immigration service
1 deputy chief inspector
1 chief immigration officer
6 immigration officers

Thirty-nine people were interviewed (38 Turkish and one Yugoslav). Eleven people were arrested and taken to City road police station with the following results:

Six (all Turkish) were found to be illegal entrants. Two (one Turkish and one Yugoslav) were cautioned for working in breach of conditions. One (Turkish) was found to be a seaman deserter. One (Turkish) was charged as an overstayer. One (Turkish) was found to be a time-barred overstayer.

A further two people (both Turkish) came forward voluntarily after the operation. One was found to be an illegal entrant and one an overstayer who was not arrested.

Two of the illegal entrants were detained. The seaman deserter was also detained. The total periods spent in detention were three and four days for the illegal entrants and eight days for the seaman deserter.

In the other cases the period spent in custody, all at city road police station, were:
four hours or less—two
over four hours but under six hours—one
over six hours but under nine hours—six

(4) At the Intercontinental hotel, Hyde Park corner, London, W1, on 20 June 1986.

The available information is as follows:

The numbers and ranks of police and immigration officers who visited the hotel were:

Police
1 chief superintendent
1 sergeant
13 constables

Immigration Service
1 deputy chief inspector
1 inspector
1 chief immigration officer
7 immigration officers

A total of 27 people were interviewed (12 Ghanaians, nine Nigerians, two Ugandans, one Sri Lankan, one Bangladeshi, one French and one British). Seventeen people were arrested and taken to Vine street police station with the following results:

Seven were judged to be illegal entrants (three Ghanaians and four Nigerians); Four were charged with working in breach of conditions (two Ghanaians and two Nigerians); three were formally cautioned for working in breach of conditions (two Ghanaians and one Nigerian); and three were found not to be in breach of the immigration laws (one British citizen, one Ghanaian and one Nigerian).

The seven illegal entrants who had been detected at the hotel, and who were taken initially to the police station, were all transferred to the Harmondsworth detention centre during the evening of 20 June. Three remained there until their removal or voluntary departure from the United Kingdom, whilst the other four were transferred to Latchmere house remand centre on 22 June (in three cases transfer was via the Queens building detention). The total periods spent in detention in these cases were: 4, 8, 11, 12, 19, 26 and 32 days, respectively.

In the other cases the periods spent in custody, all at Vine street police station, were:
Four hours or less—one
Over four but under six hours—two
Over six but under nine hours—two
Over nine but under 15 hours—five

(5) At Abell house and Cleland house, John Islip street, London, SW1, on 12 December 1986.

The available information is as follows:

The numbers and ranks of police and immigration officers who visited Abell and Cleland house were as follows:

Police
1 chief superintendent
1 chief inspector
14 constables

Immigration Service
1 deputy chief inspector
1 inspector
3 chief immigration officers
9 immigration officers
1 administrative officer

A total of 26 people employed by a contract cleaning company were interviewed, 25 Ghanaians and one Nigerian. Of these 14 were arrested and taken to Rochester row police station with the following results:

Five (including the one Nigerian) were charged with working in breach of conditions; three were judged to be illegal entrants; three were charged with overstaying; two were overstayers who were given notice of intention to deport them; and one, whose status was in doubt, was bailed to reappear the next day but failed to do so.

Following initial custody at Rochester row police station two of these people were transferred to Harmondsworth detention centre the following day, and two others to Latchmere house remand centre on 15 December, pending removal from the United Kingdom. The periods spent in detention in these cases were 1½, 14, 19 and 33 days.

In the other cases in which people were arrested the periods spent in custody, all at Rochester row police station, were:

Four hours or less—one
Over four but under six hours—three
Over six but under nine hours—two
Over nine but under 24 hours—four

Of the 12 people who were dealt with at their place of work two were judged to be illegal entrants (they were released temporarily pending removal from the United Kingdom); two were found to have been refused leave to enter and to be on temporary admission pending further consideration of their cases; one was an overstayer, time-barred from prosecution, whose case merited further consideration; four were found to have no restrictions on their taking of employment in the United Kingdom; three were asked to produce evidence of their status, which could not be determined at the time. These inquiries are continuing.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications from *(a)* husbands, *(b)* fiances, *(c)* wives and *(d)* fiancees have been (i) decided, (ii) granted and (iii) refused at each post in the Indian sub-continent for each quarter since January 1986; and how many such applications in each category and for each quarter were refused (1) wholly and (2) partly because of the primary purpose rule; what was the refusal rate in each instance; and what percentage of those refusals was *(x)* wholly and *(y)* partly on primary purpose grounds.

Mr. Renton: Information for the whole of the Indian sub-continent on husbands and fiance(e)s granted or refused entry clearance to the United Kingdom is given in table 9 of the quarterly Home Office statistical bulletin "Control of Immigration: Statistics — First Quarter 1987" (issue 14/87). Corresponding information on wives in 1986 is given in table 8 of "Control of Immigration: Statistics, United Kingdom, 1986" (Cm.166). Information for the whole of the sub-continent on persons refused on primary purpose grounds is given in the following table. With regard to the other information requested, I will write to the hon. Member.

Husbands, wives and fiance(e)s in the Indian sub-continent refused entry clearance to the United Kingdom. Number of persons or percentages[1]

	Husbands		*Fiances*		*Wives*		*Fiancees*	
	1986	*1987*	*1986*	*1987*	*1986*	*1987*	*1986*	*1987*
		1st quarter		*1st quarter*		*1st quarter*		*1st quarter*
Number refused initially because primary purpose of the marriage was to obtain admission to United Kingdom:								
Solely for this reason	430	160	840	240	10	[4]—	10	[4]—
Partly for this reason	20	20	120	50	[3]—	[3]—	10	10
Primary purpose refusals [2] as a percentage of all decisions:								
Solely on primary purpose grounds	35	..	45	..	[4]—	..	5	..
Partly on primary purpose grounds	2	..	7	..	[3]—	..	5	..
Primary purpose refusals as a percentage of all refusals[2]:								
Solely on primary purpose grounds	94	..	83	..	2	..	15	..
Partly on primary purpose grounds	4	..	13	..	—	..	17	..

[1] Refusal rate not calculated for a period of less than 12 months.
[2] After taking account of successful appeals.
[3] —nil.
[4] 5 or fewer/½ per cent. or less.
.. not available.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were waiting in each of the four queues for entry clearance at each post in the Indian sub-continent on 31 March.

Mr. Renton: The information requested is given in the following table.

Applicants in the Indian sub-continent on 31 March 1987 awaiting their first interview for entry to the United Kingdom for settlement

Number of Persons

Post	*[1]Category Queue 1*	*Queue 2*	*Queue 3*	*Queue 4*
Dhaka	370	1,500	140	2,800
[2]Bombay	200	480	570	100
New Delhi	70	210	530	140
Calcutta		No queues		
Madras		No queues		
Islamabad	800	820	2,100	770
[2]Karachi	70	80	60	—
TOTAL INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT	1,500	3,100	3,400	3,800

[1] Queue 1: Persons with a claim to the right to abode; dependent relatives over 70 years old; special compassionate cases (first-time applicants).
Queue 2: Spouses; children under 18 years old (first-time applicants).
Queue 3: Fiance(e)s; other applicants for settlement (first-time applicants).
Queue 4: Re-applicants.
[2] Data are estimates.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were waiting for special quota vouchers in *(a)* June 1987 and *(b)* December 1986; when those issued with vouchers on those dates had applied; when those now applying can expect to receive vouchers; and how many applicants there were for vouchers in 1986 and the first half of 1987.

Mr. Renton: The information which is currently available centrally is given in the following tables.

Table 1—Persons applying for a special voucher for entry to the United Kingdom

Number of persons

Country	*Applications Newly received 1986*	*1987 1st quarter*	*Awaiting decision at end of month December 1986*	*March 1987*
India	310	70	2,500	2,300
Kenya	380	100	440	470
Tanzanian	60	10	190	190
Malawi	40	10	10	30
Zambia	80	40	20	10
Elsewhere	30	[1]	10	[1]
Total	890	240	3,100	3,000

[1] Five or fewer.

Table 2—Waiting times for persons applying for a special voucher

Months

Country	*Waiting time to main interview for Persons interviewed at end of month December 1986*	*March 1987*	*Person applying at end of month March 1987*
India[1]	95·0	94·0	about 36·0
Kenya	1·5	1·5	1·5
Tanzania	0·75	1·0	1·0
Malawi	0·5	1·0	1·0
Zambia	1·0	1·0	1·0

[1] Data relate to non-priority applicants. Priority applicants (i.e. widows with a child in the United Kingdom, heads of households aged 65 or over, and special compassionate cases) are interviewed usually within three months.

Naturalisation

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of applications for naturalisation were refused in 1986 and on what grounds.

Mr. Renton: Some 8·4 per cent. of naturalisation applications completed in 1986 were refused on the grounds that the Secretary of State was not satisfied that the applicant had met the statutory requirements and should be naturalised.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for British citizenship under section 4(5) of the British Nationality Act 1981 have been *(a)* made, *(b)* granted and *(c)* refused; and how many of those granted have been on the grounds of service in the armed forces.

Mr. Renton: The position on 22 July was as follows: 529 applications under section 4(5) of the British Nationality Act 1981 have been received; 39 have been granted, of which 33 were from applicants who had served in the armed forces under the Government of Hong Kong in the second world war; and 481 have been refused.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his best estimate as to how many applications for *(a)* adult registration with entitlement, *(b)* naturalisation and *(c)* registration of minors his Department expects to (i) receive and (ii) grant in 1987-88.

Mr. Renton: Our budget estimate is that in 1987-88 we will receive 64,000 applications for registration from both adults and minors and 26,000 naturalisation applications; we estimate that we should issue some 40,000 certificates of registration and 20,500 certificates of naturalisation.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for *(a)* adult registration with entitlement, *(b)* naturalisation and *(c)* registration of minors were (i) made and (ii) granted in each month from April 1985 to the nearest available date; and how many of the applications made (i) made and (ii) granted in *(a)* above were on the basis of (1) marriage to a British man and (2) on the basis of residence since before 1973.

Mr. Renton: The following is the information available for applications for British citizenship made under the British Nationality Act 1981 received in case-working groups in the nationality division and granted for each month from April 1985 to June 1987.

British Nationality Act 1981: Applications Received

Date	*Adult Registrations*	*Minor Registrations*	*Naturalisations*
1985			
April	2,075	985	1,683
May	1,793	1,008	1,588
June	1,656	805	1,302
July	2,128	995	1,674
August	1,967	902	1,644
September	1,846	821	1,414
October	2,326	983	1,788
November	2,401	1,047	1,897
December	1,744	809	1,684
1986			
January	1,945	1,008	1,574
February	1,895	795	1,356

Date	Adult Registrations	Minor Registrations	Naturalisations
March	1,692	795	1,272
April	1,766	722	1,315
May	3,988	1,677	3,263
June	2,156	1,094	1,854
July	2,600	1,217	2,169
August	1,819	799	1,299
September	1,595	728	1,066
October	2,470	1,174	1,622
November	2,147	852	1,407
December	2,202	737	1,413
1987			
January	2,368	662	1,557
February	3,306	777	420
March	3,677	759	587
April	2,649	473	430
May	1,394	500	2,401
June	2,003	610	2,256

British Nationality Act 1981: Applications Granted

Date	Registrations—residence since before 1 January 1973	Registrations—marriage	Registrations—other adult entitlements	Registrations—Minors	Naturalisations
1985					
April	572	586	153	682	1,014
May	557	398	117	575	855
June	744	501	165	529	1,000
July	1,224	649	300	998	1,188
August	1,052	558	261	757	977
September	1,080	643	224	756	1,037
October	1,526	950	352	1,082	1,246
November	1,653	1,210	373	1,276	1,709
December	655	489	161	639	788
1986					
January	998	564	181	760	1,123
February	1,133	680	223	920	1,545
March	1,320	968	249	1,123	1,839
April	1,705	971	320	1,378	2,036
May	1,172	736	150	867	751
June	1,059	635	163	820	844
July	1,220	693	195	787	880
August	715	455	110	560	723
September	619	386	83	587	739
October	489	298	51	304	559
November	893	411	102	576	1,091
December	1,026	413	133	606	995
1987					
January	1,603	610	167	866	1,550
February	2,509	763	230	1,243	1,891
March	2,510	921	267	1,364	1,910
April	1,250	555	136	532	974
May	1,645	628	163	666	1,149
June	2,213	715	210	845	1,341

Notes:
(1) The figures for 1986 and 1987 are provisional.
(2) The figures for applications received for adult registration include both entitlement and non-entitlement applications.
(3) The figures for the registration of other adults relate to registration entitlements only in 1986 and 1987; those for 1985 include also some discretionary resumptions of citizenship following renunciation.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what is his Department's best estimate of the time an applicant will have to wait if applying now for *(a)* registration and *(b)* naturalisation;

(2) what is the average length of time taken to process applications for *(a)* registration and *(b)* naturalisation.

Mr. Renton: The average time taken to complete applications granted in June 1987 was six months for registration and 17 months for naturalisation. It is not possible to give a reliable estimate of the average time likely to be taken to complete applications now being received.

Guildford Pub Bombings

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he plans to make a statement about the review of the case of the Guildford pub bombings.

Mr. Hurd: As soon as I have completed my consideration of all the representations made to me about the convictions.

Visas

Mr. Robertson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has placed any restrictions on, or refused to renew, any visas relating to personnel working in the various offices of 4 Victoria street, London, S.W.1.

Mr. Renton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 8 July 1987, at column *145*.

Metropolitan Police (Women)

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis concerning the latest position of the Metropolitan police force's talks with the Equal Opportunities Commission regarding maternity leave; and if he will make a statement;

(2) whether he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis concerning the deployment of women police officers on front line duties; and if he will make a statement;

(3) whether he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis concerning the duties of women police officers in the Metropolitan police force; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Miss C. Martinez

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will investigate the application for a visa for Miss C. Martinez, the sister-in-law of Mr. Rudiger Schaefer of Enterprise Industrial Park, Britannia way, Lichfield, to which correspondence of 16 May Mr. Schaefer and the immigration and nationality department of his Department in Croydon refers.

Mr. Renton: Inquiries are being made to ascertain whether Miss Martinez satisfies the provisions in the immigration rules for the grant of further leave to remain as a visitor. Mr. Schaefer will be informed of the decision as soon as possible and the immigration and nationality department will also write to him about the other matters raised in his letter of 16 May 1987.

Prisoners (Release)

Mr. Bendall asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy that none of the prisoners released as a result of the changes announced on 16 July, *Official Report*, columns 1292-4, should be those convicted of any offence listed in schedule 1 to the Criminal Justice Act 1982.

Mr. Hurd: As I told the House on 16 July, the Prison Act 1952, which governs the rules of remission, does not empower the Home Secretary to make a distinction on the basis of offences.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the estimated expenditure of his Department in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

Mr. Hurd: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Dogs

Mr. Cryer asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to provide for a local authority register of potentially dangerous breeds of dogs and to provide for licensing and adequate security provisions before such animals are allowed to be kept; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No. We have no plans for legislation in this area. Under the Dogs Act 1871 it is open to anyone to initiate proceedings by complaining to the magistrates' court that a dog is dangerous, or to report the matter to the police who will decide whether to institute a prosecution in the light of the facts of the case. On being satisfied that a dog is dangerous and not kept under proper control, the court may make an order for it to be kept under proper control or destroyed.

Police, Fire and Civil Defence (Expenditure)

Mr. Sackville asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what expenditure levels he has determined in respect of 1988-89 for the joint police and fire and civil defence authorities in the metropolitan areas and the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: For these authorities, which under the Local Government Act 1985 are, for three years, deemed to have been designated under section 2 of the Rates Act 1984, I have determined expenditure levels as follows:

	£ million
Police	
Greater Manchester	94,052
Merseyside	66,916
South Yorkshire	40,691
West Midlands	92,254
West Yorkshire	72,479
Northumbria	49,926
Fire and Civil Defence	
Greater Manchester	46,799
Merseyside	31,617
South Yorkshire	22,314
Tyne and Wear	22,649
West Yorkshire	36,489
West Midlands	42,696
London	166,775

The figures are net of receipts and pension contributions, and, for police and civil defence, of specific grant. For police the figures assume that police grant in 1988-89 will remain at 51 per cent.

Formal notice of their expenditure levels has today been sent to each of the authorities together with advice on the procedure for applying for redetermination of the expenditure levels.

Satellite Broadcasting

Mr. Sackville asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what transmission standards will be required for the services to be provided by the holders of the Independent Broadcasting Authority contract for the provision of direct broadcasting by satellite services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: I confirmed on 27 March 1986 that, subject to any new factors emerging, C-MAC should be the standard use for all United Kingdom DBS services. Further study by industry and the broadcasters has, however, shown that D-MAC would offer advantages over C-MAC and the IBA has requested that D-MAC should be adopted. I have therefore agreed that D-MAC, suitably adapted fo satellite transmission, should be used in place of C-MAC for United Kingdom DBS services. Steps are being taken to submit the specification for the satellite transmission version of D-MAC (which has

already been published internationally as a standard for cable transmission) for definition by the appropriate international bodies. This is in line with the requirements of the EC Council directive on the adoption of common technical specifications of the MAC/packet family of standards for direct satellite television broadcasting.

Animals (Experiments)

Mr. Gwilym Jones asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what consideration he gives, when determining applications for experiments upon animals, to the development of alternative protections for those employed in manufacturing where there is exposure to chemicals and other materials in bulk of possible harmful levels; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what are the latest available figures for experiments upon animals; what were the comparable figures for five and 10 years previously; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Data Protection

Mr. Stern asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his plans are in relation to registration fees under the Data Protection Act 1984; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: The Data Protection Act envisages that the work of the registrar should be financed out of the product of the registration fee. That fee, covering a three-year period registration, was set at £22 in 1985 on the basis of an estimated 300,000 registrations. Actual registrations have been much less than that, and accordingly a substantial increase in the fee is now required. I have therefore made new regulations increasing the fee to £40 from 11 November this year. A further increase will be needed in November 1988 but its size will depend on the number of registrations in the intervening period.

The Data Protection Registrar has prepared a new simplified form for registration by small data users which he plans to introduce in mid-September. I hope that any small users who have, for whatever reason, failed to register so far will take advantage for these simplified procedures and register before the fee increase takes effect in November.

Offensive Weapons

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to include mail order sales of offensive weapons with no legitimate purposes within the review of the legislation.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In relation to the sale of offensive weapons which have no legitimate use it would be our intention to cover all outlets including mail order sales.

CIVIL SERVICE

ISBN Numbers

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop asked the Minister for the Civil Service why the report of the study group into geological surveying bears two ISBN numbers; and whether he will protect unique ISBN numbering on all official documents to avoid designatory confusion.

Mr. Luce: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before the summer recess; therefore, I shall write to my Friend and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

PRIME MINISTER

Disabled People

Mr. Hannam asked the Prime Minister what steps are taken to ensure that full account will be taken of the needs of disabled people in all legislation to be introduced by the Government.

The Prime Minister: Departments co-ordinate their work to ensure that the needs of disabled people are taken fully into account in bringing forward proposals for legislation. The Minister for the Disabled keeps a close watch on these matters.

Departmental Press Releases

Mr. Alan Williams asked the Prime Minister what is her policy towards the use of official departmental press releases to announce matters relating to Conservative party organisation; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: Official departmental press releases are issued to announce matters concerning the business of the Department.

Members' Correspondence

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop asked the Prime Minister whether she will remind Ministers to ensure that their Private Office staff during the summer recess send a file copy in addition to the original of every letter from a Minister to an hon. Member.

The Prime Minister: I am aware of my hon. Friend's concern, and I have arranged for the appropriate guidance to be reissued.

Council of Europe

Sir Trevor Skeet asked the Prime Minister if she will announce the composition of the United Kingdom delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

The Prime Minister: The parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe will be meeting in Strasbourg from 1 to 8 October. The delegation from the United Kingdom this year will consist of 12 members of the Conservative party, five members of the Labour party and one member of the Liberal party. I have also appointed a number of substitute delegates.

The appointments of representatives and substitutes have been made on the basis of nominations by the leaders of those parties concerned.

The same delegation will be representing the United Kingdom Parliament at the Assembly of the Western European Union.

Representatives from the Government Benches will be:
The hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg, who will act as leader.
The hon. Members for:
Warwick and Leamington (Sir D. Smith)
Southampton, Test (Mr. Hill) (Government Whip)
Birmingham, Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight)

Twickenham (Mr. Jessel)
Northampton, South (Mr. Morris)
Halesowen and Stourbridge (Mr. Stokes)
Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson)
Ashford (Mr. Speed)
Streatham (Mr. Shelton)
Medway (Dame P. Fenner)
and the Earl of Kinnoull.

Representatives from the Labour party will be:

The hon. Members for:
Neath (Mr. Coleman)
Wallsend (Mr. Garrett)
Wentworth (Mr. Hardy)
Lord Hughes and Dr. Maurice Miller.

Representatives from the Liberal party will be:

The hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir Russell Johnston).

The following substitutes have been appointed to act as necessary on behalf of the delegates:

From the Government Benches:

The hon. Members for:
Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson), Eastwood (Mr. Stewart), Norfolk, North (Mr. Howell), Thanet, North (Mr. Gale), Lewes (Mr. Rathbone), Brighton, Kemptown (Mr. Bowden), Suffolk, Central (Mr. Lord), Lord Newall and Lord Rodney.

From the Labour party:

The right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan), the hon. Members for Tooting (Mr. Cox) and Liverpool, Riverside (Mr. Parry), the right hon. Reginald Freeson, Mr. Robert Brown, Mr. Robert Edwards, Mr. Michael McGuire and Mr. Alex Woodhall.

From the Liberal party:

The Lord Mackie.

Policy Unit

Mr. George asked the Prime Minister if she will list those members of her policy unit appointed since May 1979, the date they were recruited, the organisation from which they were drawn and the date they left the unit, together with the annual running costs for each year since its formation at 1987 prices.

The Prime Minister: Members of the policy unit appointed since May 1979 are as follows:

Name	*Previous employment*	*Year of appointment*	*Year of departure*
N. R. Blackwell	McKinsey & Company Inc.	1986	
B. Griffiths	The City University Business School	1985	
G. R. J. Guise	Consolidated Goldfields plc	1986	
V. E. H. Booth	Creasey, Son & Wickenden	1984	
D. C. Hobson	Coopers & Lybrand	1983	1986
J. Hoskyns		1979	1982
O. Letwin	Former Special Adviser	1983	1986
C. W. Monckton	Centre for Policy Studies	1982	1984
W. R. F. Mount	The Standard Newspapers	1982	1983
A. J. O'Sullivan	Times Newspapers	1987	
N. C. Owen	Department of Trade and Industry	1983	1986
D. L. Pascall	The British Petroleum Company, plc	1983	1984
J. Redwood	N. M. Rothschild & Sons Ltd.	1983	1985
P. Shipley	Conservative Research Department	1982	1984
N. Strauss	Unilever International	1979	1981
P. J. Stredder	Department of Trade and Industry	1986	
P. T. Warry	Aerospace Engineering plc	1984	1986
D. L. Willetts	Her Majesty's Treasury	1984	1986
J. B. Wybrew	Shell International Petroleum Company Ltd.	1984	
R. Young	Vickers Ltd.	1983	1984

The policy unit was formed in March 1974. The salary costs of members of the policy unit since May 1979 at 1987 prices are:

	£
1979-80	66,147
1980-81	87,924
1981-82	86,043
1982-83	117,797
1983-84	186,153
1984-85	253,427
1985-86	293,844
1986-87	344,490
1987-88[1]	291,000

[1] Estimate.

Overseas Visits (Cost)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister what was the total cost of her recent visit to the United States of America and Jamaica; how many officials accompanied her; and how she travelled.

The Prime Minister: The estimated cost to my Office of the visit is £56,000. Three officials and four support staff from my Office accompanied me. We travelled on a Royal Air Force aircraft.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister what has been the total cost of travel by her and staff from No. 10 Downing street in the last financial year.

The Prime Minister: The total cost of my travel and that of my staff in 1986-87 was £752,338.

Office Staff

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister if she will give the total staff complement of No. 10 Downing street for each year since 1979.

The Prime Minister: The total staff complement of 10 Downing street for each year since 1979 is as follows:

	Number
1979	71
1980	68
1981	69
1982	67
1983	68
1984	67
1985	67
1986	66
1987	67

EC Budget

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister what steps she took at the June meeting of European Economic Community Heads of Government to ensure that expenditure in excess of the Budget in the current year will not be validated in 1988 through an increase in national contributions made possible by changing the present contribution formula or in any other way.

The Prime Minister: As I told the House on 1 July, at columns 493-94, the European Council agreed to a solution to the 1987 budgetary problems along the lines we had advocated. This is within this year's 1·4 per cent. VAT ceiling. On future changes to the system of contributions to the Community budget, I made clear at the European Council that before that issue is addressed there must be agreement on effective and binding control over Community spending.

Research

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister how much money Her Majesty's Government have contributed directly or indirectly for collective research by the European Economic Community since 1979; what commitments they have made for future contributions; and what evidence she has of the cost-effectiveness of research *(a)* financed collectively by the European Economic Community and *(b)* financed by Her Majesty's Government.

The Prime Minister: The European Community's R and D programme provides funds for work carried out in the Community's own research establishments; work done in the establishments of member states on the basis of shared costs; and concerted action involving member states' own programmes. Between 1979 and 1986 the United Kingdom's gross contribution to successive Community budgets averaged some 21·7 per cent; it is not possible to attribute the United Kingdom's net budgetary contribution to particular Community activities such as research. In assessing the cost-effectiveness of R and D sponsored by the Community the Government apply the same criteria as in the case of nationally sponsored programmes. British industry, universities and research institutions benefit considerably from R and D directly funded by the Community and carried out collaboratively.

Regional Expenditure

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister what assessment she has made of the cost-effectiveness of money spent by the European Economic Community in the United Kingdom regions and money spent by Her Majesty's Government for the same purpose; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: European Economic Community expenditure on behalf of the regions of the United Kingdom, through the European regional development fund, contributes essentially towards national public expenditure in the regions concerned. Evaluation of the effectiveness of this public expenditure, which is almost exclusively in the assisted areas, is the responsibility of several Departments. Published studies include an assessment of the effects of regional industrial policy (1960 to 1981), a study of the effects of regional financial assistance on firms' investment decisions and a study of industry's early reaction to the new regional development grants scheme introduced in November 1984.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister whether the Government are prepared to increase the United Kingdom contribution to the EEC budget to enable more money to be provided by the EEC institutions for the benefit of the regions in the United Kingdom; and whether she will publish in the *Official Report* any assessment she has made of the comparative advantage of *(a)* EEC controlled and *(b)* Her Majesty's Government's expenditure in regional development.

The Prime Minister: The future level of funding for regional development throughout the European Community needs to be decided as part of the general debate on the Community's future financing. European Community regional expenditure fully supports the Government's own regional objectives while enabling a higher level of United Kingdom spending to be sustained than would be possible without such receipts.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister whether she will publish in the *Official Report* the classes of goods subject to zero rating for value added tax purposes which *(a)* are and *(b)* are not covered by her undertaking not to agree to any proposal from the EEC for the imposition of value added tax in such cases, together with the Government's estimate of sales in the current year of each class of item and the corresponding rate of tax being proposed by the EEC Commission.

The Prime Minister: I have nothing to add to the replies I have already given which make perfectly clear the United Kingdom's position on the European Commission's proposals.

The estimated sales of items that are currently zero-rated in the United Kingdom and the rates of tax proposed by the Commission in each case are:

	Sales [1] *£ billion*	*VAT rate band proposed by the Commission per cent.*
Food	30·5	4-9
Young children's clothing and footwear	2·5	14-20
Fuel	13·0	4-9
Books, newspapers and magazines	3·5	4-9
Internal passenger transport	4·5	4-9
Construction	8·0	14-20

[1] To nearest 0·5 billion.

Sellafield

Mr. Mullin asked the Prime Minister to which Minister British Nuclear Fuels plc is responsible for plutonium stored at Sellafield.

The Prime Minister: Storage of civil plutonium at Sellafield on behalf of its customers is a matter for British Nuclear Fuels plc.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Manufacturing Trade

Mr. Allen asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the deficit on manufacturing trade.

Mr. Alan Clark: The balance of trade in manufactures was in deficit by £2·1 billion in the first five months of 1987.

Torvinstyle Properties Ltd.

Mr. Bill Michie asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the progress of the report of his Department's inspectors concerning Torvinstyle Properties Ltd.

Mr. Maude: This matter is now being investigated by the police who will report the results of their inquiries to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Fireworks

Sir Barney Hayhoe asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) whether he will arrange discussions with firework manufacturers with the aim of agreeing voluntary limits on the noise level of fireworks available for public use;

(2) whether he intends to introduce legislation to control the noise level produced by fireworks.

Mr. Maude: Over the past 25 years the firework industry has voluntarily reduced the explosive content and hence the noise level of bangers by some 40 per cent. The numbers of bangers sold has been reduced by 50 per cent. since 1977. The industry has ceased supplying jumping jacks.

I believe that further restriction or legislative control of the noise level of fireworks would not be generally welcomed, but this and all other aspects of the safety of fireworks are kept under review and discussed periodically with manufacturers, importers and representatives of local authorities and consumer and safety organisations.

Retail Sales

Mr. Holland asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many firms represented the upper half of retail sales in the United Kingdom in 1985 and 1986.

Mr. Butcher: The largest 94 individual companies accounted for one-half of retail sales in Great Britain in 1985. No estimate is yet available for 1986.

Trade Statistics

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1962 the export-import ratio of United Kingdom trade in manufactures with the European Economic Community countries and with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries other than the European Economic Community.

Mr. Alan Clark: The information is in the following table.

Export-import ratio of United Kingdom trade in manufactures

Per cent.

	European Community[1]	*Rest of OECD*
1962	170	173
1963	171	168
1964	149	130
1965	151	147
1966	147	153
1967	127	129
1968	124	120
1969	140	121
1970	135	112
1971	121	126
1972	104	114
1973	91	100
1974	88	96
1975	91	99
1976	94	98
1977	93	98
1978	84	86
1979	80	83
1980	89	82
1981	82	78
1982	75	74
1983	67	72
1984	68	74
1985	70	81
1986	69	81

[1] Present membership throughout.
Source: United Kingdom Overseas Trade Statistics.

Mr. Amess asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the present level of telecommunications and computer technology imports and exports.

Mr. Alan Clark: The information is in the following tables:

United Kingdom visible trade in telecommunications and computer technology products

January-April 1987 *£ million*

	Imports	*Exports*
Telecommunications	221·9	178·0
Computer technology	1,411·5	1,165·9

Notes:
(1) Telecommunications defined as SITC Sub-groups: 764.1, 764.3, and Items 764.81, 764.83 and 764.91.
(2) Computer technology defined as SITC Sub-group 752.0 and TTCN 8455 9700 from SITC Sub-group 759.9.
(3) Figures do not include services.
(4) 1987 figures provisional.
Source: Overseas Trade Statistics.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the percentage increase in the volume and value of United Kingdom exports of semi-manufactures and finished manufactures, less erratics, between 1973 and 1979 and between 1979 and 1986; how much of the increase was due in each case to the increase in exports to the United States of America; and what in each period was the increase in the real exchange rate, measured in terms of relative export prices, against the dollar and against all currencies.

Mr. Alan Clark: Export volume figures by country are not available. The available information is as follows:

	United Kingdom exports excluding the erratic items[1]						*Change in United Kingdom relative export prices*[4]	
	Trade with the world				*United States of America*			
	Volume 1980 = 100		*Value £ million*		*Value £ million*			
	5+6	*7+8*	*5+6*	*7+8*	[2]*5+6*	*7+8*	*United States of America*	[3]*MMCs*
1973	86·0	84·4	3,572	5,420	n/a	n/a	—	—
1979	105·9	98·7	11,263	16,859	745	1,729	—	—
1986	121·9	113·8	18,787	30,315	1,742	5,100	—	—

	United Kingdom exports excluding the erratic items[1]						Change in United Kingdom relative export prices[4]	
	Trade with the world				United States of America			
	Volume 1980 = 100		Value £ million		Value £ million			
	5+6	7+8	5+6	7+8	[2]5+6	7+8	United States of America	[3]MMCs
Change between 1973 and 1979								
Per cent.	+23	+17	+215	+211	n/a	n/a	+19	+20
Change between 1979 and 1986								
Per cent.	+15	+15	+67	+80	+134	+195	−20	−3

[1] These are defined as ships, North Sea installations, aircraft, precious stones, and silver.
[2] SITC 5+6 less division 66 and 681·1.
[3] Main manufacturing countries (Federal Republic of Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, United States of America, Canada and Japan).
[4] United States $ Terms.
n/a = Not available.

Textiles

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing imports and exports in 1970, 1979 and 1986 by volume and value from the European Economic Community and from other countries of textiles in each three-digit sub-division of SITC division 65, excluding sub-division 651, together with the figures for, respectively, cotton, man-made fibres and wool yarns.

Mr. Alan Clark: Information for 1970 is not available within agreed cost limits. The requested information on United Kingdom trade in 1979 and 1986 is in the following tables:

United Kingdom trade in textile yarn, fabrics and made up articles: 1979 and 1986

	1979				1986			
	EC total (including Greece, Spain and Portugal)		Rest of world total		EC total		Rest of world total	
SITC items	Metric tonnes	£'000	Metric tonnes	£'000	Metric tonnes	£'000	Metric tonnes	£'000
Imports								
652·00	27,967	123,569	84,090	192,224	44,564	254,698	66,060	216,050
653·00	61,603	266,600	34,796	142,866	82,179	527,029	47,863	281,418
654·00	14,531	56,891	23,513	24,450	11,808	100,615	23,432	40,863
655·00	5,715	31,075	4,570	20,193	7,508	53,861	3,622	20,326
656·00	1,208	9,651	2,848	35,955	4,095	29,390	2,622	39,483
657·00	41,479	79,498	17,605	34,453	59,422	186,065	20,596	77,749
658·00	25,262	78,827	15,912	41,821	28,747	138,637	16,970	57,022
659·00	49,328	79,291	24,970	77,765	154,667	251,785	18,161	85,486
Yarns								
Cotton	21,334	39,854	17,172	27,895	32,295	83,153	22,711	47,073
Man-made fibre	5,766	23,818	635	2,976	9,421	60,120	1,548	10,776
Wool	91,075	179,851	55,801	88,874	140,566	387,333	56,550	135,244
Exports								
652·00	16,209	60,019	11,131	60,749	16,391	80,021	8,841	75,763
653·00	17,764	60,760	19,124	67,059	19,889	76,556	11,907	63,030
654·00	9,206	64,519	13,296	128,211	8,369	85,475	10,802	161,533
655·00	8,730	34,512	6,801	33,331	9,603	49,904	4,508	28,102
656·00	1,592	9,412	1,871	20,566	1,536	16,487	1,716	24,372
657·00	22,542	55,448	27,032	75,294	23,935	96,040	25,281	128,435
658·00	11,307	43,539	7,011	35,993	9,189	48,693	5,936	42,864
659·00	38,600	81,807	31,594	85,045	20,834	79,775	23,097	102,888
Yarns								
Cotton	5,747	12,173	3,326	7,962	3,032	9,386	1,402	5,154
Man-made fibre	10,363	46,789	6,156	30,117	8,538	53,666	7,104	51,031
Wool	73,331	143,059	59,432	120,082	59,255	194,195	34,620	109,884

Notes:
1. Cotton yarns defined as SITC Sub-group 651.3 less Item 653.31.
2. Man-made fibres yarns defined as SITC Sub-group 651.2 less Items 651.21, 651.25 and TTCN heading 5310 2000.
3. Woollen yarns defined as SITC Sub-groups 651.4, 651.5, 651.6, 651.7 and 651.8 less Items 651.49 and 651.78.
4. Woollen yarns also include yarns of fine animal hair.
5. 1986 figures provisional.

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics.

EC Membership (Financial and Economic Consequences)

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) whether he will bring up to date the figures on direct investment in tables 6 and 7 of the memorandum submitted by Her Majesty's Government to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on the "Financial and Economic Consequences of United Kingdom Membership of the European Communities" (Session 1984-85, HC 57-II, pages 22 to 23);

(2) whether he will bring up to date the figures on inward and outward direct investment given in tables 8 and 9 of the memorandum submitted by Her Majesty's Government to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on the "Financial and Economic Consequences of United Kingdom Membership of the European Communities" (Session 1984-85, HC 57-II pages 24-25).

Mr. Butcher: I shall write to the hon. Member and place copies of my letters in the House Library.

Rover Group (AR6 Project)

Mr. Hoyle asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has as to when the final decisions on the future of the AR6 programme will be made and announced by Rover; and what information he has as to the details and timing of the programme.

Mr. Atkins: Rover Group's 1987 corporate plan, covering major investment in the small car sector, was approved in full by the Government in February. The detailed product plans, however are commercially sensitive and it is established practice for the Government not to reveal them.

British Caledonian Airways

Mr. Grylls asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has received from British Caledonian about alternative options for its future, with particular reference to a possible bid by a foreign airline.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: None.

Hospitality

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much has been spent on official hospitality by his Department in each of the last two financial years.

Mr. Butcher: Departmental expenditure on hospitality in the United Kingdom over the last two years was £153,000 in 1985-86, and £224,000 in 1986-87. Hospitality costs incurred overseas cannot readily be separated from other travel expenses.

Rolls-Royce (Share Flotation)

Mr. Heddle asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will investigate the case of Mr. J. R. Blake of 86 Meadow Way, Walton, Stone, Staffordshire, in respect of his application for 500 Rolls-Royce shares and the alleged lack of a satisfactory response from Barclays Bank plc, registration and new issues department.

Mr. Butcher: I have not been able to look into this case in the time available. However, I shall write to my hon. Friend, and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Manufacturing Output

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the annual average increase in manufacturing output between 1979 and 1986 compared with the decade to the end of 1973; and if he will provide comparable information available to him on figures for the United States, Japan, Sweden, Norway, Germany, France and Italy.

Mr. Butcher: The information is as follows:

Average annual increase in manufacturing output (Per cent.)

	1963-73	*1979-86*
United Kingdom	3·4	−0·6
United States of America	5·5	2·1
Japan	12·3	3·5
Sweden	5·1	1·4
Norway	4·9	1·3
West Germany	5·1	1·1
France	6·2	−0·6
Italy	5·6	0·7

Source: OECD Main Economic Indicators.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to what he ascribes the fall in the United Kingdom share of manufacturing output in the industrial countries since 1973; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing to one place of decimals the share of each of the main industrial countries in 1973 and 1986.

Mr. Butcher: A country's share of world manufacturing output reflects a variety of influences. In the United Kingdom's case during the 1970s relevant factors included high inflation, overmanning, and low productivity. In the 1980s the performance of the United Kingdom's manufacturing industry relative to that of our main European competitiors has improved markedly, as evidence, for example, by the fact that the United Kingdom is now at the top of the productivity growth league for the major industrial countries. Figures for all industrial countries are not readily available and could only be produced at disproportionate cost.

Regional Aid

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list spending on regional selective assistance for each region, Scotland and Wales in 1986-87 and proposed spending in 1987-88.

Mr. Butcher: Provisional figures for payments of regional selective assistance (RSA) in 1986-87 are as follows:

Area	*£ million*
North East	18·5
North West	19·2
Yorkshire and Humberside	10·0
East Midlands	2·2
West Midlands	9·9
South West	5·2
Scotland	35·4
Wales	27·5
Great Britain Total	127·9

Estimates for future expenditure are not broken down by English region: the actual distribution will depend on the level of demand. The RSA provision for each country in 1987-88, as set out in the Supply Estimates, is as follows:

	£ million
England	89·3
Scotland	46·8
Wales	36·1
Great Britain Total	172·2

Notes:
(1) RSA has been interpreted as industrial and training grants.
(2) All figures are gross, before deducting recoveries and European Community receipts under the European regional development fund.

Post Office (Sorting Machinery)

Mr. Hoyle asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if, when he next meets the chairman of the Post Office, he will raise with him the adequacy of Post Office sorting machinery to sort mail with hand-written post codes.

Mr. Butcher: No. I see no reason to raise with the chairman what is a detailed operational matter for the Post Office Board.

Retail Grocery Sector

Mr. Aspinwall asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list those mergers or acquisitions within the retail grocery sector notified to his Department in the last five years which were not subsequently referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Mr. Maude: This information is not readily available. I shall write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Mr. Aspinwall asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the total number of referrals made to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in the last five years concerning mergers and acquisitions within the retail grocery sector, together with the Commission's recommendations.

Mr. Maude: In the last five years two merger proposals involving companies in the retail grocery sector have been referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission: the proposed acquisition of Linfood Holdings PLC by Fitch Lovell PLC (referred 2 November 1982) and the proposed acquisition of Booker McConnell PLC by the Dee Corporation PLC (referred 21 June 1984). In both cases the Monopolies and Mergers Commission concluded that the proposals would not operate against the public interest.

Mr. Aspinwall asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will estimate the total number of independent retail grocery businesses that have closed down in *(a)* the last 10 years and *(b)* the most recent year for which figures are available.

Mr. Butcher: Data available from the retailing inquiries conducted by the Business Statistics Office suggest that the number of single outlet grocery retailers fell by *(a)* about 25,000 businesses between 1976 and 1984 and *(b)* 6,000 businesses between 1982 and 1984.

Mr. Aspinwall asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish information available to him on the percentage share of the retail grocery sector during each of the last 10 years, and for the latest date for which figures are available of *(a)* major multiples, *(b)* other multiples, *(c)* independent stores and *(d)* co-operatives.

Mr. Alan Clark: I shall write to my hon. Friend and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Competition and Retailing (Report)

Mr. Aspinwall asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) whether he intends to undertake further studies to update the findings of the Office of Fair Trading's competition and retailing report; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what recent representations have been received by his Department or the Office of Fair Trading concerning the matter of discriminatory discounting within the retail grocery sector; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: The 1985 Office of Fair Trading report, "Competition and Retailing", found no material change in the factors which led the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to conclude, in 1981, that discriminatory discounting had not in general operated against the public interest. There are in our view no grounds at present for further studies. Since the start of this year, my Department and the Office of Fair Trading have received eight representations on the subject.

Retail Developments

Mr. Aspinwall asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster under what circumstances regional assistance is given to retail developments in the immediate locality of assisted regions.

Mr. Butcher: None. Regional assistance is not given to projects which serve purely local markets, nor to projects outside assisted area boundaries.

Citizens Advice Bureaux

Mr. Hanley asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what considerations he has given to providing funding for the re-training needs of Citizens Advice Bureaux caused by recent changes in legislation and by the programme outlined in the Queen's Speech; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: I am aware of the need for workers in Citizens Advice Bureaux to keep themselves informed of changes in legislation which affect the public. The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, which provides the resources for the training of bureaux workers and which is funded by grant-in-aid from my Department, takes the cost of such training into account when estimating its needs for Government funding.

European Space Agency

Mr. Knox asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will give a progress report on preparations for the European Space Agency ministerial meeting in November.

Mr. Michael Marshall asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in what form and by what date he anticipates announcing Her Majesty's Government's

response to the British National Space Centre's proposals for future expenditure before the European Space Agency meeting of Ministers scheduled for 9 and 10 November.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Discussions are currently taking place between officials of the member states of the European Space Agency. The Government are reviewing their priorities for R & D expenditure. It is important that we make the most effective use for the benefit of United Kingdom industrial performance of the resources available from the taxpayer. The longer term benefits of expenditure on space research have to be balanced against alternative uses of funds in support of other areas of United Kingdom industry.

Having carefully considered the options on space, we have decided at present not to increase our expenditure above the current level. This is already running at over £100 million a year. Discussions and preparations will therefore proceed upon that basis. The private sector, if interested in the results from such research, should come forward with further resources.

Bucharest International Fair

Mr. Hunter asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what assistance his Department is giving to British firms wishing to exhibit at the Bucharest international fair on 17 to 20 October.

Mr. Alan Clark: My Department's Eastern European market branch is ready to offer whatever information and advice it can to those companies exhibiting at the Bucharest international fair, and in Bucharest, the commercial staff at the embassy stand ready to assist British companies in any way they can.

Mr. Hunter asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he or the Secretary of State has any plans to visit the Bucharest international fair on 17 to 20 October; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: My right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State have no plans to visit the Bucharest international fair in October.

I myself had to postpone a visit to Romania this April but hope to reinstate it next year.

BA/B-Cal Merger

Mr. Janman asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if, in considering the British Airways/British Caledonian merger, he will have regard to any alternative offers put forth by other British carriers for the separate purchase of British Caledonian's intra-European or domestic operations as a means of preserving competition.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: In deciding whether to refer to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission mergers qualifying for investigation under the Fair Trading Act 1973, my right hon. and noble Friend considers each case on its merits, having regard to the advice of the Director General of Fair Trading and taking all relevant factors into account. However, alternative proposals for the separate purchase of some of British Caledonian's operations are in the first instance matters of commercial negotiation.

Mr. Cran asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what would be the combined market share of British Airways and British Caledonian in respect of ground crew and maintenance services at Gatwick.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I have been asked to reply.

I do not have the information requested. I suggest that my hon. Friend approaches the airlines direct.

British Shipbuilders

Mr. Barry Field asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has received the annual report and accounts of British Shipbuilders for the current year.

Mr. Atkins: In accordance with section 17*(a)* and 18 *(b)* of the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Act 1977, my right hon. Friend is today laying before each House copies of British Shipbuilders' annual report and accounts for 1986-87.

Postal Dispute (London)

Mr. Forth asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what action he will take to safeguard postal services in the light of the recent disruption of the mail service in central London and the threat of national industrial actions.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: It is primarily for the Post Office Board to deal with industrial action by its employees. However, subject to certain derogations, the Post Office enjoys the exclusive privilege of providing a letter service in the United Kingdom. The Government consider that such a privilege must continually be justified, and powers are available to suspend the monopoly. The monopoly is long established and we would not lightly suspend the privilege. But Ministers have stated on a number of occasions that we would use those powers in the event of industrial action within the Post Office that resulted in a cessation or serious decline in the quality of service. I confirm that that remains our policy and I would suspend the monopoly in such circumstances but I do not believe that the problems in London's west central district have yet reached the stage of sufficient gravity to justify that step.

Aid and Trade Funding

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the projects which received funds under the aid and trade project in the most recent year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: I shall write to my hon. Friend and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the estimated expenditure of the Department of Trade and Industry in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

Mr. Butcher: The DTI expects to spend £3·3 million on management consultancy and £7·2 million on computer consultancy during 1987-88 as part of the Department's management programme. The figures exclude payments to consultants engaged in connection with the Department's support activities to industry.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Interest Rates

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the real interest rate, based on interest rates minus inflation, in each Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country at the latest available date.

Mr. Lilley: There is no unique measure of "real" interest rates. The monthly publication OECD main economic indicators gives certain short and long-term interest rates and various price indices for the OECD countries.

Self-employed Persons

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will bring up to date the figures on the number and total income of self-employed persons given in the memorandum on the financial and economic consequences of United Kingdom membership of the European Communities, as set out in evidence to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee (HC, 57-II, page 69, Session 1984-85).

Mr. Norman Lamont: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before the summer recess. Therefore, I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Public Expenditure

Mr. McFall asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the public spending planning total for 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Major: The Government's plans for public expenditure were published in the 1987 public expenditure White Paper (Cm. 56).

Civil Service Pension Scheme

Mr. Butler asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he proposes to issue guidelines to Government Departments on the extent to which special advisers should be informed of the opt-out alternatives from the principal Civil Service pension scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before the summer recess. I shall therefore, write to my hon. Friend and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Cash Accounting Scheme

Mr. Fallon asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the commissioners of Customs and Excise will be making and laying before the House the detailed regulations to implement the cash accounting scheme proposed in his Budget statement on 17 March; whether they will differ from the draft placed in the Library in April; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: The regulations for cash accounting could not be made until the European Community derogation, requested by the Government on 17 March, had been approved. As I told my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) on 20 July at column *74* the Council of Ministers has now agreed to our request for a derogation. The Commissioners of Customs and Excise will be making and laying the necessary regulations during the summer recess, thus ensuring that the cash accounting scheme will be available for use by small businesses from 1 October.

Following consultation with trade and professional bodies, a number of significant changes are being made to the draft regulations which were placed in the Library. These changes, all intended to be beneficial to small businesses wishing to use the cash accounting scheme, will of course be widely publicised when the regulations are laid.

Rating Repair

Sir Barney Hayhoe asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will make it his policy to assign part or the whole of the yield from income tax to the payment of local government expenditure under the proposed community charge and unified business rate system.

Mr. Lawson: No. Central Government already provide substantial support to local government expenditure from national taxation. But it is not the practice of the Government to hypothecate revenues from a particular tax to particular areas of expenditure.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Chancellor of Exchequer what assessment he has made of the implication for Inland Revenue valuation staff of the proposed community charge.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Inland Revenue valuation staff will not be involved in the administration of the community charge. Their existing responsibility for the valuation of domestic properties and maintenance of the corresponding valuation list will cease as domestic rates in England and Wales come to an end.

Retail Prices Index

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the effect on the retail prices index after one, two and three years of a reduction of 10 per cent. in the trade-weighted average nominal exchange rate, all other considerations remaining the same.

Mr. Lilley: The effects of a change in the exchange rate on the RPI will depend on a number of factors such as the reason for the change and the operation of policy.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the effect of the fall in the trade-weighted nominal exchange rate over the past 12 months on the retail prices index compared with the increase in the cost of housing; and if he will provide illustrative figures.

Mr. Lilley: The housing component of the RPI, which includes rents, rates and mortgage interest payments among other things, increased by about 10 per cent. in the 12 months to June 1987, accounting for about 1½ percentage points of the increase in the RPI over this period. For the effect of the exchange rate on the RPI, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier today.

Unit Costs

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his estimate of the percentage increase in unit labour costs for *(a)* manufacturing, *(b)* the production and extractive industries and *(c)* the rest of the economy in the latest 12 months for which figures are available, for each year since 1970, and for the decades ending in 1966 and 1973.

Mr. Major: Figures are available for manufacturing industries and for the production industries (which includes the extractive industries) only from 1971 to 1985. The 1986 figures will be published in due course in the Department of Employment *Gazette*. No figures are compiled for the rest of the economy.

Unit labour costs
percentage increase on previous year

	Manufacturing industries	*Production industries*
1971	8·2	7·5
1972	9·5	10·5
1973	5·9	5·4
1974	17·4	19·5
1975	37·2	36·6
1976	10·8	9·2
1977	10·8	7·7
1978	15·1	12·9
1979	17·9	13·7
1980	22·2	21·5
1981	9·0	7·2
1982	4·8	3·3
1983	0·2	−0·9
1984	3·1	2·0
1985	4·2	4·6

Personal Incomes

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables, with the same distribution and in the same format as his reply dated 25 July 1986, *Official Report*, columns *664-66*, of information on taxable incomes and yield showing *(a)* the effect of the recent budgetary changes in a full year and *(b)* the replacement of all allowances and reliefs, including the wife's earnings election, by (i) an increase in the personal allowances to £2,500 and £5,000 for, respectively, single persons and married couples under age 65 and to £3,000 and £5,000 for those over 65, (ii) a reduced rate band of £1,000 for single persons and £2,000 for married couples at 15 per cent., followed by a standard-rate band of £7,250 for single persons and £9,500 for married couples at 25 per cent., followed by four higher-rate bands of £5,000 in 5 per cent. steps for single persons and three higher rate bands of £7,500, £7,000 and £7,000 in 5 per cent. steps for married couples, (iii) the introduction of a claw back (on the lines of the present age allowance) of the whole of the single allowance and £3,000 of the married allowance at a rate of £4 for every £10 of income in excess of £4,500 for single persons under 65, £5,000 for those over 65 and £9,000 for all married couples.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before the summer recess. I shall, therefore, write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

EC Budget

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will bring up to date the information given in his written reply to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) of 4 February, *Official Report*, columns *669-70*, concerning the principal components in the United Kingdom's payments and receipts from the European Economic Community together with a forecast for the current year.

Mr. Brooke: The information requested concerning the outturn for the 1986 calendar year and an estimate for 1987 is given in the table:

Principal Components in United Kingdom Payments to and Receipts from the EEC[1]

	1986	*[2]1987*
VAT rates (percentage) (budget figures)		
Community VAT ceiling	1·4	1·4
UK VAT rate	0·67663	0·7982
FRG VAT rate	1·33697	1·3102
Other states VAT rate	1·39996	1·3643
Payments (£ million)		
VAT before abatements	3,005	3,175
Abatements	−1,701	−1,126
Sugar and Isoglucose levies	52	60
Agricultural levies	192	176
Customs duties	1,244	1,329
Total contribution	2,792	3,614
Receipts		
EAGGF	1,374	1,422
Regional Development Fund	298	327
Social Fund	335	263
Other receipts	213	255
Total receipts	2,219	2,267
Net contribution	572	1,347

Source: Departmental records.

[1] Because of rounding, the column totals do not necessarily equal the sum of the individual items.

[2] The forecast for 1987 is taken from the Statement on the 1987 Community budget, Cm. 194 published on 23 July 1987.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) on 6 February, *Official Report*, column *840*, setting out the financial guideline for the European Economic Community budget, whether he will publish in the *Official Report*, a table comparing the guideline for 1987 with what was originally proposed by the European Economic Community Commission and what has now been agreed on an adhoc basis; and if he will explain how the additional finance is to be raised.

Mr. Brooke: The financial guideline for the European Community Budget for 1987, remains at 22.961 million ecus, as was stated on 6 February 1987 at column *840*. It was agreed at the European Council on 29-30 June and subsequently by the Agriculture Council on 13 July, that agricultural expenditure would be kept within the 1987 financial guideline by means of an adjustment in the system of advance payments to agricultural intervention agencies in the Member states.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can now provide the information

for 1987 which was omitted from his written reply to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) on 3 February, *Official Report*, column *578*, concerning the United Kingdom's value added tax share of the allocated European Economic Community budget and the corresponding receipt.

Mr. Brooke: On the basis of the information contained in the 1988 preliminary draft budget, the figures for 1987 which correspond to those for 1986 given in my reply to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) on 3 February 1987 at column *578* are 6,961 mecu for our VAT share of the allocated budget and 3,524 mecu for our allocated receipts.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will bring up to date the information given in his written reply to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) on 3 February, *Official Report* column *578*, concerning the amount by which the United Kingdom contribution to the European Economic Community budget exceeds receipts; and if he will add a forecast for 1987, including in that forecast any contribution which may have to be paid next year to cover a shortfall in revenue in the current year.

Mr. Brooke: The figures for 1986, together with an estimate for 1987, are as in the table. There are no proposals in the 1988 preliminary draft budget for dealing with any shortfall in revenue this year.

£ million

	Gross contri-butions less receipts other than rebates/ abatements	[1]*abatements*	*unpaid abatement outstanding*
1986	2,273	[2 3]1,294	—
1987[4]	[2]2,473	[2 3]1,565	—

[1] This column shows abatements against the year to which they relate, not the year in which they are paid.

[2] These figures have been calculated using an exchange rate of £1 = 1·45 ecu.

[3] This figure is the sterling equivalent of the 1,633 mecu abatement in respect of 1986 contained in the 1987 budget plus the 244 mecu correction to our abatement in respect of 1986 contained in the 1988 preliminary draft budget.

[4] These figures are taken from the Statement on the 1987 Community budget, Cm 194, published on 23 July. They do not take account of the supplementary and amending budget now approved by the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament.

[5] This figure is the sterling equivalent of the 2,269 mecu abatement in respect of 1987 contained in the 1988 preliminary draft budget.

Income Tax

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the cost of extending the separate assessment of wife's income election to investment income; and how many people he calculates could benefit from such an opportunity.

Mr. Norman Lamont: On the basis of the distribution of investment income between husbands and wives reported to the Inland Revenue, the full year cost at 1987-88 income levels of extending the wife's earnings election to investment income and category B national insurance pensions is about £120 million and about 170,000 couples would benefit. These estimates may understate the full effects because some investment income for which income tax liability at the basic rate is satisfied at source is not reported to the Inland Revenue and the estimates make no allowance for behavioural changes which might occur.

Inner-city Programmes

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will itemise all additional expenditure authorised on inner-city programmes for the financial year 1987-88.

Mr. Major: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before the summer recess. I shall, therefore, write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

National Debt

Mr. Ground asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the national debt, including foreign currency debt but excluding official holdings, outstanding at the end of March, as a percentage of gross domestic product, average measure, at current market prices centred on 31 March; and what is his estimate of the national debt so expressed for the end of March 1988.

Mr. Lilley: No estimate is as yet available of the national debt, including foreign currency debt but excluding official holdings, outstanding at the end of March 1987. Including official holdings and foreign currency debt, the national debt outstanding at the end of march 1987 was £185·8 billion, 47·3 per cent. of the average measure of gross domestic product in the first quarter of 1987 (at an annual rate at current market prices). No forecast is available for 1988.

Disposable Incomes

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the average annual percentage increase in real personal disposable income in 1974 to 1979 and from 1979 to the latest available period of 12 months.

Mr. Major: The average annual increase in real personal disposable income from 1974 to 1979 was 2·1 per cent. From 1979 to the year ending in the first quarter of 1987 the average annual increase was 1·9 per cent.

Investment Statistics

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his estimate of the net inflow of overseas funds each year since 1979 and in 1987 to date for investment in *(a)* Government securities, *(b)* privatisation issues and *(c)* other securities.

Mr. Lilley: The available information relating to net investment by overseas residents in United Kingdom government and other securities since 1979 is given in the 1986 edition of the "United Kingdom Balance of Payments" (the CSO Pink Book) and in *Economic Trends* for June 1987, copies of which are in the Library. The relevant Pink Book tables are 8.2 (direct investment), 8.3 (portfolio investment) and 8.6 (short-term government securities). The corresponding *Economic Trends* tables are 9, 10 and 13.

The following information on the main recent privatisation issues relates to estimated initial subscriptions in overseas markets:

	£ million
1984	280
1985	190
1986	350
[1]1987	270

[1] First half.

Government Securities

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the amount of interest payable on Government securities in 1986 in money terms and as a percentage of gross domestic product to one place of decimals compared with 1957, 1967 and 1978.

Mr. Lilley: Following is the information:

Interest payable of British Government Securities

	£ billion	Per cent. of GDP
1957-58	0·5	2·4
1967-68	0·9	2·2
1978-79	4·9	2·9
1985-86	12·1	3·4

Note: Complete information is only available on a financial year basis.

Figures for 1986-87 will be published in the "Consolidated Fund and National Loans Fund Accounts" (to be published in December).

House Prices

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his assessment of the part the increase in house prices has played in raising wage costs since 1975 and 1979, respectively; what provision the Government have made to compensate their employees for moving from the regions to London; and what is his estimate of the difference in annual housing costs for the average employee on Humberside and in London.

Mr. Brooke: There may be a relationship between house prices and average earnings but its exact nature and size are open to question.

The arrangements for assisting civil service staff on transfer to areas where housing is more expensive have recently been improved. Somebody who is permanently transferred to London and now has to spend at least an extra £30,000 to buy a similar house can now receive up to £2,460 per year at current mortgage interest rates. (Before 1 April 1987 the limit was £1,138 per year).

There are no official figures for differences in housing costs between the regions. However, information on relative housing expenditure between regions is available from the "Family Expenditure Survey" (Table 29). The latest information concerns average weekly expenditure in the years 1984 and 1985 and shows average gross weekly expenditure of £35·82 per week in Greater London and £24·85 per week in Yorkshire and Humberside.

Interest and Exchange Rates

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what weight is attached by the Government to the level of unemployment in determining the level of interest rates and the exchange rate.

Mr. Lilley: We attach great importance to the creation of jobs. The objective of the Government's economic policy is to defeat inflation and maintain a vigorous, enterprising economy which will generate sustained growth and increased employment.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether there are any proposals to alter the rate of value added tax; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has no such plans.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the value of trade with the EEC in those manufactured goods and alcoholic beverages, respectively, in 1986 which are the subject of proposals for a harmonised rate of value added tax and revenue duties put forward by the EEC Commission; what is his estimate of the amount of tax which would be chargeable at the United Kingdom rate on imports and exports; and what arrangements would be made to recover input value added tax on imports to ensure that there was no loss of revenue to the Exchequer as a result of imbalance of trade.

Mr. Brooke: The full package of the Commission's proposals for tax approximation has not yet been submitted to the Council. Until it has been carefully studied it will not be possible to give the hon. Member a reply.

Self-employed Persons

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for 1983-84 onwards the number and total incomes, capital allowances and so on, of self-employed persons in agriculture and horticulture on the same basis as in the written reply to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby on 26 March 1985, *Official Report*, columns *156-58*.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before the summer recess. I shall, therefore, write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Hospitality

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been spent by his Department on official hospitality in each of the last two financial years.

Mr. Brooke: The amount spent on official hospitality was £30,438 in 1985-86 and £36,942 in 1986-87.

Milk Quotas

Mr. Amos asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will initiate discussions with interested parties and

organisations about the tax treatment of milk quotas under the Capital Gains Tax Act 1979; if he will take steps to extend the scale of the reliefs available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I have noted my hon. Friend's suggestion.

Imports and Exports

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what is his estimate of the effect on the volume of imports of finished manufactures of an increase of 10 per cent. in the real exchange rate, measured in terms of relative export prices, all other considerations remaining the same;

(2) what is his estimate of the effect on the volume of exports of finished manufactures of an increase of 10 per cent. in the real exchange rate, measured in terms of relative export prices, all other considerations remaining the same.

Mr. Lilley: I refer the hon. Member to the documentation for the Treasury macroeconomic model which was published in January. The estimates it contains are uncertain, subject to a margin of error and are kept under review.

Credit

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether Her Majesty's Government will introduce selective controls on credit by imposing differential reserve requirements on financial institutions designed to curb asset speculation, based on non-interest-bearing deposits with the Bank of England; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: No.

Manufacturing Output

Mr. Yeo asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been the rise in output in the first six months of 1987 compared with the equivalent period in 1986.

Mr. Lawson: The information requested is not yet available. Estimates of output for the first half of 1987, including a preliminary estimate for the second quarter, will be published by the CSO on 18 August.

Autumn Statement

Mr. Canavan asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received about his autumn statement on the economy.

Mr. Major: My right hon. Friend has received no such representations.

Manufactured Goods

Mr. Rooker asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the latest balance of payments figures for manufactured goods.

Mr. Major: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before the summer recess. I shall, therefore, write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Priority Development Areas

Mr. Adley asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will introduce legislation to provide tax incentives for investment in places designated by Her Majesty's Government as priority development areas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I have noted my hon. Friend's suggestion.

Oil Revenue

Mr. Wallace asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what revenue was derived in 1986-87 from the production of oil from the Brent and Ninian fields.

Mr. Lilley: I regret that information on revenues arising from oil production in individual oil fields is not available as corporation tax is assessed on a company basis.

Exchange Rates

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what effect the increase in the exchange rate since 1972 has had on the increase in incomes in the industries not producing internationally traded goods and services.

Mr. Lilley: The sterling exchange rate index has fallen rather than increased since 1972. It is not possible to estimate the effect of the exchange rate changes on incomes in industries producing non-traded goods and services since this depends on what would otherwise have happened and the operation of policy.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing information available to him on the degree of correlation between changes in the exchange rates and changes in consumer prices in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Germany and Japan between turning points in the period 1957 and 1986.

Mr. Lilley: I refer the hon. Member to "International Financial Statistics Yearbook" (1986) published by the International Monetary Fund.

Prices

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the percentage increase since 1979 in the gross domestic product deflator, the retail prices index, producer input and output prices excluding food, and the cost of fuel and imported raw materials.

Mr. Lilley: Figures for the gross domestic product deflator are published in *Economic Trends*. The retail prices index is published in the *Department of Employment Gazette*. The unit value index for imports of basic materials is published in the *Monthly Review of External Trade Statistics*. Indices of producer input and output prices for manufacturing excluding food are not compiled. However, long series of indices of producer input and output prices for manufacturing excluding food, drink and tobacco were published in *British Business* on 8 May 1987, where indices of the costs of fuel bought by manufacturing industry may also be found. Producer price indices are also available in the *Monthly Digest of Statistics*.

Gross Domestic Product

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the average annual rate of growth in gross domestic product in the next five years, excluding the extraction of oil and gas; and what was the average rate reached in the decade to the end of 1973.

Mr. Major: Table 2.3 in the 1987 "Financial Statement and Budget Report" shows growth assumptions for real GDP excluding extraction of oil and gas. These figures are consistent with the FSBR forecast to mid-1988 and the MTFS path for money GDP to 1990-91. The average annual increase in the output-based measure of GDP excluding oil and gas extraction in the decade to the end of 1973 was 2·7 per cent.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the average annual percentage increase in gross domestic product between 1979 and 1986, excluding the extraction of oil and gas, and the annual average in the decade to the end of 1973; and if he will provide comparable information available to him of figures for the United States, Japan, Sweden, Norway, Germany, France and Italy.

Mr. Major: I refer the hon. Member to the information on the United Kingdom's gross domestic product obtainable from the Central Statistical Office's computer database (available from the House of Commons Library).

Comparable data excluding oil and gas extraction are not available for the other countries specified. Comparable data on total gross domestic product (including oil and gas extraction) are shown in the "Annual National Accounts, Volume One" (1987) published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Personal Equity Plans

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimates he has made of the breakdown of the total full year cost of tax relief for the personal equity plan scheme between *(a)* capital gains tax relief and *(b)* income tax relief.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The cost of the tax reliefs for personal equity plans will depend on the number of plans, the amounts invested and the performance of those investments. The cost in 1987-88, which is wholly income tax relief, is expected to be about £25 million. Costs will build up in future years, and after January 1989 investments made in 1987 may be realised free of capital gains tax.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated expenditure of his Department in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

Mr. Brooke: The Treasury plans to spend approximately £2 million on management and computer consultancy in the financial year 1987-88.

EC Budget Council

Sir Anthony Meyer asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the outcome of the recent meeting of the European Community Budget Council.

Mr. Brooke: The Budget Council met in Brussels on 23 July. I represented the United Kingdom.

The Council met a delegation from the European Parliament led by Lord Plumb, to hear the Parliament's views on the 1988 budget.

The Council then discussed the Commission's preliminary draft budget proposals for 1988. I made clear that any draft budget established must respect the own resources ceiling. The Council adjourned without reaching any decision on the 1988 budget, and agreed to resume its discussions in September.

Tax Appeals (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Raffan asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if there are any plans to change the present arrangements for tax appeals in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Norman Lamont: A consultative document will shortly be published on the joint authority of my right hon. Friends, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Lord Chancellor, on the possibility of setting up general commissioners in Northern Ireland.

Most appeals against tax assessments are heard by the general commissioners but a taxpayer may elect in many cases to take his appeal to the special commissioners instead.

For historical reasons there are no general commissioners in Northern Ireland and all appeals are heard by the special commissioners (subject in most cases to a little used right of election to have the appeal heard by the county court). The consultative document will consider the possible setting up of general commissioners in Northern Ireland.

The document will invite representations which should be sent to the Inland Revenue by 20 November 1987. An Inland Revenue press release giving further details will be issued when the document is published.

Income Tax

Mr. Frank Field asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a distributional analysis of all income tax reductions since 1979 *(a)* taking the gains to the top 1 per cent., top 2 to 5 per cent., top 6 to 10 per cent., top 11 to 20 per cent., top 21 to 30 per cent., top 31 to 50 per cent., bottom 50 per cent., points in the income distribution, giving the number of tax units for each group, the reduction in income tax for each group compared with 1978-79, and the average per tax unit, and *(b)* taking the gains to those with total income under £5,000, £5,000 to £10,000, £10,000 to £15,000, £15,000 to £20,000. £20,000 to £30,000, £30,000 to £40,000, £40,000 to £50,000, over £50,000, giving the number of units paying tax and the reduction in income tax compared with 1978-79, giving both the amount for each income group and the average per tax unit.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 July 1987, c. 75]: The tables show the latest estimates of reductions in income tax liabilities at 1987-88 income levels of the 1987-88 income tax regime compared with an indexed 1978-79 regime. The comparison thus allows for budgetary changes in tax rates, thresholds and allowances but not for any change in the definition of the tax base. The 1978-79 allowances and thresholds have been indexed in line with the increase in the retail prices index between

December 1977 and December 1986. As child tax allowances were being phased out in 1978-79 they have been excluded from the comparison.

TABLE 1

Reductions in Income Tax Liabilities in 1987-88 compared with 1978-79 Indexed Tax Regime

Point of income distribution[1] in 1987-88	*Number of units[2] paying tax in 1987-88*	*Reduction in tax*	*Average[3] reduction in income tax compared with the 1978-79 indexed regime*
	'000s	*£ million*	*£ per year*
Top 1 per cent.	210	1,870	9,030
Top 2 to 5 per cent.	830	1,690	2,040
Top 6 to 10 per cent.	1,040	1,240	1,190
Top 11 to 20 per cent.	2,080	1,760	850
Top 21 to 30 per cent.	2,080	890	430
Top 31 to 50 per cent.	4,150	1,580	380
Bottom 50 per cent.	10,380	2,110	200
All	20,750	11,150	540

Notes:

[1] Based on 20,750,000 single people and married couples expected to pay tax in 1987-88 and excluding 850,000 who would pay tax under the revalorised 1978-79 regime.

[2] All information is in terms of tax units i.e. married couples are counted as one and their incomes combined.

[3] By reference to the numbers paying tax in 1987-88.

TABLE 2

Reductions in Income Tax Liabilities in 1987-88 compared with 1978-79 Indexed Tax Regime

Range of gross income	*Number of units[1] paying tax in 1987-88*	*Reduction in tax*	*Average[2] reduction in income tax compared with the 1978-79 indexed regime*
	'000s	*£ million*	*£ per year*
Under 5,000	3,210	330	90
5,000-10,000	7,610	1,940	250
10,000-15,000	5,130	2,120	410
15,000-20,000	2,590	1,860	720
20,000-30,000	1,510	1,860	1,230
30,000-40,000	410	860	2,100
40,000-50,000	140	540	3,730
over 50,000	150	1,640	10,790
All	20,750	11,150	540

Notes:

[1] All information is in terms of tax units — that is, married couples are counted as one and their incomes combined.

[2] Based on numbers of tax units liable to pay tax under the indexed 1978-79 regime; this is 850,000 more than the number paying tax in 1987-88.

North Sea Oil (Revenue)

Mr. Mullin asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give details of the North Sea oil revenue received by the Treasury for each year since 1979.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to the reply*, 23 July 1987]: The latest figures for Government revenues from United Kingdom oil and gas production in each year from 1979-80 are as follows:

£ million

	Royalties	*Petroleum Revenue Tax[1]*	*Corporation Tax before ACT set-off*	*Supplementary Petroleum Duty*
1979-80	628	1,435	250	—
1980-81	992	2,410	341	—
1981-82	1,396	2,390	681	2,025
1982-83	1,632	3,274	521	2,395
1983-84	1,904	6,017	877	—
1984-85	2,426	7,177	2,425	—
1985-86	2,057	6,375	2,911	—
1986-87	918	1,188	2,692	—

[1] Including advance payments.

War Pensions (Taxation)

Mr. Corbett asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost of disregarding for tax purposes war pensions received by *(a)* those under 65 years and *(b)* those over 65 years; and what estimate he has made of the numbers in each category.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: I regret that the information is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Frank Field asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will provide figures comparable to those given to the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore), *Official Report*, 17 July, of the weekly earnings after tax, national insurance and child benefit at *(a)* actual prices and *(b)* constant prices at April of (i) a single person, (ii) a married couple, (iii) a married couple with two children under 11 years of age and (iv) a married couple with four children, two under 11 years of age and one between 11 to 15 years of age and one over 16 years of age, whose gross earnings are not (1) lowest decile, (2) lowest quartile, (3) median, (4) upper quartile, and (5) highest decile for April 1979 under the June 1979 tax-benefit regime at April 1987.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: The information requested cannot be estimated until the results of the 1987 "New Earnings Survey", which provides the detailed earnings distribution, become available towards the end of the year.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Namibia

Mr. Matthew Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what initiatives he intends to take, along with the United Kingdom's European allies, to secure the independence of Namibia.

Mrs. Chalker: We remain fully committed to the United Nations Security Council resolution 435, the only internationally agreed basis for Namibian independence, and shall continue to support United Nations and United States efforts to achieve a negotiated solution.

Disarmament

Mr. Flynn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to initiate nuclear disarmament negotiations under the stipulated provisions of article VI of the 1968 nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Mellor: Article VI of the non-proliferation treaty requires each of the parties to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

The fact that there are presently no nuclear arms control negotiations in which the United Kingdom participates does not imply lack of good faith on our part. As the House knows, we support the objectives of the current US/Soviet nuclear and space talks.

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current situation of the MBFR talks.

Mr. Mellor: We continue to take a full and active part in the negotiations in Vienna on mutual and balanced force reductions. Progress has been disappointing owing to the unwillingness of the Warsaw pact to provide adequate data on force levels or to respond to Western proposals on verification. We shall continue to press the Warsaw pact to respond positively to the Western proposal of December 1985 in which we made a constructive attempt to break the long-standing deadlock by offering to accept reductions in the United States and Soviet troops before agreement on force levels.

Mr. Flynn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what nuclear disarmament negotiations have been undertaken within the provisions of article VI of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty *(a)* since its inception and *(b)* since May 1979.

Mr. Mellor: The following nuclear arms control negotiations have been undertaken since the nuclear non-proliferation treaty entered into force in 1970:

(1) Since 1970, seabed arms control treaty; strategic arms limitation talks (I and II) including the 1972 anti-ballistic missile treaty; threshold test ban treaty; treaty on peaceful nuclear explosions; 1977-1980 trilateral (USA/United Kingdom/USSR) negotiations on a comprehensive test ban treaty.

(2) Since May 1979, 1981-83 Geneva intermediate nuclear force talks; 1982-83 Geneva START talks; 1985—present nuclear and space talks.

Torture

Mrs. Dunwoody asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the United Kingdom is to ratify the United Nations Convention Against Torture.

Mr. Eggar: As I told the House on 5 February 1986, we intend to ratify the convention as soon as possible but we need first to ensure that our current legislation and other arrangements accord with its provisions. For example, the convention would require us in certain circumstances to take jurisdiction over acts of torture committed abroad. Legislation is necessary to ensure that our courts have power to try such cases and to deal with other points arising from the convention before we can ratify it.

Death Penalty

Mrs. Dunwoody asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when Her Majesty's Government will ratify the sixth protocol of the European human rights convention committing the United Kingdom to abolishing the death penalty for peacetime offences.

Mrs. Chalker: The United Kingdom abolished the death penalty for most offences in 1965. Since the question of capital punishment is debated by the House at not infrequent intervals, we have taken the view that it would not be appropriate to sign and ratify the sixth protocol on the basis of any one particular vote of the House on the issue.

Iranian Arms Procurement Office

Mr. Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he intends to take about the Iranian arms procurement office at 4 Victoria Street, London SW1, in the light of the vote of the United Nations Security Council calling for a ceasefire between Iran and Iraq.

Mr. Mellor: We do not believe any action concerning the Iranian military procurement offices in London is appropriate in the light of the recent Security Council resolution on Iran/Iraq. We are supporting the United Nations Secretary-General's attempts to ensure compliance with the resolution.

Colonel R. F. Crowther

Mr. Caborn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the circumstances surrounding the withdrawal of Colonel R. F. Crowther as armed forces attaché of South Africa in the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Chalker: Colonel R. F. Crowther relinquished his duties as the South African armed forces attaché on 17 July on completion of his tour of duty in London.

Mr. Caborn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what date Colonel R. F. Crowther took up the post of South Africa's armed forces attaché to the United Kingdom; and on what date he ceased to hold this post.

Mrs. Chalker: Colonel R. F. Crowther assumed his duties as the South African armed forces attaché on 18 June 1984; he relinquished them on 17 July 1987.

Mr. Caborn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to refuse to grant credentials to any replacement for Colonel R. F. Crowther as the armed forces attaché of South Africa; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: As the House knows, we have already agreed with our European partners not to grant accreditation to military attachés from South Africa. In accordance with that policy, the South Africans were informed on 22 July that we would not grant accreditation to a proposed successor for Colonel Crowther.

Mr. Caborn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what date Colonel R. F. Crowther, the outgoing armed forces attaché in the United Kingdom for South Africa, left the United Kingdom; and when his Department became aware of his impending departure.

Mrs. Chalker: The South African embassy informed us on 3 July 1987 that Colonel Crowther would be relinquishing his duties in London on 17 July. He left the United Kingdom on that day.

Belau

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is Her Majesty's Government's response to the outcome of the eighth plebiscite of the Belauan people on the retention of their 1979 constitution; and what assessment he has made of the extent to which the two further referendums to be held in August relating to United States proposals for defence are consistent with the duties imposed on the United Kingdom and the United States by the creation of the United Nations Strategic Trust Territory which includes Belau (Petan).

Mr. Eggar: A plebiscite was held in Belau (Palau) on 30 June 1987 on the terms of a compact of free association between Belau (Palau) and the United States. It was monitored by a United Nations observer mission chaired by the United Kingdom. We are awaiting the mission's report. The referenda which the Belau (Palau) Government propose to hold in August concern an amendment to the Belauan (Palauan) constitution, and the terms of the compact of free association. Under article 83 of the United Nations charter responsibility for exercising the functions of the United Nations relating to strategic trust territories belongs to the Security Council, with the assistance of the Trusteeship Council.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if the United Nations department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has held any discussions with the United States State Department as to the conduct of the referendum of 6 December in the United Nations Trust Territory of Belau;

(2) whether Her Majesty's Government will be sending official observers to monitor the conduct of the referendum on 6 December in the United Nations Trust Territory of Belau;

(3) whether the United Kingdom representative on the Trusteeship Council will be taking part in the observer delegation sent by the Trusteeship Council to monitor the conduct of the December 6 referendum in the United Nations Trust Territory of Belau;

(4) what is Her Majesty's Government's policy on the referendum taking place in the United Nations Trust Territory of Belau on 6 December.

Mr. Eggar: We are not aware that any referendum is to be held in Belau (Palau) on 6 December 1987.

Embassies and Consular Offices

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give the cost involved in maintaining embassies and consular offices for each of the past five years.

Mr. Eggar: The cost to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of maintaining its 207 posts overseas (including high commissions and missions to international organisations and conferences as well as embassies and consular posts) for each of the past five years is as follows:

	£ million
1983-84	188·5
1984-85	215·6
1985-86	216·2
1986-87	250·5
1987-88	271·0

Analysis of expenditure for 1986-87 is still proceeding. The figure for 1987-88 is an estimate.

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on measures taken to improve embassy security in countries with volatile political systems.

Mr. Eggar: The threat to security at all our missions overseas is under constant review. Additional measures are implemented as necessary to protect individuals, classified information, offices and residences. For security reasons, it is not our practice to reveal specific details about measures taken in particular posts.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the estimated expenditure of his Department in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

Mr. Eggar: The estimated expenditure for the current financial year on management and computer consultancy is as follows. The figures include expenditure for both the diplomatic and aid wings of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

	£
Management Consultancy	255,000
Computer Consultancy	1,020,000

Helsinki Final Act

Mr. Forth asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a further statement on progress with the implementation by the Union of Soviet Republics and Eastern European countries of the provisions of the Helsinki final act during the last six months.

Mr. Mellor: During the last six months to 30 June 1987, Soviet and East European implementation of their Helsinki commitments took on special significance in the light of the third CSCE follow-up meeting currently under way in Vienna and the restructuring taking place in the Soviet Union. Overall, compliance with CSCE commitments continued to be unsatisfactory, in particular as regards breaches of the provisions relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, although the record also continued to vary from country to country.

SECURITY IN EUROPE: PRINCIPLES GUIDING RELATIONS BETWEEN PARTICIPATING STATES; CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES AND CERTAIN ASPECTS OF SECURITY AND DISARMAMENT (BASKET I)

Violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms covered by principle VII, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief continued.

In the Soviet Union, however, the period was marked by a number of positive developments. A significant number of prisoners convicted under the most frequently used "political" articles of the Soviet penal code on anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda and anti-Soviet slander were released early under the terms of unpublished decrees. Permission to emigrate was also granted to some former political prisoners, for instance, Dr. Anatoly Koryagin, who had served half his 12-year sentence for his opposition to Soviet abuse of psychiatry; Sergei Khodorovich, who had served four years in a Labour camp after arranging charity for political prisoners and their families; and former members of the Moscow Helsinki group Tatyana Osipova and her husband Ivan Kovalev. By June the numbers of those released had risen to some 160, although at least 500 more prisoners of conscience were thought to be still serving sentences, including about 180 in mental hospitals.

Those whose sentences were curtailed were not, however, released through an amnesty (in contrast to some of the remaining prisoners of conscience who are expected to be among the beneficiaries of a formal amnesty announced in June in honour of the 70th anniversary of the October revolution). Most were compelled to sign undertakings and several who refused continued to serve their sentences. Well-known political prisoners not released included those sentenced to the harshest category of camps ("special regime") like the Estonian Mart Niklus; Viktoras Petkus and Balys Gajauskas of the Lithuanian Helsinki group; and Levko Lukyanenko and Mikhailo Horyn of the Ukrainian Helsinki group. Only a handful of political victims of psychiatric abuse have so far been released.

There was a welcome and steady increase in numbers of Jews allowed to emigrate. However, fears were expressed by many Jewish refuseniks that the new regulations on entering and leaving the Soviet Union which came into force at the beginning of the year would restrict applications to those with only the closest family members abroad—as stipulated. This would render most of those wishing to leave ineligible to apply. The Jewish community also continued to face difficulties in practising its religion and culture and confiscation of religious material from the homes of Soviet Jews, particularly of refuseniks, continued. Most of the best-known Jewish prisoners of conscience were released; however the Hebrew teacher Alexei Magarik remained imprisoned.

Arrests of Christian believers diminished in the period under review and a number of Baptists and other religious activists were among those released ahead of term. Humanitarian considerations, however, were not always manifest. One baptist who continues to serve his sentence, for example, is 65-year-old N. Boiko, who is now partly paralysed.

There was increased discussion of religious issues in the Soviet press. The Soviet weekly *Literary Gazette* revealed in May that the number of registered mosques (365) was far from adequate for the needs of Muslim believers: as a result more than 1,800 unofficial mosques were operating. It was suggested that at least some of these should be legalised. Other articles in the Soviet press took up the complaints of believers against the arbitrariness of local authorities, for example, in registering places of worship. Side by side with these developments, however, standard calls for a stepping-up of atheist indoctrination and press attacks on individual religious activists continued to be published. The tiny — if growing — Hare Krishna movement in the USSR continued to be a prime target for such attacks. Several of its members, including one of its founders Anatoly Pinyaev, remained in mental hospitals or imprisoned. His fellow adherent, V. Kustrya was sentenced in March to a further three years under the terms of a retrograde 1983 law.

Officials in some non-Russian areas (such as Byelorussia and Moldavia) have continued to criticise and resist attempts to promote local languages and cultures against Russian inroads.

Bulgarian implementation of CSCE commitments changed little over the last six months and the positive developments in the Soviet Union did not trigger any similar changes. Bulgarian interest in the CSCE still concentrated on security issues, whilst principle VII on respect for human rights and fundamental freedom was largely flouted. The practice of religion remained difficult for the non-orthodox denominations, with the Muslim faith particularly severely affected and many mosques remaining closed. Restrictions on attendance at Muslim services and festivals and prohibitions on certain Muslim practices continued. The general situation of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria remained profoundly unsatisfactory, with reports suggesting that the Bulgarian authorities had begun dispersing the Turkish population within Bulgaria by moving a number of families into predominantly Slav areas. Speaking Turkish continued to be forbidden as was listening to Turkish radio broadcast, with non-compliance resulting in heavy fines.

There was a slight improvement in Czechoslovakia's overall implementation of CSCE provisions, but with regression in some areas. Principle VII continued to be disregarded. The authorities continued to keep a wary eye on religious activists and to hinder the work of the churches. Sentences were pronounced in a number of important political trials during the period. In March, 5 members of the Jazz Section Committee, arrested in September 1986, were sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment (some suspended), supposedly for illegal trading and tax fraud. In May, brothers Pavel and Jiri Wonka were sentenced to 21 and 12 months imprisonment respectively for "incitement", relating to Pavel Wonka's attempt to stand as a parliamentary candidate. The Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS) continued to be the target of repressive action. The security services persisted in their efforts to prevent contacts between dissidents and Western officials. Despite this, in February my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Sussex (Mr. Renton), then Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, was able to hold meetings with certain Charter 77 signatories and members of the Jazz Section. Three Western journalists were admitted to the Jazz Section trial, and some Western diplomats to other human rights trials, representing a significant, if limited, improvement on past practice.

The GDR's implementation record during the last six months was mixed. The increase in the numbers of those below pensionable age allowed to visit the West seen in 1986 was by and large maintained. But the GDR authorities continued to refuse many applications to visit the West or to emigrate; and to create difficulties for citizens seeking information about human rights or

Western contacts. Regrettably the GDR's policies have so far prevented the 750th anniversary of Berlin being an occasion for greater contacts between those living in both parts of the city. The GDR's basic policy of preventing the bulk of the population from travelling to the West and shooting at individuals who try to cross the Berlin wall and inner-German border was unchanged.

Hungary remained the most open of the Eastern European countries and its record of compliance with CSCE commitments was the best. Church-State relations remained harmonious. Freedom of expression was still restricted, with limited selective action against vocal critics. However, there was a move towards greater openness in the workings of the Government, with the appointment of a Government spokesman.

The improvement in Poland's human rights record initiated by the clemency law of July 1986 which led to the release of political prisoners in September 1986 was sustained. No further prison sentences for political offences were imposed. Instead the authorities dealt with political offences through the use of heavy fines and confiscation of property. However, trade union pluralism remained illegal and freedom of association seriously circumscribed. There was no change in the freedom allowed to Poles to practise religion, and meetings continued between Church and state within the established framework. In addition, the Pope visited Poland in June and made a number of firm statements in support of human rights. In spite of censorship, the level of real press debate remained relatively high.

Romania's poor record on implementation of the final act was unrelieved. There was no freedom to express dissenting views and the press continued to be heavily circumscribed. During Mr. Gorbachev's visit to Romania, seven Western journalists were refused admission to the country. Religious freedom continued to be restricted, with non-conforming groups and individuals liable to harassment and arrest. Cultural facilities for national minorities were not freely available. Travel remained difficult for all and contacts with foreigners were discouraged.

CONFIDENCE AND SECURITY-BUILDING MEASURES

Warsaw pact countries complied fairly strictly with the commitments entered into in September 1986 with the adoption of the Stockholm document. Certain countries even supplied more information than was required by the document. For one combined exercise with Czechoslovakia ("Druzhba '87") the Soviet Union provided notification even though its participation was below the relevant threshold. During the period under review the United Kingdom sent observers to four exercises: the Czechoslovak exercise Zima from 2 to 6 February; a Polish exercise from 9 to 14 March; and two joint GDR/Soviet exercises which took place in the GDR from 23 to 30 March and 10 to 16 April.

CO-OPERATION IN THE FIELD OF ECONOMICS, OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND OF THE ENVIRONMENT (BASKET II)

There were a number of interesting developments in the Soviet Union in this period, such as the proclaimed reorganisation of the Soviet foreign trade apparatus through the introduction of a small degree of decentralisation; the adoption of a law allowing joint ventures in the Soviet Union; and the publication of a draft law on the state enterprise allowing for a greater degree of self-financing and self-administration at the factory level. A new United Kingdom-Soviet chamber of commerce opened in Moscow in March. But in general there was virtually no improvement in the conditions for Western business men in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Day-to-day annoyances, such as inadequate and expensive housing and the lack of sufficient telephone and telecommunications installations, persisted. There was no discernible improvement in the provision of economic and commercial data, and the lack of reliable statistical information continued to hinder business analyses. There was a growing awareness in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe of the importance of environmental issues. In the Soviet Union in particular this resulted in a number of concrete measures such as the abandonment of plans to reverse the flow of the Siberian rivers and the conversion or closure of polluting factories. However, much remains to be done.

CO-OPERATION IN HUMANITARIAN AND OTHER FIELDS (BASKET III)

During the last six months there was a considerable increase in travel between Eastern countries, as well as easier availability of visas for visits to relatives in the West in most cases — most notably in the GDR. The publication of new Soviet emigration regulations in January also clarified the position for Soviet citizens wanting to travel abroad, particularly in family reunification cases, although there was much criticism of the content from would-be emigrants. Arbitrary decisions continued to be made and difficult cases usually remained unresolved, including those where the Soviet authorities continued, dubiously, to allege state security as grounds for refusal. In Czechoslovakia, family visits in either direction remained unsatisfactory. Romania continued to discourage contacts with foreigners, with marriage applications inordinately delayed. Restrictions remained in force in nearly all Warsaw pact countries on individuals wishing to visit the West, as well as on access to Western diplomatic missions. In Bulgaria there was ample evidence that those who entered Western missions or had contact with Western diplomats suffered as a consequence.

Developments in Mr. Gorbachev's policy of "glasnost" led to increasing amounts of information coming from Moscow. There were more press conferences and improvements in the quality of press, radio and television reporting, including uncensored TV interviews with senior Western spokesmen (such as with my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in March) and the publication of articles by Western statesmen and journalists, generally accompanied by critical Soviet commentaries. On the whole, however, the work of the media remained under close supervision and Western non-Communist publications continued to be virtually unobtainable. Jamming of the BBC Russian service and Voice of America ceased; but it continued in other cases, for example, BBC Polish service broadcasts on shortwave. In early June, East German police brutally beat up West German journalists who had been seeking to observe incidents in east Berlin in which the police had prevented crowds of young people from gathering near the Wall to listen to pop concerts taking place on the Western side.

CO-OPERATION AND EXCHANGES IN THE FIELD OF CULTURE AND EDUCATION

Many Eastern European countries expressed a renewed desire for closer cultural co-operation. Routine exchanges were generally satisfactory, impeded only by occasional bureaucratic constraints. There was much evidence of a loosening up of exchanges with Hungary outside the rigid

quotas of the cultural exchanges programme and the period was marked by the signing in March by my right hon. and learned Friend during his visit to Budapest of an agreement on co-operation in the fields of education, culture, science and technology.

A United Kingdom/Soviet memorandum of understanding concerning new directions in co-operation in the fields of information, culture and education was also signed in March, during the visit of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the Soviet Union, reflecting the interest in both countries in increasing the volume and variety of cultural exchanges, and opening doors to increased cultural exchange outside the confines of the biennial agreement on relations in the scientific, educational and cultural fields. While primarily a facilitating document, this also contained a number of specific commitments to which the Soviet Union had not previously subscribed in documents of this kind. Although Soviet insistence on strict reciprocity was a continuing difficulty, the period as a whole saw the development of encouraging and positive trends in these areas.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Elderly Clergymen

Mr. William Powell asked the right hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners what policy is adopted towards the payment of stipends to incumbent clergymen aged over 70 years.

Mr. Alison: The Commissioners' general recommendation is that their stipend should be set at such a level as to ensure that from all sources, including the state pension for a single person (whether the incumbent concerned is single or married), they receive an income not less than the recommended national minimum stipend. It is then for the diocese to determine the stipend level in each individual case in the light of this recommendation.

Mr. William Powell asked the right hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners, how many incumbent clergymen are over 70 years old.

Mr. Alison: Ninety-eight at 30 June 1987.

THE ARTS

Paintings (Damage)

Mr. David Nicholson asked the Minister for the Arts if he will list the occasions in the last 10 years that paintings in the United Kingdom's major art galleries have been criminally damaged; what estimates exist of the repairs then made necessary; what were the names of the persons consequently convicted; and what penalties or treatment resulted.

Mr. Luce: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before the summer recess; therefore, I shall write to my hon. Friend and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Minister for the Arts what is the estimated expenditure of the Office of Arts and Libraries in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

Mr. Luce: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before the summer recess; therefore, I shall write to my hon. Friend and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Expenditure

Mr. Amess asked the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on measures to encourage the arts in regions outside London.

Mr. Luce: I am concerned to ensure that excellence in the arts is accessible in all parts of the country. In the past three years, the Arts Council has instituted a number of regional developments in pursuance of its "Glory of the Garden" policies; the funding of the regional arts associations has been increased, untill they now receive over £19 million a year from the council (exclusive of Greater London Arts) and they have, in conjunction with local authorities, provided arts facilities in every region; the British Film Institute has facilitated the opening of media centres in Cardiff and Manchester; national museums have established branches outside London; and the Museum and Galleries Commission has taken steps to support touring exhibitions of works of art.

Museums and Galleries

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts (1) if he will list any expenditure by his Department on museums and galleries for each year since 1979 other than on the national museum and Museums and Galleries Commission;

(2) if he will list his Department's expenditure on the Museums and Galleries Commission and its predecessor in every year since 1979; and if he will show how much was allocated to each of the seven English area museum councils and, within the area museum council for the south-east to the London museum service;

(3) if he will list his Department's expenditure on *(a)* the operating costs, *(b)* the capital costs and *(c)* the purchase grants of each of the national museums for which he is responsible since 1979.

Mr. Luce: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before the summer recess; therefore, I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

SCOTLAND

School Placements

Mr. Galbraith asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has had from parents complaining about school placements and seeking changes in the relevant legislation.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 15 July 1987. I receive many representations about placing requests from parents, some of whom seek changes in legislation.

Rural Workshops

Mr. Steel asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will make a statement on the future of the development of rural workshops scheme administered by

the Scottish Development Agency, with particular reference to the funds allocated and the number of applications which have been rejected due to inadequate funding;

(2) what representations he has received on the level of funding of the development of rural workshops scheme administered by the Scottish Development Agency;

(3) what policies his Department is pursuing to encourage the conversion or extension of buildings in rural areas to create workshops.

Mr. Rifkind: The development of rural area workshops scheme was launched by the Scottish Development Agency in November/December 1984 for a pilot period of two years with an annual budget of £300,000. The scheme, which was aimed at encouraging the provision of workshop accommodation in rural areas, proved so popular that on two subsequent occasions the budget was, with ministerial approval, increased so that over the pilot period a total of some £1·3 million has been allocated by the agency to the scheme. As agreed at the scheme's inception it, together with the agency's programme for rural initiatives and developments scheme, was the subject of a review at the end of the pilot period to determine how best future needs might be met. The consultants' report of the review of both schemes has been under consideration, and my officials and the agency are currently discussing possible successor arrangements. These discussions are still at an early stage and it would not be appropriate for me to comment on them. I understand from the agency that no applications have been rejected due to insufficient funding but that some are being held in abeyance pending a decision on future arrangements. I have received one representation on the level of funding for the scheme.

Maryhill Jobcentre

Mrs. Fyfe asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total of vacancies available at Maryhill jobcentre on 8 May.

Mr. Lang: Vacancy statistics for Maryhill jobcentre are included with those notified to Glasgow, West jobcentre: separate figures for Maryhill are not obtainable.

On 8 May 1987 the number of vacancies notified, and remaining unfilled, at Glasgow, West jobcentre totalled 741. On the same date a further 402 community programme vacancies had been notified to the jobcentre.

This information is available in the Library.

Labour Statistics

Mrs. Fyfe asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the unemployment levels in Maryhill constituency for the current period and at the same time for each year since 1979, giving separate totals for males, females and school-leavers under 18 years.

Mr. Lang: Unemployment statistics for parliamentary constituencies did not become available until the introduction of electoral ward-based data in June 1983. The numbers of male and female unemployed claimants in the Glasgow, Maryhill constituency, and the equivalent figures for school-leavers under 18 years of age, in June each year from 1983 to 1987, are shown in the table:

	All Unemployed Claimants			*Unemployed School Leavers under 18 (included in All Unemployed)*		
	Male	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
1983	5,382	1,824	7,206	210	190	400
1984	5,359	1,906	7,265	201	169	370
1985	5,755	2,057	7,812	193	150	343
1986	5,882	2,087	7,969	214	188	402
1987	5,773	1,971	7,744	192	145	337

These figures are not comparable because of changes in the basis of the count.

The information is available in the Library.

Mr. McAllion asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the seasonally adjusted unemployment figures for Scotland and the Dundee travel-to-work area for the last available date, and figures in May 1979, June 1983 and June 1987, compiled on a similar basis.

Mr. Lang: On a comparable basis, seasonally adjusted unemployment in Scotland was 333,600 in June 1987, 308,200 in June 1983 and 150,400 in May 1979. I regret that corresponding figures for the Dundee travel-to-work area cannot be provided since seasonally adjusted unemployment figures are not available below Scotland level.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for *(a)* each postal code district and *(b)* each local authority ward the numbers unemployed in June 1983 and June 1987.

Mr. Lang: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Departmental Staff

Mrs. Fyfe asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has a target for achieving a greater representation of women at all levels of jobs held in his Department.

Mr. Rifkind: My Department, like other Government Departments, has a policy of equal opportunities for men and women: I have not set any specific target for the representation of women.

A7 Trunk Route

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the cause and extent of any delay in the contract undertaken by the Scottish Development Department to demolish Nos. 3 and 4 Sandbed to make way for a new traffic roundabout in the A7 trunk route through Hawick; what penalties attach to the contractors responsible for any delay; and whether he can now give a completion date for the project.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The demolition of 3 and 4 Sandbed, Hawick, has been unavoidably delayed because of work associated with the resiting of public utilities. No penalties are involved and this work is now completed. The contractor responsible for the road works and demolition of the buildings will begin on site in August, with completion of the scheme due in November 1987. The demolition of the buildings will be carried out at the beginning of this contract.

School Transport

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* those local education

authorities in Scotland which exercise their discretion under section 51(1) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 and provide free school transport for school pupils who live within the statutory walking distance from school, together with the walking distance used to determine the right to a free lift in each case.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information taken from the annual survey of school transport undertaken in September 1986 is as follows:—

Authority and Criteria used

Fife and Lothian
More than 2 miles for all pupils.

Central
1 mile—under 8 years.
2 miles—8 years and over.

Strathclyde
More than 1 mile—primary.
More than 2 miles—secondary.

In addition each authority exercises its discretion by providing free transport within the statutory walking distance in special circumstances eg. safety or medical reasons.

Farm Grants

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has yet completed his inquiry into the simultaneous award of farm grants to enhance the agricultural value of the same farmland at Houpasley at Roberton for which forestry approval for tree planting has been given; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Investigations into this matter are not yet complete. My right hon. and learned Friend will write to the hon. Member as soon as he is in a position to do so.

Scottish Development Agency

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been spent by the Scottish Development Agency in each year since 1979 *(a)* in the Dunfermline, East constituency and *(b)* in Fife in the following areas: (i) environmental improvement, (ii) industrial investment, (iii) advance factory building and (iv) total spending; and if he will express these figures as a percentage of spending by the Scottish Development Agency in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Torness Power Station

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the loading of nuclear fuel at Torness power station and on contingency plans to deal with accidents at Torness, including the area of the emergency evacuation zone; and if he will list those responsible for protecting and informing the public.

Mr. Lang: Her Majesty's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate granted consent to the South of Scotland Electricity Board on Manday 20 July to allow fuel loading in the first reactor at Torness. I am advised by the Board that fuel loading has commenced.

The inspectorate has also approved the emergency arrangements, including arrangements for evacuation within 3 km of the site, in terms of the site licensing requirements. Action for the protection and notification of the public in the event of an accident is a matter for Lothian and Borders police, based upon advice from the board or the Government technical adviser if one is appointed.

Scottish Special Housing Association

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will undertake a review of the charges imposed by the Scottish Special Housing Association on owner-occupiers who purchase houses from the association, for the upkeep of amenity areas in the vicinity of houses; whether he will consider the possibility of assimulating these charges into general rate-borne expenditure; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: These charges arise from a condition included in the sale agreement under which former tenants of the Association have purchased their houses and the Scottish Development Department already keeps in touch with the Association on this matter. No review is therefore necessary. It is for district councils to decide whether they wish to assume responsibility for such amenity areas in the light of authorities' priorities and the resources available to them.

Prisoners

Mr. Dewar asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many of the people presently in prison in Scotland have a last known address in a psychiatric hospital.

Mr. Rifkind: Information on prisoners' last known addresses is not held centrally and could not be obtained except at disproportionate expense.

A74

Mr. Dewar asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when the work on upgrading the A74 road will start; and when the work will be completed.

Mr. Rifkind: The timetable for implementing the upgrading of the A74 to motorway standard will depend on detailed studies still to be carried out, and on the time taken to complete any necessary statutory procedures.

Mr. Dewar asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the estimated cost of upgrading the A74 road to motorway standard.

Mr. Rifkind: At present the cost is estimated to be about £200 million, but more precise estimates will be made in due course.

Mr. Dewar asked the Secretary of State for Scotland to what extent the upgrading of the A74 road to motorway standard will involve a new line of route; and how much land will have to be purchased for this purpose.

Mr. Rifkind: Feasibility studies will shortly be commissioned to assess the best way of implementing this project. Until these have been carried out it is not possible to determine whether the best solution is upgrading on the existing road alignment or building on a new alignment. That choice will affect the land requirements.

Mr. Forth asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the total cost of the A74 upgrading and the reason for that upgrading; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: At present the cost is estimated to be about £200 million, but more precise

estimates will be made once detailed studies have been carried out. The A74 is to be upgraded to motorway because it is the Government's policy to improve key roads and the A74 is Scotland's main link with the south.

Mr. Forth asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the design capacity of the upgraded A74; and what is the current traffic volume.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The design capacity of a rural two-lane motorway is 54,000 vehicles per day. The current daily traffic volume on the A74 in Scotland is some 19,000 vehicles. However the normal threshold figure for considering provision of a motorway is 28,000 vehicles per day in a design year 15 years after completion. Current projections for the A74 exceed this figure.

Street Lighting

Mr. Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will arrange for his Department to publicise the merits of better and more modern street lighting as a means of dealing with street crime; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The British Standards Institution is currently reviewing all road lighting standards. A working party of the Institution is preparing a code of practice concerned with lighting for urban centres and other public amenity areas. I understand that aspects of security and safety are being taken into account in drafting the code.

A1

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will initiate a comprehensive review of safety and other factors on the A1 road between Edinburgh and the English border, involving consultation with local communities and road users; and if he will publish a report on Her Majesty's Government's plans for the future development of that road.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The safety of the A1, and of all other Scottish trunk roads, is continuously under review. All potential accident black spots are automatically inspected and, when necessary, remedial work is carried out. As to future plans, consultants are currently examining roads south of Edinburgh with a view to recommending a route strategy. I shall make an announcement about their findings in due course.

Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next expects to meet the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to discuss the implementation of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: At present I have no plans to meet the convention on this subject. My Department has been in touch with officials of the Convention about provisions proposed for implementation in the current financial year and further discussions will be held in due course.

National Health Service (Amendment) Act 1986

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to meet the Scottish Society for the Mentally Handicapped and other appropriate voluntary organisations to discuss the implementation of the National Health Service (Amendment) Act 1986 in respect of joint planning provisions.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: We have made clear our preference for a voluntary system of joint planning and my right hon. and learned Friend has no plans at present to introduce mandatory arrangements. We are, however closely monitoring progress on the preparation of joint plans and Health Boards are aware of the need to complete outstanding plans as quickly as possible.

Exercises (Gartcosh)

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the nature of the police and public sector exercises in Gartcosh, Lanarkshire, in the week beginning Monday 13 July; what were the costs involved; what steps were taken to inform the public in advance; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: A routine exercise to test contingency plans for emergency incidents was held by Strathclyde Police at Gartcosh over the period 7-11 July. Final costs are not yet to hand but I understand from the Chief Constable that the police budget for the exercise, which is unlikely to be exceeded, was £20,000. The costs of those Government Departments which were involved have not been separately assessed.

I further understand from the Chief Constable that prior notice of the exercise was given to householders in the immediate vicinity of the site but that one of the lessons learnt is that intimation could have been wider.

Hospitality

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been spent by his Department on official hospitality in each of the last two financial years.

Mr. Rifkind: The amounts spent were as follows:

1985-86 £	*1986-87* £
35,815	38,315

Banff and Buchan District Council

Mr. Salmond asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what grant penalty he intends to impose on Banff and Buchan district council; by how much its budgeted expenditure for 1987-88 is below the expenditure need assessment for the authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The grant penalty for Banff and Buchan is set out in the Rate Support Grant (Scotland) (No. 2) Order 1987 which the House approved on 20 July, and is £81,384, arising from a budgeted overspend against guideline of £81,000. The Council's budgeted expenditure for 1987-88 is £512,000 below its assessment of relative expenditure need, but 11·2 per cent. above its expenditure in 1986-87, a substantial growth in real terms. If the Council brings its expenditure down to guideline at outturn the penalty will be restored to it.

Electricity Generation

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Scotland by what amount available electricity generated in Scotland exceeds normal demand.

Mr. Lang: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave yesterday.

Abortions

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will list the numbers of National Health Service abortions performed in Scotland on women resident in each health board area in 1986 and the estimated numbers of women aged 15 to 44 years resident in each health board area in Scotland in mid-1986;

(2) if he will list the numbers of legal abortions performed in Great Britain on women resident in each health board area in Scotland in 1986.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Following is the information:

Health Board	*All abortions in Great Britain on women resident in Scotland*[1]	*NHS abortions in Scotland*[1]	*Estimated female population aged 15-44 at 30 June 1986*
Argyll and Clyde	711	591	97,277
Ayrshire and Arran	628	555	81,227
Borders	137	134	20,711
Dumfries and Galloway	279	225	30,097
Fife	682	661	74,941
Forth Valley	494	450	59,982
Grampian	1,199	1,135	113,004
Greater Glasgow	1,913	1,620	207,651
Highland	458	434	43,210
Islands[2]	98	95	14,749
Lanarkshire	877	720	127,921
Lothian	1,772	1,712	170,102
Tayside	1,036	1,010	83,297

[1] Provisional.
[2] Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles.

NHS Resources

Mr. Galbraith asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the latest percentage estimates of the increased demand for National Health Service resources in Scotland due to demographic change for the years 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The Government's expenditure plans for 1987-88 to 1989-90 allow an annual increase of 1 per cent. in provision made for hospital and community health services in Scotland to meet estimated demand growth caused by demographic changes and other factors. Health boards will also be expected to continue with their economy and efficiency programme which, in the current year, are expected to divert the equivalent of 1½ per cent. of revenue allocation into direct patient care.

Historic Buildings

Mr. Michael J. Martin asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what funds he made available to the National Trust for Scotland for the upkeep of historic buildings for the years 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Maintenance Grants to the National Trust for Scotland were as follows:

	£
1983-84	87,189
1984-85	101,585
1985-86	115,000

Babcocks

Mr. Allen Adams asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what information was available to him, prior to the announcement on the takeover of FKI Electrical Group of Babcocks; what guarantees were *(a)* sought and *(b)* given on the maintenance of Babcocks' Scottish plant; what information he has as to the number of employees at Babcocks; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend and I have received no prior information about the merger announcement. I understand that Babcock employs some 2,500 at Renfrew, Dumbarton and Paisley. The merger will be considered by the Director-General of Fair Trading, who will advise the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on whether to refer the case to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Rating Reform

Mr. Dewar asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he intends to lay the commencement order under the Abolition of Rates &c. (Scotland) Act 1987; what further orders subject to parliamentary procedure will be made in order to implement in full the Act over the next 12 months, and when; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: I intend that the commencement order should come into operation before the end of August. Details of the main groups of regulations to be made under the Act in the next few months were given by my hon. Friend the Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Mr. Lang) in the course of a debate on the implementation of the Act which took place on Monday 13 July [*Official Report*, column 876-77].

Hospital Consultants

Mr. Galbraith asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will take steps to procure information on the number of consultants, whole-time and part-time, in each specialty in each hospital in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I shall consider whether to enhance the information available in "Scottish Health Statistics" in the context of developing computerised personnel and manpower systems for health boards.

Action on Smoking and Health

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what grant is currently paid by his Department to Action on Smoking and Health in the current year; what grant will be paid in the succeeding year; and when he last had a meeting with the organisation's officers.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The Scottish Committee of Action on Smoking and Health will receive an annual grant-in-aid from the Scottish Home and Health Department of £31,000 in the current financial year. The level of grant for 1988-89 has still to be decided. Officials of the Scottish Home and Health Department met representatives of the Scottish Committee of Action on Smoking and Health on 6 June 1986. A further meeting is due to take place later this year.

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to transfer the funding of Action on Smoking and Health from public to private sources.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My right hon. and learned Friend has no such plans at present.

Health Boards

Mr. Galbraith asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the National Health Service per capita expenditure for each of the health boards in Scotland, to include the charges retained by family practitioners.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information for 1985-86 is as follows:

Health Board	*Per Capita (£)*
Argyll and Clyde	303·06
Ayrshire and Arran	281·12
Borders	291·74
Dumfries and Galloway	334·94
Fife	275·35
Forth Valley	327·97
Grampian	326·01
Greater Glasgow	466·41
Highland	352·91
Lanarkshire	280·98
Lothian	380·41
Orkney	284·22
Shetland	279·05
Tayside	415·07
Western Isles	316·53
Scotland	353·86

Notes:

(1.) The expenditure figures used are taken from the annual accounts submitted to the Department by Health Boards. They are inclusive of charges paid by patients and retained by dental, pharmaceutical and ophthalmic practitioners. These charges amounted to £31·9 million, or £6·22 per capita, for Scotland as a whole.

(2.) Figures do not include expenditure on support services provided by the Common Services Agency on the main capital programme, or on the programme for the upgrading of the NHS estate.

(3.) The population figures used are mid-year estimates of resident population for 1985. The distribution of funds to Health Boards in Scotland is determined by population weighted according to age, sex and local mortality rates; by the amount of health care provided for patients from neighbouring areas (cross boundary flow), by teaching hospital costs, by a number of other commitments, and also by the extent to which individual Boards benefit by the operation of the resources equalisation process. It is therefore not possible to draw reliable conclusions from comparisons of per capita expenditure by Health Board based on resident population figures which make no allowance for these factors.

Mr. Bill Walker asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has revised the financial allocations to health boards for 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Since the House was informed of this year's allocations on 11 March an additional £35 million has been made available. This brings to £1,570 million the allocation to health boards to meet their gross recurrent expenditure commitments on hospitals and community health services in 1987-88. After expected income is taken into account, the net cash limited allocations to individual Health boards are as follows:

Health Boards	*Recurrent Recurrent (net) £ million*
Argyll and Clyde	112·583
Ayrshire and Arran	82·854
Borders	24·148
Dumfries and Galloway	40·380
Fife	77·651
Forth Valley	74·095
Grampian	142·411
Greater Glasgow	408·926
Highland	58·838
Lanarkshire	128·691
Lothian	251·390
Orkney	4·406
Shetland	5·190
Tayside	145·277
Western Isles	8·036
Total	[1]1564·876

[1] Includes £14·06 million allocated outwith the SHARE formula for specific commitments such as the national cardiac surgery service and for new developments in health care.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the estimated expenditure of his Department in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

Mr. Malcolm Rifkind: Expenditure by my Department on external management and computer consultancies in 1987-88 is currently estimated at £286,700.

UK 2000

Mr. Worthington asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what activity there has been by UK 2000 in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

School Meals

Mr. Maxton asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what are the results of the annual census of school meals in Scotland held in January;

(2) if he will publish a table showing *(a)* the cost of fixed school meals in primary and secondary schools in each region, division, or island authority in Scotland in January and *(b)* the average amount spent on cafeteria meals;

(3) if he will publish a table showing *(a)* the total number of staff employed in the school meals service in January in each region, division or island authority in Scotland and *(b)* the number of staff employed for (i) 30 or more hours per week and (ii) less than 30 hours per week.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Coal Industry

Mr. O'Neill asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list by region for each year since and including 1976 the opencast coal mining applications that have been considered by him on appeal, and the results of those appeals in each case.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Education Costs

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the latest figure for expenditure per pupil on books and on equipment in *(a)* primary schools, *(b)* secondary schools and *(c)* special schools; and what are the comparable figures for each of the years since 1978-79, in cash terms and real terms using 1986-87 prices and using an index of 100 for 1978-79.

Mr. Michael Forsyth [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: The information available is given in the following tables which have been compiled from local authority financial returns. Expenditure on equipment was not separately identified in these returns until 1982-83. There have been some variations from year to year in the recording of expenditure under these 2 headings. In particular some of the figures for expenditure on text and library books may include some expenditure on items of equipment.

Table 1—Expenditure per pupil on text and library books and on educational tools, equipment and materials at outturn prices (£)

Year	Books			Educational tools, equipment and materials		
	Primary	Secondary	Special	Primary	Secondary	Special
1978-79	4·54	8·31	7·27	n/a	n/a	n/a
1979-80	5·49	9·61	11·25	n/a	n/a	n/a
1980-81	5·84	9·29	12·20	n/a	n/a	n/a
1981-82	6·54	9·77	12·17	n/a	n/a	n/a
1982-83	7·03	10·03	13·64	8·18	27·33	48·46
1983-84	8·99	13·35	22·64	7·28	25·36	42·11
1984-85	9·55	13·83	21·41	8·91	30·09	57·77
1985-86	8·91	13·47	21·37	8·33	30·26	53·42

Table 2 —Expenditure per pupil on text and library books and on educational tools, equipment and materials adjusted to 1986-87 prices using the GDP deflator (£)

Year	Books			Educational tools, equipment and materials		
	Primary	Secondary	Special	Primary	Secondary	Special
1978-79	8·57	15·69	13·72	n/a	n/a	n/a
1979-80	8·87	15·52	18·17	n/a	n/a	n/a
1980-81	7·95	12·65	16·61	n/a	n/a	n/a
1981-82	8·11	12·11	15·09	n/a	n/a	n/a
1982-83	8·13	11·60	11·80	9·46	31·60	56·02
1983-84	9·95	14·77	25·06	8·06	28·07	46·60
1984-85	10·13	14·68	22·72	9·46	31·93	61·31
1985-86	8·91	13·47	21·37	8·33	30·26	53·42

Table 3: Expenditure per pupil on text and library books adjusted to 1986-87 prices using the GDP deflator, expressed as an index with 1978-79 = 100

Year	Primary	Secondary	Special
1978-79	100	100	100
1979-80	103·5	98·9	132·4
1980-81	92·8	80·6	121·1
1981-82	94·6	77·2	110·0
1982-83	94·9	73·9	86·0
1983-84	116·1	94·1	182·7
1984-85	118·2	93·6	165·6
1985-86	104·0	85·9	155·8

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will publish a table showing the amount spent by local authorities on *(a)* school transport and *(b)* school meals in the latest year for which figures are available; and what are the comparable figures for each year since 1978-79 in cash terms and real terms using 1986-87 prices and using an index of 100 for 1978-79.

Mr. Michael Forsyth [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: The information is set out in the table:

Year	School Meals (gross expenditure) Cash £000's	Adjusted to 1986-87 prices using the GDP Deflator £000's	Index	Year	School Transport Cash £000's	Adjusted to 1986-87 prices using the GDP Deflator Index
1978-79	49,055	95,377	100	15,876	30,867	100
1979-80	54,729	91,054	95	19,742	32,845	106
1980-81	56,052	78,618	82	22,508	31,570	102
1981-82	57,479	73,412	77	25,800	32,952	107
1982-83	57,684	68,693	72	31,921	38,013	123
1983-84	60,347	68,796	72	28,257	31,213	104
1984-85	60,680	66,331	70	28,401	31,046	101
1985-86	62,715	64,601	68	29,299	30,180	98

Note: Figures for 1986-87 are not yet available.

SDA (Expenditure)

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish, for each parliamentary constituency, the amounts spent on *(a)* industrial investments and *(b)* environmental improvements by the Scottish Development Agency in each year since 1983.

Mr. Lang [*pursuant to his reply*, 3 July 1987, c. *202*]: I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

Rating Reform

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list all the studies compiled on likely collection rates for the community charge, and if he will place them in the Library.

Mr. Lang [*pursuant to his reply*, 7 July 1987]: My right hon. and learned Friend is not aware of any published systematic study assessing the levels of likely community charge collection rates in Scotland.

Nursery Education

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the proportion of children aged 3 and 4 who, in 1986-87, were in receipt of nursery education in *(a)* each local education authority area and *(b)* Scotland as a whole.

Mr. Michael Forsyth [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 July 1987, c. *78*]: Information for 1986-87 is not available: the latest available information is set out in the following table:

Percentages of Three and Four year old pupils[1] in Education Authority Nursery Schools by Education Authority Area and Scotland—September 1984

Authority	Percentages Three Year Olds	Four Year Olds	Three & Four Year Olds
Borders	5·2	25·0	15·2
Central	17·2	45·6	31·2
Dumfries and Galloway	2·6	14·6	8·7
Fife	17·5	68·4	42·8
Grampian	11·2	25·8	18·6
Highland	4·4	17·1	10·5
Lothian	34·3	56·4	45·3
Strathclyde	17·1	38·4	27·6
Tayside	15·5	30·1	22·6
Orkney	14·1	22·4	18·3
Shetland	10·8	16·5	13·6

Authority	Percentages Three Year Olds	Four Year Olds	Three & Four Year Olds
Western Isles	0·0	0·0	0·0
Scotland	17·4	39·2	28·2

[1] Includes full-time and part-time pupils.

DEFENCE

Cobra Counter Artillery Battery Radar Location System

Mr. Wilkinson asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will make a statement on progress on the Cobra counter artillery battery radar location system and on international collaboration by the United Kingdom on the project.

Mr. Sainsbury: The three collaborative partners have recently concluded their evaluation of proposals from three competing consortia. Detailed contractual negotiations are now opening and final contractor selection would depend on the outcome of these negotiations. At the same time, options other than a collaborative development are also under consideration, and a decision whether to proceed with a collaborative project is not expected to be taken before the end of this year.

Low-Flying Aircraft

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Defence to what extent *(a)* low-flying by the Royal Air Force and *(b)* the number of public complaints thereat has increased over the last 10 years.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to the replies given to the hon. Member for Merionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas) on 22 April, *Official Report* columns *584* and *585*. Thus far (as at end of June) 1987 figures are 74,421 sorties and 1,912 complaints.

Edinburgh Airport (Exercises)

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Defence which military jet aircraft are being deployed from Edinburgh airport in the course of military flying exercises; in what circumstances; and for how long.

Mr. Freeman: The airfield at Edinburgh airport adjoining RAF Turnhouse provides diversion landing

facilities for aircraft from RAF Leuchars. From time to time, various military aircraft also stage through Edinburgh en route to or from exercises elsewhere.

Equipment Orders

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Defence; pursuant to his reply, *Official Report* 13 July, column *344*, whether he will list those categories of overseas orders for defence equipment placed in the United Kingdom which do not have to be notified to the Defence Export Services Organisation and which are exempt from licence arrangements.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Export of Goods (Control) Order 1985, as amended, identifies the equipments, materials and technologies for which an export licence is required. Defence exports not so identified may be exported without a licence and without reference to the Defence Export Services Organisation.

Benbecula Airport (Land)

Mr. Macdonald asked the Secretary of State for Defence if his Department has any plans to buy or lease from the Civil Aviation Authority any part of the land area known as An Tom, on the north-east side of Benbecula airport.

Mr. Freeman: The land area known as An Tom has been leased from the Civil Aviation Authority since 1972.

UKADAGE Radar Stations

Mr. Macdonald asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the acreages of the operational radar sites of the UKADAGE radar stations at *(a)* Saxa Vord, Shetland, *(b)* South Clettraval, North Uist, *(c)* RAF Buchan, Aberdeenshire, *(d)* Bishopscourt, Northern Ireland and *(e)* Boulmer, Northumberland.

Mr. Freeman: It is not possible to specify the acreages of the operational radar sites listed as they form an integral part of RAF Station complexes. However, the acreages for each of the RAF stations are as follows:

	Acres
(a) Saxa Vord, Shetland	43·63 (freehold)
(b) South Clettraval, North Uist	15·17 (freehold)
(c) RAF Buchan, Aberdeenshire	91·15 (freehold) 25·98 (leasehold)
(d) Bishopscourt, Northern Ireland	585·07 (freehold) 19·65 (leasehold)
(e) Boulmer, Northumberland	138·04 (freehold) 19·73 (leasehold)

No. 4 Flying Training School, RAF

Mr. Macdonald asked the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration has been given to the establishment of a permanent training detachment from No. 4 Flying Training School, Royal Air Force, at *(a)* RAF Stornoway and *(b)* Benbecula airport.

Mr. Freeman: There are no plans to establish a permanent training detachment at either RAF Stornoway or Benbecula airport.

Western Isles (Military Construction Projects)

Mr. Macdonald asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list all currently planned military construction projects in the Western Isles.

Mr. Freeman: The major projects currently planned in the Western Isles are as follows;

RAF Stornoway
Hardened aircraft shelters with associated support buildings.
Additional fuel storage with interconnecting on base pipeline.
Jetty at Gob Shilldinish with pipeline to airfield
Improved air traffic control facilities.

RAF Benbecula
Completion of works for the IUKADGE [1] facilities including:
Support building.
Radar installation.
Ducting
Electrical works.

South Uist Island
Marconi ST 802 Radar
Explosive storehouse

[1] Improved United Kingdom Air Defence Ground Environment.

RAF Aird Uig, Lewis

Mr. Macdonald asked the Secretary of State for Defence what functions are performed by the RAF station at Aird Uig, Lewis.

Mr. Freeman: Aird Uig is a low frequency transmitting station for the support of RAF maritime operations.

RAF Stornoway

Mr. Macdonald asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the design of hardened aircraft shelters to be constructed at RAF Stornoway permits cross-servicing of United States tactical combat aircraft.

Mr. Freeman: This would depend upon aircraft size and logistics requirements.

Mr. Macdonald asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what consideration has been given to the re-establishment of electronic countermeasures monitoring range facilities at RAF Stornoway;

(2) what consideration has been given to the re-establishment of a radar bomb-scoring unit at RAF Stornoway.

Mr. Freeman: None.

Stornoway Airport

Mr. Macdonald asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the title, dates, scope and purposes of all military exercises which are scheduled to involve use of Stornoway airport in 1987 and 1988.

Mr. Freeman: The appropriate authorities will be given as much notice as possible about future exercises to take place at RAF Stornoway, in accordance with longstanding arrangements.

Staffordshire (Public Safety)

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish in the *Official Report* the text of any correspondence he has had with Staffordshire county

council, the Staffordshire police or any other public body since 1979 on matters of public safety in general and on military exercises involving radioactive dust in particular.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The Ministry of Defence takes a responsible attitude towards all aspects of safety, including nuclear safety. Its correspondence with public bodies on public safety in general will, therefore, be extensive. Some of it, including most of that relating to nuclear accident response exercises, is classified. For these reasons, I am not in a position to publish it.

Radioactive Materials (Saint Athan)

Mr. Win Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what assessment has been made of the risk of the radioactive materials stored at Saint Athan contaminating people and in particular those working on the base, living nearby or visiting the base on occasions such as the open day;

(2) what assessment has been made of the risk of the radioactive materials stored and used in training exercises at Saint Athan entering the environment and contaminating it via soil, water and winds;

(3) whether the local authority emergency services in South Wales were informed about the nuclear accident response team at Saint Athan and its use of nuclear materials when it was established;

(4) what radioactive contaminants are *(a)* used in exercises and *(b)* brought to Saint Athan; and what is the half-life of each radio nuclide involved;

(5) what is the precise function of the nuclear accident response unit based at Saint Athan; on what occasions the unit has been used *(a)* within Wales and *(b)* outside Wales; and whether it was involved in the accident at West Dean, Wiltshire, in January when a nuclear weapons carrier overturned;

(6) why Saint Athan was chosen as the base for a nuclear accident response team; and when the team began operating from there.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It has been the practice of successive Governments not to comment specifically on the storage of defence nuclear material. Use of nuclear materials throughout the Ministry of Defence is subject to stringent procedures to ensure the safety of the personnel involved and of the general public. There is full liaison on appropriate issues with the emergency services at all RAF stations in the United Kingdom. It is not, however, our practice to comment in detail on particular units or establishments that might be involved in the response to an accident involving defence nuclear material.

Trident

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the United States Navy authorities require Her Majesty's Government's formal approval before deploying Trident C4 armed submarines to replace the existing Poseidon-armed vessels at Holy Loch; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The position remains as stated by my right hon. Friend, the hon. Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Mr. Stanley) in his reply to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) of 19 November 1986 at column *224*.

James Gibb (Accident)

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for Defence when the report of the inquiry into James Gibb's accident on the Dartmoor national park will be made public; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: It is not our policy to make public the findings of boards of inquiry. However, a public statement may be appropriate once the board of inquiry into this incident has been completed.

Beef

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many tons of beef for consumption by Her Majesty's forces has been purchased from *(a)* Uruguay, *(b)* New Zealand and *(c)* Australia and any other foreign nation in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and what is the projected amount for the current year.

Mr. Freeman: The MOD purchases annually in excess of 3,000 tonnes of beef, averaging some £8 million a year, for consumption worldwide by the armed forces. Because procurement of this beef, in accordance with Government policy, is the subject of competitive tendering action from United Kingdom and European Economic Community firms, who obtain their supplies from normal trade sources, it is not possible to provide detailed information regarding the origin of the beef, although it has been established that the bulk of purchases for the current year will, in fact, come from EEC countries. MOD contracts are, of course, placed on the basis of obtaining best value for money, taking account of the United Kingdom's international treaty obligations as well as the need to meet MOD's quality standards.

Radioactive Contaminants (Exercises)

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Defence what use has been made of *(a)* cadets and *(b)* women in exercises involving radioactive contaminants.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Information is not held centrally on the degree of involvement of cadets or women in such exercises, and could not be provided except at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what information he has of any breaches of security during exercises involving radioactive contaminants;

(2) what information he has of any disciplinary action taken against armed service personnel following exercises involving radioactive contaminants.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Such matters would normally be dealt with at unit or establishment level and would not be reported to the Ministry of Defence. Information on breaches of security and disciplinary action on such occasions is not therefore held centrally, and could not be provided except at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many armed service personnel have received medical check-ups after being involved in exercises involving radioactive contaminants since 1 January 1981.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I have nothing to add to my reply to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) of 20 July at columns *95-96*.

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will list all the chemicals in the radioactive material used by his Department in Operation Senator in 1981.

Mr. Ian Stewart [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: It is not our practice to comment in detail on specific exercises. Details of the radio-isotopes contained in live contaminant used in nuclear accident response exercises were given in my reply to the hon. Lady and the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) of 22 July.

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Defence, what quantity of radium 223 sulphate, diluted with barium sulphate and aluminium oxide, is typically used in military training exercises simulating nuclear accidents.

Mr. Ian Stewart [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: It is our policy to use only the smallest quantity of radioactive material, of the lowest level of radioactivity required to achieve relevant instrument readings and meet essential training objectives. The same precautions are taken as would be taken in the event of a real accident and are therefore inherently many times more rigorous than the training material itself warrants.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the source of the radium 223 used in training exercises.

Mr. Ian Stewart [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: The live contaminant used in nuclear accident response exercises is obtained from commercial sources, such as Amersham International.

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Defence what information was given to police and other personnel active in Swynnerton, Staffordshire, as to the extent to which they were exposed to radioactive materials as a result of military exercises.

Mr. Ian Stewart [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: Officials of the police and other external authorities are given appropriate information before each exercise involving the use of radioactive materials. Access by both military and civilian personnel to contaminated areas during those phases of a nuclear accident response exercise involving the use of contaminated material is strictly controlled. Personnel involved are required to wear protective clothing appropriate to the levels of contamination to which they have access, and to undergo full monitoring and decontamination procedures on their exit from the area. The need for these safety procedures is fully explained to those involved.

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy towards the issuing of protective clothing to civilian police on duty in the vicinity of exercises involving radioactive contaminants.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Member to the pursuant answer I have given today to the right hon. Member for Stoke on Trent, South (Mr. Ashley).

Mr. Fisher asked the Secretary of State for Defence, further to his answer of 15 July, *Official Report*, columns *1129-1135*, what method was used to spray radioactive contaminants during the tests referred to.

Mr. Ian Stewart [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: A variety of methods for laying liquid low-level radioactive contaminant has been used in nuclear accident exercises including, typically, a hand-held, short range, directional dispenser. All methods are designed to ensure that the application of contaminant is restricted to a designated area with due regard being given to such external factors as weather and wind direction and strength.

Single-role Minehunters

Dr. Marek asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he is now in a position to announce increases in the numbers of single-role minehunters to be made available to the Royal Navy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) yesterday.

Hospitality

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Defence how much was spent by his Department on official hospitality in each of the last two financial years.

Mr. Sainsbury: The information requested is as follows:

	£
1985-86	2,858,465
1986-87	2,906,519

The amounts quoted represent total expenditure borne on Defence Votes for the provision of entertainment. They therefore include expenditure incurred not only by the Ministry of Defence itself, but also by formations and establishments of the Armed Forces at home and abroad and by individual officers occupying command and international appointments for which entertainment allowances are payable.

The 1985-86 figure is an update to that given in reply to a similar question from the hon. Member on 6 May at column *104* when some overseas expenditure had yet to be brought to account.

Whale Products

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Defence if any whale products have been purchased by his Department in the past two years.

Mr. Sainsbury: No.

Nuclear Accidents

Mr. Cryer asked the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Bradford, South of 20 July, if he will now state the number of people employed in the nuclear accident response organisation and the qualifications of managers involved in simulated nuclear accidents.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Except for small staffs in MOD headquarters and service commands, the nuclear accident response organisation is a functional grouping of people primarily employed on other tasks. All those involved are suitably trained and qualified.

Espionage

Mr. Cryer asked the Secretary of State for Defence what safeguards against espionage are being considered in

the special study examining the scope for extending the use of contractors to provide support services for the British forces in Germany; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The recommendations of the study into the scope for extending the use of contractors to provide supporting services to the British forces in Germany are currently under consideration. When final decisions are taken security considerations will be fully taken into account in the implementation process.

Exercises (Pacific)

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether Her Majesty's Government plan any further naval exercises, either singly or in conjunction with other Governments, in the Pacific region, and in particular in the territorial waters of the four United Nations trust territories of Micronesia.

Mr. Ian Stewart: We have no plans at present for naval exercises in this area.

Defence Establishments (Statistics)

Mr. Trotter asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will list by standard regional classification those defence establishments which employ more than 400 people, providing details of the number of *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian personnel at each establishment where security considerations do not prevent the figures being divulged; and whether he will provide a summary of the total number of (i) military and (ii) civilian personnel employed in each of the regions.

Mr. Sainsbury: It would not be in the public interest to provide a list of numbers in defence establishments in the detail requested.

The numbers of United Kingdom service personnel and MOD civilians deployed by standard region are centrally recorded on an annual basis at 1 July but the numbers for 1987 will not be available before October. The details for 1986 in thousands are as follows:

	Thousands	
	United Kingdom Service personnel	*MOD civilians*
National Totals		
England	191·7	136·5
Wales	6·3	6·2
Scotland	19·7	17·9
Northern Ireland	10·5	2·7
Standard Regions of England		
North	1·9	3·5
Yorkshire & Humberside	14·8	6·3
East Midlands	13·6	4·5
East Anglia	16·3	2·7
South East	84·6	64·9
South West	49·0	42·4
West Midlands	9·4	9·3
North West	2·2	3·1

In addition there were 1,300 Gurkha troops in South East region.

Ark Royal

Mr. Bellingham asked the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions his Department has had with Swan Hunter, following the hull plate damage HMS Ark Royal suffered on 27 January allegedly the result of faulty workmanship.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Ministry of Defence will be discussing the position with Swan Hunter now that survey work has given an indication of the cause of the damage.

Mr. Bellingham asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether full and comprehensive repairs are being carried out to HMS Ark Royal following hull plate damage suffered on 27 January; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: Minor damage was suffered to a small area of hull plating in HMS Ark Royal on 27 January but, following temporary repairs she returned to normal duties. The damage has recently been fully surveyed and final repairs are now in hand, during the routine docking period at Portsmouth which began on 13 July.

Strategic Defence Initiative

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the present situation regarding co-operation on research and development of strategic defence initiative with the United States of America.

Mr. Sainsbury: I have nothing to add to the answers given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) on 14 July at columns 956-957.

Review Board (Report)

Mr. Forth asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the report by the review board on its fifth general review of the profit formula for Government non-competitive contracts.

Mr. Younger: The Government have accepted the overall target rate of return on capital employed recommended by the review board in its report. This rate will be effective from 1 July this year. There are some other points in the report which officials will be pursuing with the CBI, in the context of implementing the recommendations, as part of the continuing drive to secure value for money and to promote full efficiency in the performance of defence work. Copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Lance (Warheads)

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Defence what nuclear warheads for Lance have been deployed by the United States in support of the British Army of the Rhine since 1981.

Mr. Ian Stewart [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: The United States-owned and supplied nuclear warheads which are assigned to British forces operating Lance systems in the Federal Republic of Germany have always been of the non-enhanced radiation type, on which the position remains as stated by my right hon. Friend the hon. Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Mr. Stanley) in his reply to the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) on 8 May 1987 column 557.

Military Training Assistance

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will list those countries *(a)* which currently

receive military training assistance and *(b)* whose applications for such assistance are currently being considered.

Mr. Freeman [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: It is not our practice to reveal discussions between Her Majesty's Government and foreign Governments about future training possibilities. The list of countries which were provided with military training assistance in the financial year 1986-87 is as follows:

Algeria
Australia
Bahamas
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belgium
Belize
Bermuda
Botswana
Brazil
Brunei
Cameroons
Canada
Chile
Denmark
Dominica
Ecuador
Egypt
Eire
El Salvador
Fiji
France
FRG
Gambia
Ghana
Greece
Guyana
Hong Kong
India
Indonesia
Iraq
Israel
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kenya
Kuwait
Lebanon
Lesotho
Malawi
Malaysia
Maldives
Malta
Mauritius
Mozambique
Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nigeria
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Philippines
Portugal
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Singapore
South Korea
Spain
Sri Lanka
St. Lucia
St. Vincent
Sudan
Swaziland
Sweden
Switzerland
Tanzania
Thailand
Trinidad/Tobago
Tunisia
Turkey
UAE
Uganda
Uruguay
USA
Venezuela
Yemen Arab Republic
Yugoslavia
Zambia
Zimbabwe

TRANSPORT

Coastguard (Swansea)

Mr. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the total number of annual manpower hours allocated to each sector in 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88 in the Swansea region of the coastguard service; and what was the number of callouts in 1985-86 and 1986-87.

Mr. David Mitchell: The allocation of auxiliary coastguard hours to each sector is a matter for the region, taking due account of financial budgets, the varying numbers of stations in each sector, changes in membership numbers at stations and other requirements for auxiliary assistance. Sector allocations are given in the table, together with district totals of occasions when members of auxiliary companies in Swansea region were called out to render assistance where human life was thought to be at risk.

True comparisons cannot be drawn between the annual allocations of hours by sector because of differences in coverage. Some reductions have taken place as part of a planned programme to bring resources into line with current requirements, while maintaining the overall effectiveness of the auxiliary service. Call-out figures are not readily available by financial year or by sector.

Swansea Region	*Auxiliary hours allocated*			*District call-outs*		
Sectors	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*[1]
Solway	4,300	2,970	3,300			
South Cumbria	2,800	1,900	2,300	80	72	9
Fylde	3,200	2,300	2,600		(Liverpool)	
Merseyside	1,500	1,050	1,240			
Clwyd	2,990	2,786	2,707			
Anglesey	3,470	4,453	3,671	97	97	7
Menai	3,380	5,120	3,584		(Holyhead)	
Dwyfor	3,558	3,464	4,258			
South Gwynedd	3,080	3,020	1,975			
North Dyfed	3,080	3,020	1,975			
Preseli	3,080	3,020	1,975	106	130	8
St. Brides	3,080	3,020	1,975		(Milford Haven)	
South Pembs	3,080	3,020	1,975			
Gower	2,692	2,624	1,590			
Ogmore	2,019	1,968	1,286	117	115	8
Gwent	2,692	2,624	1,590		(Swansea)	
Avon	2,692	2,624	1,590			
Somerset	1,689	1,789	1,672			
North Devon	5,578	4,284	3,969	91	99	4
Hartland	3,965	3,587	3,405		(Hartland)	

[1] January to March.

South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority

Mr. Illsley asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether extra money will be made available to the South Yorkshire passenger transport authority to make grants for the transport needs of elderly and disabled persons under section 106 of the Transport Act 1985.

Mr. David Mitchell: It is for the passenger transport authority to determine how much it spends on individual items within its overall budget. Its expenditure level for 1988-89 has been determined at £41·5 million.

M25 (Road Widening)

Mr. Lawrence asked the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has for the widening of the M25 between Chertsey and Heathrow.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Consultants are currently preparing a scheme for additional fourth lanes on the M25 between junctions 11 (Chertsey) and 13 (Staines). I shall make a further announcement about this as soon as possible. We have no plans for widening the existing dual four-lane sections of the motorway north of junction 13.

Road Accident Statistics

Mr. Lawrence asked the Secretary of State for Transport, since the wearing of seat belts became compulsory for car drivers and front-seat passengers, how many of the following categories of person have been killed or seriously injured in each year: *(a)* drivers, *(b)* front-seat passengers, *(c)* back-seat passengers, *(d)* motorcyclists and cyclists in collision with motor vehicles and *(e)* pedestrians in collision with motor vehicles.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I shall write to my hon. and learned Friend.

Mr. Lawrence asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many serious road accidents there have been in each year since the wearing of car seat belts became compulsory; and how many there were in each year over the same number of years before compulsion.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information is as follows:

Serious Accidents: Great Britain
February 1980—January 1986

Year	*Number*
Pre-compulsory seat belt wearing	
February 1980-January 1981	65,336
February 1981-January 1982	64,548
February 1982-January 1983	66,619
Post-compulsory seat belt wearing	
February 1983-January 1984	59,735
February 1984-January 1985	61,479
[1]Feburary 1985-January 1986	60,907

[1] Provisional.

An analysis of the effect of compulsory seat-belt wearing on injuries was covered in the Department of Transport's report in October 1985.

Cars (Mirrors)

Mr. Lawrence asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will make the fitting of front-wing mirrors on the passenger side of motor vehicles compulsory.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Nearside mirrors must be fitted in vehicles with no internal rear view mirror, such as lorries. Most cars are fitted with nearside mirrors. Under directive 85/205/EEC, this cannot be made compulsory.

National Bus Company

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the former National Bus Company companies which have been privatised by type of purchase including management buyout.

Mr. David Mitchell: Thirty-nine National Bus Company subsidiaries have been sold since sales began in July 1986, 25 to their own managements or employees. The details are as follows:

Management-employee buyouts
Badgerline Ltd.
Brighton and Hove Bus and Coach Company Ltd.
Cambus Ltd.
Cheltenham and Gloucester Omnibus Company Ltd.
The City of Oxford Motor Services Ltd.
Devon General Ltd.
Eastern Counties Omnibus Ltd.
East Kent Road Car Company Ltd.
The Eastern National Omnibus Company Ltd.
East Yorkshire Motor Services Ltd.
The Maidstone and District Motor Services Ltd.
Midland Red Coaches Ltd.
Midland Red West Ltd.
National Welsh Omnibus Services Ltd.
The Northern General Transport Company Ltd.
Potteries Motor Traction Company Ltd.
Provincial Bus Company Ltd.
The Southern Vectis Omnibus Company Ltd.
South Midland Ltd.
The South Wales Transport Company Ltd.
Trent Motor Traction Company Ltd.
Wessex National Ltd.
West Riding Automobile Company Ltd.
Wilts and Dorset Bus Company Ltd.
The Yorkshire Traction Company Ltd.

Third Party Purchases
Alder Valley Engineering Ltd.
Bristol Engineering Ltd.
Carlyle Works Ltd.
Cumberland Motor Services Ltd.
Eastern National Engineering Ltd.
H and D Distribution Ltd.
Hampshire Bus Company Ltd.
Kent Engineering (NBC) Ltd.
National Holidays Ltd.
NTE Coaches Ltd.
Pilgrim Coaches Ltd.
Shamrock and Rambler Coaches Ltd.
Southdown Engineering Services Ltd.
United Counties Engineering Ltd.

Diabetics (Vocational Licences)

Mr. William Powell asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will seek to remove all obstacles which restrict the freedom of diabetics to drive under vocational licences on the public highway.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Under European Community law, insulin-treated diabetics are not permitted to drive heavy goods or public service vehicles on public roads. Prior to 1983 drivers taking certain tablet treatment were also prohibited, but the rules have now been relaxed to allow those taking oral preparations to continue to hold a licence.

North Circular Road (Newham)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has for designing or constructing a second flyover at the intersection of the A13 and the North Circular road in Newham; and at what date he expects it to be in operation.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We have not yet made a decision about widening the flyover at this junction. Studies are still in progress. We are also considering converting the existing one-way flyover to take traffic in both directions at certain times of day.

London Underground (One-man Operation)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport what reports he has received from the Chief Inspector of Railways concerning proposals to extend one person operation to deep-tube railways in London.

Mr. David Mitchell: London Underground Ltd. has developed plans for the extension of one-person operation to their deep-tube railways. These plans have been shown and demonstrated to the Railway Inspectorate, which is satisfied that they will provide a proper level of safety. The Secretary of State is not required to approve formally the method of operation of London Underground's trains; this is a matter for the railways' management which is responsible for the safe day-to-day operation of its railways.

Buses (London)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport what are the numbers of crew-operated rear platform buses operated in Central London by London Regional Transport and the numbers he expects them to operate in each of the next five years.

Mr. David Mitchell: London Regional Transport's operating subsidiary, London Buses Ltd., currently has 1,044 such buses in passenger service, predominantly in central and inner London. A further 50 are employed on London sightseeing tours. The requirement in future years is an operational matter for LRT and London Buses Ltd. to determine.

Merseyside PTE (Expenditure)

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the spending guidelines for 1988-89 determined by him for the Merseyside passenger transport executive.

Mr. David Mitchell: The 1988-89 expenditure level for the Merseyside passenger transport authority has now been determined at £58·5 million. The authority is free to make a reasoned application for a redetermination of this figure if it so wishes.

Night Flights (London)

Mr. Ground asked the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of the night flying at Heathrow and Gatwick, respectively, for 1985 and 1986 summer and winter seasons, met ICAO Chapter 3 Regulations.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Department does not have such information. The relevant airport companies could produce it only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Ground asked the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of night flying at Heathrow and Gatwick is composed of *(a)* charter and *(b)* scheduled aircraft movements.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Department does not keep such records for the night restrictions period. I understand that at Heathrow there are very few chartered passenger flights at night. For Gatwick the table shows approximate figures provided by the airport scheduling committee for passenger flights at night in 1986.

	Chartered per cent.	*Scheduled per cent.*
Summer	90	10
Winter	45	55

A57, Denton (Traffic Lights)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps as a matter of priority to install temporary traffic lights at the junction of the A57 Manchester Road and Hule Road, Denton.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No. Very high costs and practical difficulties rule out a temporary installation here. The promised permanent traffic signals will be installed next year in conjunction with other improvements to the A57.

Transport Supplementary Grant

Ms. Walley asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will detail for what purposes the transport supplementary grant can be used; if he has any plans to change the transport supplementary grant so that local councils can implement the recommendations of his Department's document "Measures to Control Traffic for the Benefit of Residents, Pedestrians and Cyclists"; and if he will outline how those recommendations are to be financed.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Transport supplementary grant (TSG) is paid in support of local authorities' capital expenditure on roads of more than local importance. Expenditure on schemes of the kind described in the traffic advisory unit leaflet 1/87, "Measures to control traffic for the benefit of residents, pedestrians and cyclists", would be considered for support through TSG if forming part of a road improvement or traffic management scheme on a road of more than local importance.

Copies of the leaflet were placed in the Library in March. It is a technical publication aimed at drawing attention to ways of handling traffic in residential areas and giving greater emphasis to the needs of residents. Comments on the techniques were invited with a view to the publication of further, more detailed information in due course.

Implementation is for local authorities to consider in the light of local circumstances and resources.

On-train Trolley Services

Dr. Marek asked the Secretary of State for Transport if, when he next meets the Chairman of British Rail, he will raise with him the case for operators of on-train services to be required to display *(a)* the name and address of the company holding the franchise and *(b)* their price list; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: These are management matters for the Railways Board.

East Midlands Bus Company

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is his policy towards the proposed sale of the East Midlands bus company to a private buyer; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: The National Bus Company welcomes outside bids for all its subsidiaries, including East Midlands Motor Services, provided that they are from parties who intend to continue bus operations. NBC also encourage bids from management and employee teams; such bids can be eligible for a price preference of up to about 5 per cent. over third party offers.

Helicopters

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 20 July, if he will give details of the revision of the emergency reporting procedures for helicopters for Sumburgh and Aberdeen airports following the mandatory occurrence reports submitted in March 1982.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Aviation safety regulation is the statutory responsibility of the Civil Aviation Authority. I will ask the chairman of the authority to write to the hon. Gentleman.

Railways (Tourism and Employment)

Mr. Amos asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is his assessment of the role of the railway network in Northumberland in bringing employment and tourism to the county; if, when he next meets the Chairman of British Rail he will raise with him the implications for that role of the present standards of reliability on the London to Newcastle and Newcastle to Carlisle lines; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: I want to see the quality of BR's service improved over its network as a whole. That is why we have just agreed standards for punctuality, reliability and other aspects of service quality. I shall be monitoring the board's performance against them.

Grants (Bridges)

Mr. Amos asked the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria are used, in allocating grants to local authorities for transport purposes, to assess the urgency of structural repairs to bridges on or over roads for which local authorities are responsible; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Transport supplementary grant (TSG) is paid to local authorities in support of accepted programmes of capital works on roads of more than local importance. Expenditure on structural repairs to bridges on such roads may be accepted for TSG if the original load-carrying capacity is increased. It is for local authorities to decide the priority to be given within their road programmes to structural improvements to bridges.

Mr. Amos asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will visit Northumberland to discuss the state of structural repair of bridges on and over roads for which he has responsibility; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Bridges in Northumberland carrying local roads which are in need of structural repair are the responsibility of the county council as the local highway authority. I saw some of them when I visited Northumberland last year and I discussed this matter with the council earlier this year on the occasion of the northern regional annual consultative committee meeting.

Structural improvement to local bridges to increase their local carrying capacity may be eligible for transport supplementary grant. I am now awaiting the council's bid for this for 1988-89.

Hospitality

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent by his Department on official hospitality in each of the last two financial years.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The amounts spent by the Department of Transport on the full range of official hospitality are as follows:

	£
1985-86	88,634
1986-87	94,295

A69 (Dualling)

Mr. Amos asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is his assessment of the role of the A69 in the economic prosperity of the north of England; when he expects to announce a date for the commencement of work to convert to dual carriageway the A69 west of Hexham to Carlisle; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We fully appreciate the importance of the A69 to the northern region as a strategic east-west route linking the A1(M) to the M6 and Tyne and Wear to north-west England and western Scotland. It is for this reason that we have been proceeding with a series of improvements to the A69 in recent years, and the dualling of the section between Newcastle and Hexham will be completed shortly.

West of Hexham, traffic flows are much lighter — down to about 7,000 vehicles a day — and dualling cannot be justified. This stretch is being improved to a high single carriageway standard with short section of dual carriageway to facilitate overtaking. This will enable it to cope more than adequately with predicted increases in traffic over the next 15 to 20 years.

Settle-Carlisle Railway

Mr. Cryer asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to hold over any announcement of his decision on the retention of the Settle-Carlisle railway until after the House reassembles following the Summer Adjournment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: I am also under pressure to end the uncertainty over the future of the Settle-Carlisle line. I intend to make an announcement as soon as the considerable work involved in preparing for a decision is complete and Ministers have come to a conclusion.

LRT (Chiswick Site)

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he has been informed of any transfer of ownership

of land at the Chiswick site occupied by Bus Engineering Ltd. to Bus Engineering Ltd. from London Regional Transport or any subsidiary of London Regional Transport;

(2) what communication there has been between his Department and London Regional Transport concerning the proposed sale of land in Chiswick; when such communication took place; and if he has given his consent to the sale;

(3) if he will make a statement about the proposed sale of Bus Engineering Ltd. by London Regional Transport.

Mr. David Mitchell: London Regional Transport announced on 10 July that it was seeking offers for the sale of its subsidiary company, LRT Bus Engineering Ltd. My right hon. Friend has received no request for his consent, either to the disposal of any securities of the subsidiary which are held by LRT, or to the transfer of any land between LRT and the subsidiary.

Merchant Shipping (Re-registration)

Mr. Rowlands asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many applications have been received for the re-registration of foreign ships as British ships during the last five years; and in which countries those ships were originally registered.

Mr. David Mitchell: The number of ships of over 100 gross registered tons which were entered on the United Kingdom register under part I of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894 and which were previously on foreign registers was as follows:

in 1986—75 ships from 23 different foreign registers
in 1987 so far 37 ships from 18 different foreign registers

Information for earlier years and for the Crown dependencies and dependent territories could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Bus Routes (London)

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Transport what advice he has issued to the Board of London Regional Transport concerning tender specifications for London bus routes; what account such advice took of the needs of disabled people; and if he will place copies of the advice in the Library.

Mr. David Mitchell: We have issued no advice concerning tender specifications for bus routes. LRT does, however, have a general statutory duty in securing the provision of passenger services to have due regard to the transport needs of disabled people.

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for Transport what instructions he has issued to the board of London Regional Transport, concerning the timespan within which London buses are to put routes out to tender; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: London Regional Transport has a general statutory duty to invite tenders to carry on those of its activities it may declare to be appropriate. The current objectives which the Government have set the Chairman include a requirement to involve the private sector in the provision of services where that is more efficient. Beyond that, the timing and nature of tendering of bus routes are matters for LRT.

Air Misses (Carlisle)

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will institute an inquiry into the incidence of aircraft near misses in the air space in the vicinity of Carlisle airport; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No. The Civil Aviation Authority, through the National Air Traffic Services, has statutory responsibility for all matters concerning air traffic control. The reported air miss near Carlisle on 15 July 1987 is under investigation by the CAA's joint air miss working group which investigates all air miss reports. I understand that the incidence of air misses near Carlisle have been no different from that over other parts of the country where traffic volumes are similar.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. [illegible] Smith asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the estimated expenditure of his Department in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The estimated expenditure on management and computer consultants by the Department of Transport in 1987-88 is £3·4 million.

Severn Crossing

Mr. Stern asked the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made on the proposed second crossing of the River Severn; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Channon: Tenders have been invited today from selected consultants for the next stage of scheme preparation for this project. We hope to appoint the successful consultant by early October, who will then undertake the detailed investigations and consultations that are necessary in carrying this project forward. The consultant will then have to prepare the plans to suit the engineering and environmental conditions of the route we have already selected, and the funding, contracting and legal procedures that will be appropriate for this large and complex project.

We are on target to provide this crossing by the mid-1990s, if the build-up of traffic across the estuary needs it by then and Parliament so decides.

Chief Highways Engineers Directorate

Mr. Gregory asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to announce his conclusions on the Rayner scrutiny of the role of the Chief Highways Engineers Directorate.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I expect to publish my conclusions shortly when my Department has completed its consultation with the central trade union side. I will then place a copy of the scrutiny report and its action plan in the Library of the House of Commons.

Buses

Mr. Andy Stewart asked the Secretary of State for Transport what change there has been in the accident rate involving buses since bus deregulation.

Mr. David Mitchell: Provisional figures for the first six months of deregulation, October 1986 to March 1987,

indicate a fall in bus occupant casualties over the country as a whole of 7 per cent. compared with the same period a year ago. However, because bus accidents are comparatively rare, a very few additional accidents, from whatever cause, can lend the statistics a misleading appearance. It can be especially misleading to attempt to relate movements in accident statistics involving buses to particular events in relatively small areas, as has recently been attempted in West Yorkshire.

BA/B-Cal Merger

Mr. Cran asked the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he has taken to ensure that there are sufficient safeguards in the regulations governing the newly privatised British Airports Authority plc to ensure that independent British scheduled and charter airlines' rights of access to Gatwick will not be diminished in the event of the proposed merger of British Airways and British Caledonian being allowed to proceed.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Airports Act 1986 provides appropriate safeguards, should these prove necessary. Section 31 empowers the Secretary of State to make traffic distribution rules regulating airlines' access to certain airports such as Gatwick. Section 33 provides a reserve power for the Secretary of State to introduce schemes to allocate capacity at certain airports between airlines. Section 41 empowers the Civil Aviation Authority to remedy or prevent any trade practice or pricing policy on the part of an airport operator that unreasonably discriminates against particular airlines or classes of airlines.

Dial-a-ride Services (Yorkshire)

Mr. Illsley asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Government have any proposals to increase funding to either Barnsley metropolitan district council or the South Yorkshire residual body to expand dial-a-ride services.

Mr. Trippier: I have been asked to reply.

The Barnsley dial-a-ride service is part of the Barnsley community transport co-ordination scheme which is currently given financial support by the Government under the 1987-88 Barnsley inner area programme. Implementation is a matter for the Barnsley metropolitan district council.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Milk Quotas

Mr. McLoughlin asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement about milk quota leasing.

Mr. MacGregor: As I have already announced to the House, as part of this year's price fixing, we secured agreement that a measure would be implemented to permit the continuation of milk quota leasing. We have been urging the completion of the necessary regulations as quickly as possible, and considerable progress has been made. But adoption itself will not be possible until after the summer holiday because of the need, first, to consult the European Parliament.

In view, however, of the importance which we attached to the early implementation of a leasing arrangement, and to assist producers, my right hon. Friends and I have agreed that preparation for leasing arrangements can be pursued in the meantime. The milk marketing boards will accordingly be announcing shortly the details of a scheme whereby producers who wish to participate in leasing arrangements will notify the appropriate milk marketing board. The board will then automatically adjust the quotas of the farmers concerned as soon as the regulation is formally adopted.

Mr. Amos asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received from farmers about the implication for the dairy industry about the fact that milk quota is not considered to be a qualifying asset under the Capital Gains Tax Act 1979 in terms of eligibility for roll-over relief; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I have received a number of representations about the fact that milk quota is not an asset qualifying for roll-over relief against capital gains tax. Taxation policy is, however, the responsibility of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and I would refer my hon. Friend to the reply that he has received from the Chancellor to a similar question.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, what information he has as to the highest known price paid per litre of milk quota in (*a*) East Sussex and (*b*) elsewhere; what litreage has been purchased by persons not resident in the United Kingdom; what has been the average rate of return of milk producers in each of the past three years; and what is the reason for the premium paid for milk quotas.

Mr. Donald Thompson: No records are kept on the price of quota and I therefore have no detailed information on the price paid for milk quota in East Sussex or eleswhere. So far as purchases of quota by persons not resident in the United Kingdom are concerned, it is not possible for United Kingdom milk quota to be transferred outside its boundaries. Information on the returns to milk producers in 1984-85 and 1986-86 is published in "Milk Production 1984-85" and "Milk Production 1985-86; copies of these publications are available in the Library of the House. Figures for 1986-87 are not yet available. The price paid for milk quota is a reflection of market demand and the continued overall profitability of the dairy sector.

Fishing Quotas

Mr. Neale asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when the Government propose to introduce legislation on the registration of fishing vessels designed to ensure that the United Kingdom quotas are reserved for United Kingdom fishermen.

Mr. Harris asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proposals he has to prevent foreign-owned fishing vessels from gaining access to United Kingdom quotas; and when such measures will be introduced.

Mr. MacGregor: My predecessor, my right hon. Friend the Member for Westmorland and Lonsdale (Mr. Jopling), announced on 9 May that the Government had decided that the law on the registration of fishing vessels should be changed so that, in order to obtain registration of a British fishing vessel, a company will have to be largely owned and managed by British citizens resident and domiciled in this

country. The Government's intention is to include the necessary provisions in the Merchant Shipping Bill which it is hoped will be introduced in the autumn.

Queens' Speech

Mr. Thurnham asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received about proposals in the Queen's Speech for which he has responsibility; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The Queen's Speech stated that the Government would help farmers to diversify and would introduce legislation to encourage the planting of farm woodlands. Consultation documents entitled "Farm Woodland Scheme" and "Farm Diversification Scheme" were issued earlier this year. A large number of responses have been received and we shall take these into account in framing our legislative proposals.

Cow Effluent

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations have been received by him concerning the extension of the 60 per cent. grant for the disposal of cow effluent in less-favoured areas to the rest of the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: Representations have been received from a number of organisations including the water authorities, the Country Landowners Association and the National Farmers Union, concerning the extension to the lowland areas of the 60 per cent. rate of grant now available for effluent and waste facilities in the less favoured areas.

However, the relevant European Community legislation does not permit the payment of the 60 per cent. rate in lowland areas.

Agricultural Land

Mr. Rooker asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he expects the decline in the use of land for agriculture to continue; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: It is difficult to predict the future trend in the diversion of land from agriculture to other uses, but we have recently announced a number of new policy initiatives to encourage farmers to diversify, with the aim of reducing production of commodities in surplus.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what estimate has been made as to the amount of farmland taken out of production in each year since 1973.

Mr. Gummer: Some of the information my hon. Friend requires was given in a reply to my hon. Friend the Member for South Hams (Mr. Steen) on Thursday 12 February 1987 at col *287*. I shall write to my hon. Friend giving further information shortly.

Water Pollution

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many incidents of water pollution by farm wastes were recorded in each of the years 1980 to 1986, and in 1987 to date, in England; how many of these incidents were attributable to pollution by silage effluent, and by slurry; and how many of these incidents were the subject of warning letters and prosecutions.

Mr. Gummer: Statistics on farm waste pollution incidents and water authority prosecutions are collated by my Department and the Water Authorities Association. Although the exact information requested is not available for England alone, a considerable volume of information covering England and Wales for the years 1980 to 1985 was published in the 1985 survey of reported water pollution incidents by farm wastes in England and Wales, copies of which were placed in the Library. The equivalent 1986 survey is still in preparation. No 1987 statistics have yet been collated centrally.

Intervention Stocks

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the total estimated cost of intervention storage in each European Community country in each of the past five years.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Community expenditure on intervention storage in each member state in each of the past five years is set out in the table. Details of actual expenditure by member states on intervention storage operations are not available.

(Mecu)

	1982	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Belgium	1	7	13	9	12
Denmark	17	43	42	55	46
Germany	184	290	381	466	460
Greece	58	53	23	12	10
Spain	—	—	—	—	45
France	67	165	190	256	240
Ireland	26	50	71	88	84
Italy	61	100	123	137	125
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0	0
Netherlands	5	44	84	89	90
Portugal	—	—	—	—	3
United Kingdom	48	105	129	229	234

Source: Community contributions to intervention technical and financing costs as given in EC Commission EAGGF financial reports.

Sugar

Mr. Spearing asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) of 8 July, *Official Report*, column *154*, what is the source of the funds used to defray the difference between £621 million of increase from the sugar levy and the year's expenditure of £1,061 million in the year 1985.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Sugar sector expenditure not covered by sugar levies is funded in the normal way through the own resources system comprising customs duties, agricultural levies and VAT. This expenditure will be partly offset by receipts from the elimination levy agreed by the Council in 1986 designed to claw back the deficit on the production levy/export refund account which had arisen in the five marketing years up to 1985-86, in the next five marketing years.

Mr. Spearing asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will tabulate the quantity of raw cane sugar imported by each member state of the European Economic Community, including imports from Departments Outre Mer, for the most recent available year.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Imports of preferential ACP sugar in the period July 1985 to June 1986 were as follows (figures in thousand tonnes white sugar equivalent):

	Thousand tonnes
Belgium	0·4
Denmark	—
France	137·1
Germany	0·2
Greece	—
Ireland	—
Italy	—
Luxembourg	—
Netherlands	1·5
Portugal	—
Spain	—
United Kingdom	1,141·7

Similar information for imports of raw sugar from the French Overseas Departments is not available. In line with new arrangements following Portuguese accession, however, 185,000 tonnes and 254,000 tonnes of raw cane sugar for import, excluding preferential sugar, were allocated to metropolitan France and Portugal respectively for the 1986-87 marketing year.

Thames Barrier

Mr. Spearing asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are the dates on which the Thames barrier has been closed for emergency reasons since September 1986; and for each closure, what was the height of the tidal surge above ordnance datum at Southend, Gravesend and at the barrier, respectively, together with their heights above predicted levels at each location.

Mr. Gummer: Since September 1986 the Thames barrier has been closed against potential flooding only on 29 March 1987. On that occasion the maximum recorded high water levels above ordnance datum were 3·6 m at Southend, 3·88 m in the area of Gravesend and 4·35 m at Woolwich close to the barrier. The Southend level was 0·5 m and the Tilbury and Woolwich levels 0·3 m above the predicted levels shown in published tide tables.

Mr. Spearing asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are the works in hand to complete the Thames flood defences downstream of the Thames flood barrier; and if he will make a statement concerning the circumstances of the recent breach of flood defences in Barking creek.

Mr. Gummer: The Thames tidal defences downstream of the Thames flood barrier are now complete save for minor works near Southend-on-Sea. The flooding from Barking creek on 14 July 1987 occurred as a result of slippage of the river bank during work on sluices controlling discharges from Beckton sewerage treatment works. Adjacent buildings, roads and playing fields were flooded during the early hours of that day. Further flooding after the dawn high tide was, however, prevented by closure of the Barking flood barrier. The river bank was restored on 15 July and there have been no further problems.

West Coast Saith Quota

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) whether he has identified the vessels and fish producers' organisations which overfished the west coast saith's quota, resulting in premature closure; and what action he proposes to take against them.;

(2) what compensation he proposes to offer to the Grimsby Fish Producers Organisation whose west coast saith quota was prematurely closed because of overfishing by other vessels.

Mr. Gummer: As regards penalties and compensation for over- or under-fishing of sectoral quotas, I would refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Kingston-upon-Hull, West (Mr. Randell) on 17 July. We shall consider the application of these arrangements once the final catch figures for the different organisations are available and once we know whether or not additional saith opportunities are available from another member state.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures he proposes to ensure that overfishing and premature closure of the west coast saith quota does not happen again.

Mr. Gummer: Fisheries Departments are urgently reviewing arrangements for monitoring catches in the area IV and VI white fisheries, and will put in hand any possible improvements identified. In addition, we propose to discuss with the industry the possibility of arrangements for suspending licences of any group approaching the limit of its sectoral allocations so as to allow a definitive assessment to be made of the catch position before the allocation is exceeded.

West Coast Cod Quota

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how close the west coast cod quota is to exhaustion; and what compensation he will offer to those fish producers organisations whose quota is incomplete if catching is prematurely stopped.

Mr. Gummer: The latest data available on catches to 4 July suggests that approximately 85 per cent. of the United Kingdom quota for west of Scotland cod had been taken by that date. If the previous unusually high rate of catching continued thereafter we estimate that the annual quota would be exhausted by about the end of July. However, we expect the rate of catching to have been reduced as a result of the quota management restrictions introduced for the non-sectoral fishery on 7 July and the action taken, with effect from 18 July, to suspend licences for the non-sectoral fishery and for those sectoral groups whose allocation was exhausted, which jointly account for the major part of this fishery.

In view of the seasonal pattern of fishing and the action already taken, I cannot at this stage predict when, if at all. closure action will be necessary. Fisheries Departments will be monitoring the situation as closely as possible.

In the event that the fishery is closed prematurely the agreed arrangements for compensation, to which I referred in my reply of 17 July to theap j 13-5 hon. Member for Kingston-upon-Hull, West (Mr. Randall), will apply. We are exploring the possibility of obtaining additional opportunities for cod by means of a quota exchange from another member state but I can hold out no firm hope of this at this stage.

EC (Membership)

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) whether he will bring up to date the information on the estimated return on capital given in table M of the memorandum submitted by Her Majesty's Government to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on the financial and economic consequences of United Kingdom membership of the European Communities (Session 1984-85, HC 57-II, page 56);

(2) whether he will bring up to date the information on average United Kingdom farm-gate prices given in Annex V to the memorandum submitted by Her Majesty's Government to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on the financial and economic consequences of United Kingdom membership of the European Communities (Session 1984-85, HC 57-II, page 53).

Mr. Donald Thompson: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will bring up to date the information on rent farm income on full-time farms given in table f1 of the memorandum submitted by Her Majesty's Government to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on the financial and economic consequences of the United Kingdom membership of the European Communities (Session 1984-85, HC 57-II page 38).

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested is given in the tables.

Net farm income on full-time farms by farm type: 1967-68 to 1970-71 and 1979-80 to 1985-86

£ per farm

	All dairy farms		*All livestock farms*		*All cropping farms*		*Pig and poultry farms*		*Horticultural farms*	
	Money terms (£)	*Index in real terms 1982-3: 100*	*Money terms (£)*	*Index in real terms 1982-3: 100*	*Money terms (£)*	*Index in real terms 1982-3: 100*	*Money terms (£)*	*Index in real terms 1982-3: 100*	*Money terms (£)*	*Index in real terms 1982-3: 100*
1967-68	1,903	75	1,677	179	3,210	100	2,255	82	2,148	137
1968-69	1,761	66	1,524	154	2,238	66	2,180	75	1,712	104
1968-69	1,762	66	1,523	154	2,278	67	2,174	75	1,806	109
1969-70	1,799	64	1,555	150	3,103	87	2,151	71	2,083	120
1969-70	1,811	64	1,546	149	3,078	86	2,191	72	1,988	114
1970-71	2,235	74	1,963	176	3,363	88	1,996	61	2,011	108
1979-80	7,343	78	2,384	69	10,831	91	11,786	117	5,699	99
1980-81	8,401	77	3,494	87	9,747	70	12,654	107	4,356	64
1980-81	8,288	76	3,823	95	9,920	72	13,731	116	7,108	105
1981-82	10,690	87	4,758	106	12,418	80	17,116	130	9,976	132
1981-82	10,773	88	5,870	130	12,019	78	19,156	145	10,602	140
1982-83	13,177	100	4,844	100	16,631	100	14,195	100	8,114	100
1982-83	13,520	103	5,333	110	17,181	103	11,523	81	2,291	28
1983-84	7,846	57	4,847	96	20,682	119	8,708	59	16,775	198
1983-84	8,348	61	5,234	103	21,466	123	13,440	91	15,196	179
1984-85	8,654	60	4,596	86	21,060	115	33,471	215	7,323	82
1984-85	8,963	62	5,141	97	21,137	116	30,105	193	7,176	81
1985-86	11,386	74	4,129	73	5,242	27	21,806	132	3,218	34

Source: Farm Business Survey.

Notes— Pairs of years relate to an identical sample of farms. A major break in series occurred in 1978-79. It is not, therefore possible to make a meaningful comparison of the two periods. A further break occurred in 1982-83. The major differences in the periods are:

	Geographical coverage	*Breeding livestock stock appreciation*	*Farm size and type determination*	*Depreciation basis*	*Definition full-time farm*	*Mixed farms*
1967-68 to 1970-71	England and Wales	Included in NFI	Standard man days	Historic cost	275 to 4100 SMD	Distinct type
1979-80 to 1982-83	England	Excluded from NFI	Standard gross margin	Current cost	4 to 250 ESU[1]	Included in all livestock

	Geographical coverage	Breeding livestock stock appreciation	Farm size and type determination	Depreciation basis	Definition full-time farm	Mixed farms
1982-83 to 1985-86	England	Excluded from NFI	Standard gross margin	Current cost	4 BSU[2] and above except farm types asterisked 4 to 250 BSU	Included in all livestock

[1] One ESU = 1000 EUA of standard gross margins at average 1972-74 values.
[2] One BSU = 2000 ECU of standard gross margins at average 1978-80 values.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the estimated expenditure of his Department in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Estimated expenditure is likely to be in the region of £1 million.

Oilseed Rape

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the production of oilseed rape in the United Kingdom in each of the past 10 years together with imports and exports of oilseed rape and rapeseed oil; and if he will include a figure of the cost to public funds each year of producing oilseed rape and rapeseed oil.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested is as follows:

('000 tonnes)

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Rapeseed										
Production	142	154	198	300	340	580	562	923	891	971
Imports	155	73	163	137	139	38	126	67	60	258
Exports	5	2	1	-0	1	14	106	167	295	495
Rapeseed Oil										
Imports	1	3	15	9	16	53	64	66	65	85
Exports	35	17	25	18	7	2	24	28	12	13
Community expenditure in United Kingdom (£ million)	5	5	20	36	58	58	82	64	65	88

Notes:
(1) Rapeseed data from annual review White Papers but Customs and Excise data used for 1986 trade.
(2) Rapeseed oil data from FAO trade yearbooks for 1977-80 and Eurostat for 1981-86.
(3) Expenditure data from FEOGA financial reports relates to rapeseed except that until 1982 expenditure on production aid for other oilseeds is included. There is no separate FEOGA expenditure on rapeseed oil.

Agricultural Holdings

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the number of agricultural/horticultural holdings in multiple ownership and/or the number of farmers/horticulturalists with more than one holding; and if he will provide such figures as he has available to show the concentration of ownership in terms of land per person rather than size of individual holdings;

(2) whether he will bring up to date the information on the size and tenure of agricultural holdings given in the reply to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby on 22 July 1982, *Official Report*, column *252*.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I shall write to the hon. Member.

EC (Expenditure)

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each common agricultural policy product the amount of public money spent in 1986-87 on each hectare or livestock unit in the United Kingdom in direct subventions, storage, export rebates, and so on.

Mr. MacGregor: Expenditure in 1986-87 on market regulation under the CAP is summarised by principle commodity in table 28 of the "Annual Review of Agriculture 1987" (Cm. 67). Details of crop areas and livestock numbers are given in table 3 of Cm. 67.

Tomato Regime

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will bring up to date the information on the EEC tomato regime given in his reply to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby on 8 May 1985, *Official Report*, column *453*.

Mr. Donald Thompson: EEC production aid rates for tomato products are published in the *Official Journal of the European Communities*. Details for the marketing years 1985-86 and 1986-87 are listed in the following volumes which are in the Library of the House:

L205 of 3.8.85 (Regulation 2222/85);
L179 of 3.7.86 (Regulation 2077/86).

The cost to the Community budget for production aid for tomato products was 528·6 mecu in 1985-86 and 260·4 mecu in 1986-87. No surplus tomato products have been stored at Community expense.

The information in respect of fresh tomatoes is as follows:

Compensation for withdrawals

	Mecu
1984-85	2·60
1985-86	89·56

Export refunds

	Mecu
1983-84	1·68
1984-85	1·73
1985-86	[1]

[1] Figures not yet available.

Farm Rents and Land Prices

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will bring up to date the information on farm rents given in the written reply to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby of 5 March 1982, *Official Report*, column *269*; and if he will add figures for land prices.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The following table shows the average farm rents in England over the period 1961 to 1986 and average prices for agricultural land over the period 1961 to 1985, the latest years for which information is available.

Year	Farm Rents		Average Land Prices[1]	
	£/per hectare	Index (1975 = 100)	£/per hectare	Index (1975 = 100)
1961	6·37	31·44	265	23·56
1962	7·13	35·19	286	25·42
1963	7·86	38·80	329	29·24
1964	8·40	41·86	437	38·84
1965	8·90	43·93	440	39·11
1966	9·52	46·99	454	40·36
1967	10·29	50·79	486	43·20
1968	11·14	54·99	517	45·96
1969	11·97	59·08	525	46·67
1970	13·07	64·51	501	44·53
1971	14·27	70·43	571	50·76
1972	15·17	74·88	1,161	103·20
1973	16·13	79·62	1,557	138·40
1974	17·49	86·33	1,273	113·16
1975	20·26	100·00	1,125	100·00
1976	24·66	121·72	1,349	119·91
1977	29·80	147·09	1,909	169·69
1978	35·60	175·72	2,434	216·36
1979	42·13	207·95	3,129	278·13
1980	50·01	246·84	3,316	294·76
1981	58·36	288·06	3,283	291·82
1982	66·14	326·46	3,535	314·22
1983	73·93	364·91	3,631	322·76
1984	81·27	401·14	3,788	336·71
1985	88·01	434·40	3,654	324·80
1986	[2]95·75	[2]472·61		

[1] All sales—vacant possession and tenanted.
[2] Provisional.

Mediterranean Products

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each of the years 1984-86 the production of Mediterranean products on the same basis as given in his written reply to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby dated 20 May 1985, *Official Report*, columns *346-47*.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested is shown in the table.

	EC10	Spain	Portugal
Olive oil (thousand tonnes)			
Usable production[1]			
1983-84	1,255	266	16
1984-85	615	658	75
1985-86[2]	1,017	380	30
Oranges (thousand tonnes)			
Harvested production			
1984	2,362	1,339	98
1985	2,773	1,945	155
1986[2]	3,025	2,104	169
Wine (million hectolitres)			
Usable production			
1983-84	168	31	9
1984-85	148	34	9
1985-86	143	33	10
1986-87[2]	162	37	8

Source: Eurostat and Commission.
[1] Olive oil is a biennial crop and production can fluctuate substantially from one year to the next.
[2] Provisional.

Hospitality

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much has been spent by his Department on official hospitality in each of the last two financial years.

Mr. MacGregor: The information requested is as follows:

	£
1985-86	38,000
1986-87	139,000

Expenditure in 1986-87 included £101,000 spent on hospitality as a direct result of the United Kingdom's presidency of the EEC.

Intervention (Expenditure)

Mr. Salmond asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proportion of Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce expenditure for the years *(a)* 1985-86 and *(b)* 1986-87 was devoted to (i) the storage of agricultural stocks, (ii) the purchase of agricultural commodities for intervention and (iii) other Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce expenditure.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Proportions of the Intervention Board's gross expenditure were:

£'000

	(a) 1985-86	(b) 1986-87 (provisional)
Gross expenditure	2,189,726	1,716,022
(i) Storage and related costs	124,595	128,521
(per cent. gross expenditure)	(5·7)	(7·5)

	(a) 1985-86	(b) 1986-87 (provisional)
(ii) Purchases	845,339	405,768
(per cent. gross expenditure)	(38·6)	(23·6)
(iii) Other expenditure	1,219,792	1,181,733
(per cent. gross expenditure)	(55·7)	(68·9)

Expenditure

Mr. Salmond asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proportion of expenditure controlled by the Agricultural Departments is paid directly to producers; and if he will estimate what proportion of the total benefits of such spending accrues to *(a)* producers, *(b)* merchants and *(c)* processors.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The proportion of expenditure covered by the Supply Estimates (including administration costs) for the Agricultural Departments in 1986-87 which was paid directly to producers was of the order of 50 per cent. Other areas of expenditure such as that on animal disease, research, advice and education benefit producers although not paid directly to them. Some 15 per cent. of gross expenditure by the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce in 1986-87 on market regulation under the CAP was paid to producers under the variable premium schemes for beef and sheep. Most other IBAP payments are to processors and traders. It is not possible to provide a detailed breakdown of the benefits of expenditure in terms of categories of beneficiaries.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his estimate of the cost to the average British family with two children of support for agriculture in the United Kingdom and in the rest of the European Economic Community and world food prices.

Mr. MacGregor: Information on expenditure on agricultural support is not available in the form requested.

Imported Food Products

Mr. Amess asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on quality controls on imported food products.

Mr. Donald Thompson: There is no differentiation between quality controls (food labelling and food composition requirements) applied to imported food products or to home produced ones. Regulations are enforced by local authorities.

Organic Produce

Mr. Harris asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if any progress has been made in the development of production standards for organic produce; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: The chairman of Food from Britain has informed me that his council has now agreed to establish on a voluntary basis a United Kingdom register of organic food standards (UKROFS). The tasks will be (i) to set production standards for organic produce tied to a United Kingdom organic logo and a voluntary code of production practice; (ii) to consider applications from organic sector bodies to check that their standards meet such minimum standards and are supported by adequate inspection arrangements; (iii) to establish a register of individual organic producers whereby registration provides a right to use the logo; (iv) to arrange for adequate monitoring of inspection arrangements and for the inspection of the farms of those producers not linked to a recognised organic sector body.

It is intended that UKROFS would be supervised on behalf of FFB by a board to be appointed by the council and that the operation should be largely self-funding and will not absorb any FFB funds. Detailed plans will now be drawn up by FFB in discussion with officials and a further announcement will be made later.

On behalf of Agriculture Ministers I should like to welcome this important development which, it is intended, will extend to the whole of the United Kingdom. We hope that domestic producers will seize the opportunities now being offered by the increased consumer demand for organic produce. For some time it has been recognised that the establishment of production standards for such produce was a key factor in such a development. I understand that the proposals now agreed by the FFB council in broad outline are likely to be consistent with proposals on organic production currently being developed by the EC Commission. It is our hope that these will lead eventually to the mutual recognition of national arrangements not only between member states but also involving third countries.

Farmed Deer

Mr. Curry asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he is yet in a position to respond to the report from the Farm Animal Welfare Council on the welfare of farmed deer.

Mr. Donald Thompson: We have carefully considered this report, following the many comments which have been received. In the main, we agree with the recommendations from the council. In particular we accept the proposal that the slaughter of deer be permitted in abattoirs provided there are suitable safeguards. Full details are being sent out to all interested organisations and a copy of our responses has been placed in the Library of the House.

Food Labelling

Miss Emma Nicholson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects to make regulations on the labelling of foods with their fat content, and to issue guidelines on the voluntary declaration of the nutrient content of food.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will consider introducing an official standard of labelling designed to provide consumers with nutritional information about dairy products.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Since we circulated our proposals for comment early in 1986, my officials have been in extensive discussions with the Commission of the European Communities about the compatibility of our proposals for fat content labelling with Community law. Those discussions are continuing. We had originally intended that guidelines for full nutrition labelling should be issued in parallel with fat content labelling regulations, but in view of the delay, and the increasing need for a standard approach in the market place to the provision of

nutrition information on food labels, I have decided to issue now the guidelines for voluntary nutrition labelling of food. The final version of the guidelines takes account of the comments received on the draft circulated in February 1986.

It is my intention in the longer term that the form in which nutrition information provided voluntarily on food labels is given should be controlled by law, but it is sensible to defer any decisions on this until we have seen these guidelines in action for a while and we have more details of the EC Commission's known plans for a Community system of voluntary nutrition labelling. In the meantime, I commend the approach set out in the guidelines, particularly to food manufacturers and retailers responsible for nutrition labelling, in the interests of ensuring that consumers receive nutrition information in a standard form.

I am also circulating for comment proposals for minor amendments to the Food Labelling Regulations 1984 to ensure that those who voluntarily provide statements of the basic nutrient content of foods for the benefit of consumers do not offend against those provisions of the regulations which protect consumers against misleading claims. These proposals are being circulated to those organisations representative of interests which will be substantially affected by them, as required by the Food Act 1984.

I have arranged for copies of both documents to be placed in the Library of the House.

Pesticides

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if, in relation to the pesticide DDT, he will *(a)* give his estimate of the amount of DDT which is still held on farms in the United Kingdom, *(b)* make arrangements for the collection and safe disposal of any remaining stocks of DDT on farms in the United Kingdom and *(c)* issue advice to farmers on the safe disposal of any remaining stocks of DDT on farms in the United Kingdom; when he expects to produce a revised version of MAFF booklet 2198 on guidelines for the disposal of unwanted pesticides and containers on farms and holdings; and whether the revised booklet will be made available throughout the United Kingdom.

Mr. Donald Thompson [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: There should be no significant stocks of products containing the pesticide DDT on farms in the United Kingdom. The last permitted use was withdrawn in October 1984 after extensive notice, and since 6 October 1986 it has been an offence to store or use any pesticide in Great Britain which does not have an approval under the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986. It is the responsibility of the owner to dispose safely of unwanted pesticides.

Advice on disposal is given both in general terms and in specific cases. Farmers can ask suppliers to take back surplus pesticide. If this is not practicable the local authority may be asked to collect the pesticide. If the local authority is unable to do so, the name of a private contractor will be available either from the local authority or from the National Association of Waste Disposal Contractors.

MAFF booklet 2198 on guidelines for the disposal of unwanted pesticides and containers on farms and holdings continues to be available while a statutory code of practice for Great Britain on the agricultural and horticultural use of pesticides is prepared under the provisions of part III of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985. The Great Britain code will be generally available when it is published during 1988. A separate code will be made for Northern Ireland.

Air Pollution

Dr. David Clark asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether his Department is looking into the effects of air pollution on crop production; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: My Department takes an interest in research into the effects of air pollution, including the effects on growing plants. However, results from the national air pollution monitoring network, and from other research, suggest that in general air pollution has no discernible effect upon agriculture.

Forestry

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the total area of land which was referred to his Department by the Forestry Commission under the forestry grant consultation procedures for each of the years ended 31 March 1986 and 31 March 1987; and if he will list in the *Official Report* in respect of each of the area offices of his Ministry, the area of land which it advised was *(a)* acceptable to award forestry grant and *(b)* inappropriate to afforest on agricultural grounds.

Mr. Gummer: This information is not held centrally, and I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Sampson Report

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he intends to publish the findings of the Sampson report into the Royal Ulster Constabulary; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) on 15 July. In keeping with normal practice with police reports of this kind, Mr. Sampson's report will not be published.

Medical Staff

Rev. Martin Smyth asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish figures showing average pay for speech therapists, clinical psychologists, biochemists, physicists, hospital pharmacists and opticians in Northern Ireland for the last five years.

Mr. Needham: Information is not readily available in the form requested but the maximum point on the basic salary scale for staff employed by Health and Social Services boards in each of the professions was as follows:

	1982	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Speech Therapists	6,074	6,353	6,659	7,056
Clinical Psychologists	8,349	8,725	9,432	9,996

	1982	1984	1985	1986
Biochemists	8,349	8,725	9,432	9,996
Physicists	8,349	8,725	9,432	9,996
Pharmacists	8,096	8,438	8,835	10,344
Ophthalmic Opticians	8,220	8,590	8,990	9,529

There has not yet been a pay settlement for any of these professions for the current year.

Rev. Martin Smyth asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what pay awards were made in the current year to each of the graduate professions within the National Health Service; and what representations he has received since these awards.

Mr. Needham: A pay award of 8·25 per cent. has been made in the current year to hospital and community medical and dental staff. Pay increases for other graduate professions have not been agreed yet. No representations have been received.

General Election (Voting)

Rev. Martin Smyth asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received from individuals who were unable to vote in the recent general election because they did not have one of the prescribed documents; and whether he plans to make any modifications to the list of prescribed documents required before issue of a ballot paper.

Mr. Stanley: The Northern Ireland Office is not aware of any such representations other than in two letters received from the hon. Member. I understand, however, that a number of representations have been made to the Chief Electoral Officer. We have no current plans for changes to the list of specified documents, but we are reviewing the arrangements in the light of recent experience.

Special Education

Rev. Martin Smyth asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on his policy on providing for the special educational needs of pupils in schools, and the advice given by his Department to education and library boards as to how they should best meet these needs; and how many children in each of the education and library boards have been assessed as having special educational needs.

Dr. Mawhinney: Articles 6 and 32 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 place the duty of meeting the special educational needs of pupils in schools on the education and library boards.

Detailed advice was issued to Education and Library Boards in DENI Circular 1987/21, "Education and Children with Special Educational Needs". I have arranged for a copy to be placed in the Library.

Figures are not yet available of the numbers of children assessed as having special educational needs. The latest available figures relate to pupils determined as handicapped at January 1986 and are shown in the following table.

Education and Library Board	Number of pupils
Belfast	1,309
Western	823
North-Eastern	790
South-Eastern	840
Southern	437
Total	4,197

Rev. Martin Smyth asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what additional resources have been provided by his Department to meet the special educational needs of children in Northern Ireland schools; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: As a result of the provisions of the Education (NI) Order 1987 transferring from 1 April 1987, responsibility for the education of mentally handicapped children to the Education sector, £4 million capital funding has initially been made available for new and improved accommodation and a further £2·8 million has been provided for additional recurrent expenditure.

Rev. Martin Smyth asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is his policy towards the provision of higher education for children over the age of 16 years with special educational needs; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: The Government's policy is that the educational provision made in institutions of further and higher education in Northern Ireland should be available, where practicable, to young people with special educational needs who have the capacity, motivation and maturity to benefit from the courses provided.

Community Employment Schemes

Rev. Martin Smyth asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the total number of people employed in action for community employment schemes.

Mr. Viggers: 5,850 (at end of June 1987).

Rev. Martin Smyth asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what targets for numbers employed under action for community employment schemes have been set for 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Viggers: The target in both years is to achieve an average of 6,200 in employment under the scheme.

Disabled People

Rev. Martin Smyth asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether there is a 3 per cent. quota rule for employing registered disabled workers in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Viggers: Yes, such a quota applies for employers with 20 or more workers.

Rev. Martin Smyth asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* disabled people and *(b)* registered disabled people are employed in action for community employment schemes in Northern Ireland; and what percentage this represents.

Mr. Viggers: 47 disabled people are currently employed under ACE. It is not known how many of those are registered disabled. This represents 0·8 per cent of ACE employees.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

Mr. Canavan asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the Government of the Republic of Ireland about the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Mr. Tom King: I last met Irish Ministers at a meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference on 16 July. As is set out in the joint statement issued after the meeting, a copy of which is in the Library, we discussed a range of matters within the field of activity of the conference, including security and economic co-operation and equality of opportunity in employment.

Employment Equality

Mr. John David Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the joint statement by the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference on 16 July in London, promising affirmative action to promote employment equality in Northern Ireland, applies to *(a)* companies registered in Northern Ireland, *(b)* companies registered in the Republic of Ireland and trading with Northern Ireland and *(c)* companies registered in Great Britain and trading within Northern Ireland.

Mr. Viggers: My right hon. Friend announced on 15 July that a new guide to the effective practice of equality of opportunity in employment would be published in September. It will provide guidance on affirmative action for all employers in Northern Ireland, regardless of a company's place of registration.

Disabled Persons

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will be consulting disablement organisations in Northern Ireland to ascertain their views as to when it would be appropriate to introduce the provisions of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: Consultations are currently under way with Health and Social Services and education and library boards.

Initial comments on the Act have also been invited from the Northern Ireland Council on Disability which acts as an umbrella organisation for voluntary groups concerned with the disabled.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the estimated expenditure of his Department in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

Mr. Viggers: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

ACE Programme

Mr. Hume asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he is satisfied that the management and monitoring of the ACE programme in Northern Ireland is appropriate.

Mr. Viggers: Yes.

Mr. Hume asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement indicating whether, pursuant to his interim statement on 15 July, *Official Report*, column *490-1*, on equality of opportunity in employment, there will be further consideration given to these issues particularly in respect of those with disabilities and in relation to sex discrimination.

Mr. Viggers: Yes, arrangements are being made for meetings with key interest groups, including the Equal Opportunity Commission and the Northern Ireland Council on Disability.

Mr. Hume asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement indicating what representations were received from or on behalf of the Northern Ireland Council on Disability on Equality of Opportunity in Employment and the Government's response to these to date; and what plans exist for further consideration of or consultations on the matters raised by the Northern Ireland Council on Disability.

Mr. Viggers: The Northern Ireland Council on Disability made a submission dated 31 March 1987 in response to the consultative paper "Equality of Opportunity in Employment in Northern Ireland." In the period to 6 July 1987, eight right hon. and hon. Members have written to urge that consideration be given to the Council's views. Right hon. and hon. Members were assured that the fullest consideration would be given to the Northern Ireland Council on Disability's views, consistent with the necessity to take account of all the views put forward in response to the consultative paper. To allow further discussion of their submission, a meeting between the Northern Ireland Council on Disability and departmental officials has been arranged for mid-August.

Security Statistics

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the security statistics for the second half of 1986 are now available, together with details of persons charged with terrorist-type activities and convictions for scheduled offences for the year.

Mr. Stanley [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 July 1987]: Yes. The statistics together with those since 1971 are as follows:

Statistics on Security

Part I—Statistics of Terrorist Activity.

Yearly totals for 1971-1986.

Statistics for terrorist activity comprise the following:

(i) Number of shooting incidents.
(ii) Number of explosions.
(iii) Number of bombs and devices neutralised.
(iv) Weight of explosives in bombs and devices neutralised.
(v) Number of armed robberies and amount stolen.
(vi) Number of malicious fires.
(vii) Number of deaths and injuries of RUC/RUC'R', Army and civilians.

Part II—Statistics of Security Forces' Activity.

Yearly totals for 1971-1986.

Statistics for security forces' activity comprise the following:

(i) Number of houses searched.
(ii) Number of weapons, pounds of explosives and rounds of ammunition found.
(iii) Number of people charged with terrorist type offences (murder, attempted murder, explosives offences, firearms offences, armed robbery and other offences relating to the security situation, e.g. arson, membership of illegal organisation etc.)

Part III—Statistics of Persons Convicted of Scheduled Offences.
Six-monthly total for July-December 1986.

Statistics on security
Part I—Statistics of terrorist activity
Yearly figures: 1971 to 1978

	1971	*1972*	*1973*	*1974*	*1975*	*1976*	*1977*	*1978*
Shooting incidents[1]	1,756	10,628	5,018	3,206	1,803	1,908	1,081	755
Explosions	1,022	1,382	978	685	399	766	366	455
Bombs neutralised	493	471	542	428	236	426	169	178
Weight of explosives in lbs[2]								
Explosions	10,972	47,462	47,472	46,435	13,753	17,596	2,839	5,343
Neutralised	3,001	19,978	32,450	27,094	11,159	16,252	2,188	5,860·5
Armed robberies	437	1,931	1,215	1,231	1,201	813	591	442
Amount stolen	£303,787	£790,687	£612,015	£572,951	£572,105	£545,497	£446,988	£232,650
Malicious fires[3] [4]	—	—	587	636	248	453	432	269
Deaths:								
Civilian	115	322	171	166	216	245	69	50
Army/UDR	48	129	66	35	20	29	29	21
RUC/RUC 'R'	11	17	13	15	11	23	14	10
Injuries:								
Civilian	1,838	3,813	1,812	1,680	2,044	2,162	1,027	548
Army/UDR	390	578	548	483	167	264	188	135
RUC/RUC 'R'	315	485	291	235	263	303	183	302

Yearly figures 1979-1986

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Shooting incidents[1]	728	642	815	382	290	230	196	285
			(327)	(165)	(134)	(104)	(41)	(107
Explosions	422	280	398	219	266	193	148	172
Bombs neutralised	142	120	131	113	101	55	67	82
Weight of explosives in lbs[2]	11,181	9,059	9,261	11,199	6,923	8,545	11,711	11,309
Explosions neutralised	4,530	6,405	9,168	7,300	7,503	6,114	7,715	9,463
Armed robberies	434	412	587	580	622	627	459	724
Amount stolen	568,359	496,825	854,929	1,392,202	830,258	701,903	655,690	1,207,152
Malicious fires[3] [4]	315	275	536	499	528	840	740	906
Deaths:								
Civilian	51	50	57	57	44	36	25	37
Army/UDR	48	16	23	28	15	19	6	12
RUC/RUC 'R'	14	9	21	12	18	9	23	12
Injuries:								
Civilian	557	530	878	328	280	513	468	773
Army/UDR	153	77	140	98	88	86	33	55
RUC/RUC 'R'	165	194	332	99	142	267	415	622

[1] Figures in ( ) refer to shots heard only and *not* included in the total.
[2] Estimated weight only.
[3] No figure for April-June 1981.
[4] Consolidated figures not available for earlier years.

Statistics on security
Part II—Statistics of security forces' activity
Yearly figures 1971-86

	1971	*1972*	*1973*	*1974*	*1975*	*1976*	*1977*	*1978*
Houses searched[1]	17,262	36,617	74,556	71,914	30,092	34,939	20,724	15,462
Finds								
Firearms	717	1,264	1,595	1,260	825	837	590	400
Ammunition (rds)	157,944	183,410	187,399	147,202	73,604	70,306	52,091	43,512
Explosives	2,748	41,488	38,418	26,120	11,565	21,714	3,809	2,108

Persons charged with terrorist type offences[2]

	31 July-31 December 1972	*1973*	*1974*	*1975*	*1976*	*1977*	*1978*
Murder	13	71	77	138	120	131	60
Attempted murder	16	85	76	88	121	135	79
Firearms offences	242	631	545	460	353	301	225
Explosives offences	86	236	161	100	215	146	79
Theft act	111	186	239	314	188	203	151
Other	63	205	276	97	279	392	249
TOTAL	531	1,414	1,374	1,197	1,276	1,308	843

[1] Includes occupied and unoccupied houses searched.
[2] These figures are not available in consolidated form for earlier years.

Yearly figures 1979-86

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Houses searched[1]	6,452	4,106	4,104	4,045	1,497	1,282	812	1,273
Finds								
Firearms	301	203	409	317	200	197	238	215
Ammunition	46,280	28,078	47,127	41,452	32,451	17,211	13,748	29,061
Explosives	1,996	1,810	7,536	5,066	3,762	8,534	7,373	5,386
Persons charged with terrorist type offences[2]								
Murder	45	63	48	50	75	41	24	12
Attempted murder	39	59	72	96	60	68	52	28
Firearms offences	177	112	155	173	150	155	105	128
Explosives offences	40	39	39	41	48	21	37	31
Theft act	159	128	158	130	119	94	65	70
Other	210	149	446	196	161	149	239	386
Total	670	550	918	686	613	528	522	655

[1] Includes occupied and unoccupied houses searched.
[2] These figures are not available in consolidated form for earlier years.

Statistics on security (Part III)—July-December 1986

Notes on the tables:

(1) The offence classifications are based on those used by the Crown and Peace Office in their annual return.
(2) The tables relate to persons convicted at the Belfast Crown Court. This covers all scheduled offences tried on indictment.
(3) Some jury trials are included in cases where the Attorney General certified out of the scheduled mode of trial, ie non-terrrorist serious offences.
(4) Where a person had been convicted of more than one offence only the most serious or that which received the longest sentence is recorded in the statistics.

Convictions for Scheduled Offences—1 July-31 December 1986

Offence	*Number convicted*	*Non-Custodial sentence*	*Young Offenders Centre Training Schools*	*Less than 5 years*	*5 years and less than 7 years*	*7 years and less than 10 years*	*10 years and less than 15 years*	*15 years and less than 20 years*	*20 years and over*	*Life*
Murder	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Attempted Murder	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Conspiracy to Murder	6	0	0	0	0	2	4	0	0	0
Manslaughter	7	0	2	0	1	4	0	0	0	0
Wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm	18	4	6	6	2	0	0	0	0	0
Causing grievous bodily harm	6	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assault occasioning grievous bodily harm	4	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Causing Explosion	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Possessing explosives with intent	12	4	0	1	0	1	5	0	1	0
Other explosives offences	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Possessing a firearm with intent	23	7	1	6	3	1	5	0	0	0
Possessing a firearm	7	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carrying a firearm with intent	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other major firearms offences	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Offence	Number convicted	Non-Custodial sentence	Young Offenders Centre Training Schools	Less than 5 years	5 years and less than 7 years	7 years and less than 10 years	10 years and less than 15 years	15 years and less than 20 years	20 years and over	Life
Robbery	65	22	9	28	4	0	2	0	0	0
Unlawful collection of information	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Kidnapping and false imprisonment	7	1	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	0
Hijacking	14	7	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arson	27	4	10	12	1	0	0	0	0	0
Petrol bomb offences	30	9	12	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Criminal damage	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assisting offenders	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Intimidation	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Withholding information	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Common Law riot	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	257	79	48	83	14	9	17	1	1	5

Note: Where a person has been convicted of more than one offence only the most serious or that which received the longest sentence is recorded in the statistics.

Rev. Martin Smyth asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what arrangements exist for the training of teachers in respect of meeting special educational needs in Northern Ireland; how many teachers in Northern Ireland are currently qualified to teach children with special educational needs; and what changes he plans in this provision.

Dr. Mawhinney [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: All courses of initial teacher training include tuition on the identification and handling of pupils with learning difficulties. In addition specialist training for teachers wishing to concentrate in this field is available by means of the Department's in service training support scheme. There are no plans for change in current provision but the Department of Education will continue to build on its programme of in service training to ensure the Province's needs continue to be met.

The information on qualified teachers is not available in the form requested but there are 504 full-time teachers serving in special schools and 803 teachers in receipt of a special class allowance in primary and secondary schools.

Education Costs

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will publish a table showing the amount spent by local authorities on *(a)* school transport and *(b)* school meals in the latest year for which figures are available; and what are the comparable figures for each year since 1978-79 in cash terms and real terms using 1986-87 prices and using an index of 100 for 1978-79.

Dr. Mawhinney [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: Expenditure by the education and library boards for the years in question is as follows:

Year	School transport			School milk and meals[1]		
	Cash £000's	Real terms £000's	Index	Cash £000's	Real terms £000's	Index
1978-79	6,192	12,037	100	15,641	30,406	100
1979-80	7,843	13,043	108	18,176	30,226	99
1980-81	10,438	14,640	122	16,974	23,808	78
1981-82	11,418	14,584	121	16,210	20,704	68
1982-83	12,479	14,856	123	17,828	21,223	70
1983-84	13,146	14,989	125	20,072	22,886	75
1984-85	13,758	15,034	125	20,828	22,760	75
1985-86	15,240	15,700	130	22,949	23,642	78
1986-87	15,477	15,477	129	23,841	23,841	78

[1] Expenditure figures for school milk and meals are not recorded separately.

Land Restoration (Grants)

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what was the total expenditure by way of grant-aid under the agriculture improvement scheme on land restoration in the Province, in the financial years 1985-86 and 1986-87; and whether such grants are paid in respect of heathland and moorland.

Mr. Viggers [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: The information is:

	£
1985-86	Nil
1986-87	6,600

Grant is not paid in respect of heathland and moorland.

Farm Wastes (Pollution)

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many incidents of water pollution by farm wastes were recorded in each of the years 1980 to

1986, and in 1987 to date, in Northern Ireland; how many of these incidents were attributable to pollution by sileage effluent, and by slurry; and how many of these incidents were the subject of warning letters and prosecutions.

Mr. Needham [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: The table gives details of recorded water pollution incidents arising from agriculture sources for the years 1980 to 1986 inclusive. The figures show the action taken by the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland for those cases referred to it for consideration for prosecution under the Water Act (Northern Ireland) 1972. The Foyle Fisheries Commission and the Fisheries Conservancy Board for Northern Ireland have taken prosecution action under the Foyle Fisheries Act (Northern Ireland) 1952 or the Fisheries Act (Northern Ireland) 1966 respectively in each of those years but no information is readily available on the pollution sources. Figures for 1987 incidents are based on incomplete returns for the first quarter.

	Slurry—Water Act (NI) 1972			*Silage—Water Act (NI) 1972*		
Year	*Number of incidents*	*Prosecutions*	*Warning letters*	*Number of incidents*	*Prosecutions*	*Warning letters*
1980	355	9	—	232	6	—
1981	321	8	—	125	1	2
1982	326	—	—	135	5	—
1983	357	2	2	420	60	14
1984	443	3	17	157	1	16
1985	513	13	12	418	26	28
1986	393	19	7	283	37	26
1987	51	—	2	1	—	—

Agriculture Schemes

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the total expenditure by way of grant-aid on land reclamation in the Province, and the number of payments made, in the financial year 1986-87, under *(a)* the farm capital grant scheme, *(b)* the farm and horticulture development scheme, *(c)* the agriculture and horticulture grant scheme and *(d)* the agriculture and horticulture development scheme.

Mr. Viggers [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: Estimates of expenditure and number of payments are:

	Grant £	*Number of payments*
A. Farm Capital Grant	19	1
B. Farm and Horticulture Development	28,205	65
C. Agriculture and Horticultural Grant	808,146	924
D. Agriculture and Horticultural Development	280,625	227
Totals	1,116,995	1,217

WALES

Welsh Language

Mr. Butler asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will make a statement on the operation of the opt-out proposals on Welsh-medium education.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: We shall be publishing shortly a consultative document seeking views on our proposals for grant maintained schools. These proposals will apply equally to Welsh medium schools.

Welsh Language

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales in which circumstances local planning authorities may consider the Welsh language as a factor in decisons relating to planning permission; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Local planning authorities are required in dealing with a planning application to have regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as these are material to the application, and to any other material considerations. Policies which relate to the character and way of life of a community, including the needs and interests of the Welsh language, may properly be among the provisions or considerations material to an application.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales what guidance he has given to local planning authorities on the consideration of the Welsh language as a factor in decisions relating to planning permission; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: None.

Land Authority for Wales

Mr. Gwilym Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the profit achieved by the Land Authority for Wales on the nine most successful transactions in the three years to 31 March 1985; and how that compares with each other group of nine transactions in order of profitability in the same period.

Mr. Grist: The information is as follows:

	Percentage of purchase and improvement cost	*Gross profit £*
Group 1		
1	3,670	9,250
2	2,395	575,000
3	1,619	600
4	850	747,200
5	819	88,300
6	757	1,300
7	724	140,500
8	683	444,600
9	681	13,900
Group 2		
10	542	417,400
11	511	27,100
12	484	40,000
13	378	15,400
14	397	478,000
15	320	31,200
16	293	20,900
17	290	5,900
18	273	3,100
Group 3		
19	263	245,000
20	238	24,200
21	233	14,600
22	213	18,400
23	193	79,100
24	189	600
25	178	337,000
26	153	45,300
27	151	152,000

	Percentage of purchase and improvement cost	Gross profit £
Group 4		
28	150	25,400
29	136	57,600
30	136	57,500
31	133	14,300
32	129	83,900
33	114	4,900
34	113	2,600
35	111	18,900
36	106	6,700
Group 5		
37	103	1,000
38	100	100
39	93	505,000
40	92	8,200
41	84	20,500
42	70	308,000
43	70	54,100
44	68	148,500
45	65	58,800
Group 6		
46	63	16,900
47	58	161,100
48	56	16,000
49	55	47,500
50	55	30,200
51	53	33,500
52	51	160,000
53	51	300
54	50	100
Group 7		
55	47	900
56	43	39,000
57	39	72,400
58	39	30,600
59	39	10,400
60	33	17,300
61	33	16,200
62	31	5,100
63	27	7,100
Group 8		
64	27	6,000
65	26	99,000
66	26	14,000
67	25	7,600
68	25	6,000
69	23	3,800
70	20	74,700
71	20	3,600
72	18	5,800
Group 9		
73	16	240,800
74	15	60,000
75	15	54,700
76	9	2,000
77	4	1,100
Group 10		
78	[1]	23,500
79	[1]	13,500
80	[1]	400
81	[1]	100
82	[1]	10
	Gross Loss	
Group 11		
83	−8	−6,200
84	−13	−5,300
85	−15	−17,000

[1] Residual income received from miscellaneous sites disposed of in earlier years.

Mr. Gwilym Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the asset value, turnover and net worth of the Land Authority for Wales for each of the last five financial years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The information is:

	1982-83 £'000	1983-84 £'000	1984-85 £'000	1985-86 £'000	1986-87 £'000
1. Asset Value (ie Land Bank)					
At Cost	8,788	8,310	8,656	14,882	10,610
At Market Value	15,220	14,211	14,185	22,707	17,387
2. Turnover	4,145	5,895	3,943	5,002	9,079
3. Net Worth	9,296	9,457	9,637	13,010	13,441

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if, in the light of the critical comments made in the recent Public Accounts Committee report on some of the activities of the Land Authority for Wales, he intends to review the future activities of the authority and to investigate ways by which it can be made more effective and accountable; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if, in the light of the recent recommendation by the Public Accounts Committee that the Land Authority for Wales should review the extent to which developers may be profiting disproportionately from the authority's activities, he will take steps to ensure that, in its dealings with the Cwmbran development corporation over the next few months, the authority will work closely with Torfaen borough council; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if, in the light of the conclusions of the recent Public Accounts Committee report on the Land Authority for Wales, he will investigate means by which the authority will work more closely with local planning authorities in Wales in future; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: I expect to receive shortly the Report of a comprehensive Financial Management and Policy review of the Land Authority for Wales. I shall be giving careful consideration to the future of the Authority and its role in the light of the findings of the review.

Planning Appeals

Mr. Gwilym Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the number of planning appeals that

were heard by his Department for each council in Wales for each year since 1979, giving the numbers of those that were upheld.

Mr. Grist: The information is as follows:

Local Planning Authority	1979		1980		1981		1982		1983		1984		1985		1986	
	[1]D	[2]A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A
Clwyd																
Alyn and Deeside	8	5	10	4	11	4	11	2	5	4	9	3	14	8	12	7
Colwyn	8	3	14	2	16	9	21	8	14	8	21	15	23	14	28	8
Delyn	14	3	21	4	17	3	16	2	16	4	8	5	8	3	17	2
Glyndwr	17	5	15	2	12	3	12	2	9	4	8	3	9	7	15	5
Rhuddlan	11	6	10	5	14	6	15	6	15	10	25	13	18	13	16	11
Wrexham	18	7	19	6	24	7	35	9	19	8	14	8	17	11	26	9
Dyfed																
Carmarthen	11	1	26	2	18	6	9	1	18	8	8	3	6	3	18	7
Ceredigion	21	6	36	6	27	5	25	5	15	2	16	1	26	8	29	9
Dinefwr	8	3	9	2	11	2	13	1	4	1	9	2	9	6	13	9
Llanelli	12	—	12	1	19	9	16	2	14	5	16	4	13	7	21	7
Preseli	14	3	20	2	14	1	13	—	10	3	10	3	5	4	12	—
South Pembs	16	3	19	4	29	7	15	3	23	6	13	4	13	4	22	9
Gwent																
Blaenau Gwent	4	1	5	2	4	3	4	1	9	1	5	2	5	4	14	5
Islwyn	3	0	11	5	12	3	9	1	4	1	9	5	12	6	16	6
Monmouth	21	6	27	9	37	16	52	17	26	10	42	9	47	14	45	18
Newport	15	5	19	7	11	4	22	7	18	7	24	6	23	10	33	17
Torfaen	4	3	9	5	5	4	14	4	14	3	17	7	14	10	26	9
Gwynedd																
Aberconwy	19	5	16	1	22	4	18	6	24	10	15	5	27	14	21	13
Arfon	10	4	12	4	10	5	8	4	11	2	13	4	16	9	16	7
Dwyfor	24	12	10	4	19	6	18	6	17	5	14	5	17	6	13	3
Meirionnydd	23	8	23	7	13	5	12	5	12	6	12	4	8	3	16	8
Ynys Mon	32	9	27	10	43	15	40	17	40	12	33	10	33	11	45	17
Mid Glamorgan																
Cynon Valley	5	0	5	4	4	1	12	5	6	1	10	4	9	2	15	4
Merthyr Tydfil	7	2	6	2	4	1	17	7	8	2	7	2	2	1	11	4
Ogwr	26	8	36	8	47	13	31	4	28	8	31	9	20	3	27	4
Rhondda	7	3	6	3	6	4	14	5	10	4	13	1	10	3	24	10
Rhymney Valley	11	3	10	3	13	4	20	5	16	4	10	5	10	3	19	5
Taff Ely	19	11	17	8	25	9	20	6	23	7	21	7	17	8	18	9
Powys																
Brecknock	13	0	15	3	20	1	15	—	16	7	14	6	21	6	22	9
Montgomery	10	5	12	3	14	3	11	—	13	2	11	6	7	1	3	1
Radnor	2	0	5	1	12	2	9	2	3	0	3	0	6	3	8	4
South Glamorgan																
Cardiff	49	18	39	15	48	15	33	10	53	22	45	18	55	31	38	16
Vale of Glamorgan	55	26	57	23	62	24	61	20	50	17	43	15	42	13	48	20
West Glamorgan																
Port Talbot (formerly Afan)	10	6	7	1	4	2	8	4	4	2	4	0	5	1	4	1
Lliw Valley	15	2	28	12	25	6	22	4	28	11	23	8	17	7	13	7
Neath	10	5	14	9	8	2	12	4	10	4	5	2	10	2	5	2
Swansea	35	17	42	11	54	22	48	14	44	23	56	19	59	23	53	20

[1] D = Determined.
[2] A = Allowed.

Domestic Rates

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the average domestic rate paid in each Welsh district in the current financial year; and what is the estimated community charge in each Welsh district *(a)* per person and *(b)* per property.

Mr. Peter Walker: Average domestic bills, calculated as the estimated contribution made by domestic ratepayers to authorities' rate fund expenditure in 1987-88 (after allowing for domestic rate relief) divided by the number of hereditaments, are given in the following table. Estimated community charge figures for 1987-88 are also shown. These estimates are based on present expenditure patterns and aggregate levels of grant. They are given on two bases: first, community charges assuming the Government's proposals were implemented in full in 1987-88, with no safety net, are provided; secondly, charges after allowing for the safety nets envisaged in the Green Paper. The average community charge per property including safety net will, by definition, be the same as the average domestic rate bill per property.

Rating authority	Average domestic rate bill per property	Community charge with no "safety net". per adult	Average per domestic property	Community charge including "safety net" per adult
	£	£	£	£
Alyn and Deeside	329	132	268	163
Colwyn	336	144	258	188
Delyn	327	137	273	165
Glyndwr	263	138	258	141
Rhuddlan	326	134	269	163
Wrexham Maelor	292	140	274	149
Carmarthen	220	136	270	111
Ceredigion	232	128	243	122
Dinefwr	197	125	243	102
Llanelli	238	150	287	124
Preseli Pembrokeshire	221	127	241	117
South Pembrokeshire	255	124	232	137
Blaenau Gwent	202	146	280	106
Islwyn	222	137	271	112
Monmouth	311	131	277	147
Newport	316	132	252	166
Torfaen	271	142	277	139
Aberconwy	292	127	239	155
Arfon	198	124	215	114
Dwyfor	225	128	200	145
Meirionnydd	218	127	198	140
Ynys Mon	256	123	224	141
Cynon Valley	174	135	252	93
Merthyr Tydfil	206	149	284	108
Ogwr	266	142	294	129
Rhondda	144	151	283	77
Rhymney Valley	235	148	294	118
Taff-Ely	254	147	296	126
Brecknock	229	121	239	116
Montgomeryshire	213	108	201	114
Radnor	212	112	200	119
Cardiff	335	103	206	168
Vale of Glamorgan	320	117	247	152
Port Talbot	263	181	348	137
Lliw Valley	237	164	321	122
Neath	252	148	287	130
Swansea	331	172	342	166
Wales average	268	136	268	136

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list, by Welsh district, (*a*) the district rate and (*b*) the percentage increase of this in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Peter Walker: The information requested is given in the following tables:

Total district rate and year on year change.

	1976-77 (p)	1977-78 (p)	Per cent. change	1978-79 (p)	Per cent. change	1979-80 (p)	Per cent. change	1980-81 (p)	Per cent. change
Total district									
Alyn and Deeside	18·57	18·20	−2·0	21·10	15·9	17·40	−17·5	21·24	22·1
Colwyn	22·68	23·40	3·2	26·10	11·5	21·50	−17·6	25·04	16·5
Delyn	24·97	25·70	2·9	26·90	4·7	24·30	−9·7	28·07	15·5
Glyndwr	21·81	19·00	−12·9	21·70	14·2	21·00	−3·2	25·52	21·5
Rhuddlan	26·75	29·90	11·8	33·50	12·0	29·30	−12·5	32·40	10·6
Wrexham Maelor	18·76	20·40	8·7	25·00	22·5	23·80	−4·8	28·80	21·0
Carmarthen	20·89	17·80	−14·8	22·90	28·7	18·60	−18·8	20·42	9·8
Ceredigion	19·55	20·00	2·3	23·00	15·0	17·00	−26·1	17·94	5·5
Dinefwr	15·00	11·80	−21·3	18·50	56·8	19·00	2·7	19·06	0·3
Llanelli	25·19	24·40	−3·1	29·40	20·5	23·10	−21·4	29·30	26·8
Preseli	17·48	15·70	−10·2	17·90	14·0	14·10	−21·2	15·89	12·7
South Pembroke	23·93	22·30	−6·8	19·00	−14·8	12·20	−35·8	17·33	42·0
Blaenau Gwent	29·48	31·50	6·9	38·10	21·0	26·30	−31·0	30·97	17·8
Islwyn	23·63	25·40	7·5	27·00	6·3	21·50	−20·4	25·50	18·6
Monmouth	15·43	20·50	32·9	22·50	9·8	20·60	−8·4	24·11	17·0
Newport	22·09	24·30	10·0	25·60	5·3	19·40	−24·2	25·96	33·8
Torfaen	21·90	27·30	24·7	31·50	15·4	26·90	−14·6	33·78	25·6

	1976-77 (p)	*1977-78 (p)*	*Per cent. change*	*1978-79 (p)*	*Per cent change*	*1979-80 (p)*	*Per cent change*	*1980-81 (p)*	*Per cent. change*
Aberconwy	24·23	26·50	9·4	32·00	20·8	26·70	−16·6	29·41	10·1
Arfon	20·88	22·90	9·7	27·30	19·2	21·40	−21·6	24·30	13·6
Dwyfor	22·00	22·60	2·7	24·90	10·2	23·00	−7·6	26·33	14·5
Meirionnydd	21·93	22·70	3·5	24·30	7·0	21·10	−13·2	27·41	29·9
Ynys Mon	22·19	24·20	9·1	25·80	6·6	19·00	−26·4	21·57	13·5
Cynon Valley	28·09	30·80	9·6	31·20	1·3	23·80	−23·7	26·74	12·4
Merthyr Tydfil	32·28	33·80	4·7	37·20	10·1	35·50	−4·6	36·47	2·7
Ogwr	18·67	20·50	9·8	27·90	36·1	22·40	−19·7	27·85	24·3
Rhondda	25·70	27·50	7·0	31·00	12·7	30·50	−1·6	35·60	16·7
Rhymney Valley	28·60	28·80	0·7	32·40	12·5	25·90	−20·1	31·36	21·1
Taff Ely	23·93	26·00	8·7	33·40	28·5	24·80	−25·7	33·96	36·9
Brecknock	17·66	20·60	16·6	22·60	9·7	15·80	−30·1	13·95	−11·7
Montgomeryshire	15·91	15·30	−3·8	21·50	40·5	14·60	−32·1	14·43	−1·2
Radnor	18·31	19·20	4·9	21·70	13·0	13·50	−37·8	11·23	−16·8
Cardiff	23·50	22·50	−4·3	22·50	00	13·50	−40·0	19·95	47·8
Vale of Glamorgan	22·43	23·30	3·9	19·60	−15·9	11·80	−39·8	16·48	39·7
Port Talbot	40·00	37·90	−5·3	34·80	−8·2	30·50	−12·4	34·03	11·6
Lliw Valley	21·44	23·80	11·0	26·90	13·0	24·00	−10·8	24·85	3·5
Neath	23·35	21·10	−9·6	24·30	15·2	20·30	−16·5	23·69	16·7
Swansea	26·95	28·30	5·0	30·60	8·1	25·70	−16·0	29·51	14·8

Total district rate and year on year change—continued

	1981-82 (p)	*Percentage change*	*1982-83 (p)*	*Percentage change*	*1983-84 (p)*	*Percentage change*	*1984-85 (p)*	*Percentage change*
Total district								
Alyn and Deeside	20·40	−4·0	17·40	−14·7	18·30	5·2	25·50	39·3
Colwyn	35·00	39·8	33·10	−5·4	28·11	−15·1	32·10	14·2
Delyn	28·60	1·9	34·60	21·0	31·96	−7·6	30·90	−3·3
Glyndwr	26·80	5·0	26·00	−3·0	24·83	−4·5	26·20	5·5
Rhuddlan	32·40	0·0	31·80	−1·9	31·64	−0·5	33·00	4·3
Wrexham Maelor	30·00	4·2	28·50	−5·0	30·31	6·4	31·00	2·3
Carmarthen	22·60	10·7	22·80	0·9	22·90	0·4	20·90	−8·7
Ceredigion	17·50	−2·5	17·60	0·6	17·25	−2·0	18·70	8·4
Dinefwr	18·60	−2·4	21·30	14·5	16·24	−23·8	16·90	4·1
Llanelli	29·70	1·4	30·30	2·0	31·69	4·6	33·10	4·4
Preseli	17·80	12·0	19·70	10·7	19·83	0·7	21·80	9·9
South Pembroke	18·40	6·2	20·50	11·4	21·35	4·1	21·60	1·2
Blaenau Gwent	38·40	24·0	36·50	−4·9	33·17	−9·1	32·60	−1·7
Islwyn	28·00	9·8	29·00	3·6	24·00	−17·2	32·00	33·3
Monmouth	24·00	−0·5	26·90	12·1	21·95	−18·4	27·80	26·7
Newport	30·60	17·9	30·50	−0·3	31·00	1·6	34·30	10·6
Torfaen	40·00	18·4	38·90	−2·8	39·16	0·7	46·20	18·0
Aberconwy	30·40	3·4	29·30	−3·6	30·17	3·0	34·60	14·7
Arfon	28·20	16·0	26·80	−5·0	26·59	−0·8	33·80	27·1
Dwfor	29·30	11·3	29·80	1·7	33·22	11·5	36·00	8·4
Meirionnydd	31·30	14·2	31·50	0·6	33·03	4·9	33·60	1·7
Ynys Mon	28·70	33·1	27·30	−4·9	28·87	5·8	32·30	11·9
Cynon Valley	27·70	3·6	27·80	0·4	28·15	1·3	29·50	4·8
Merthyr Tydfil	44·80	22·8	38·50	−14·1	39·56	2·8	39·40	−0·4
Ogwr	30·60	9·9	30·20	−1·3	28·38	−6·0	31·50	11·0
Rhondda	33·30	−6·5	30·30	−9·0	28·00	−7·6	27·00	−3·6
Rhymney Valley	31·40	0·1	37·30	18·8	38·79	4·0	37·40	−3·6
Taff Ely	28·50	−16·1	28·60	0·4	24·93	−12·8	29·30	17·5
Brecknock	13·30	−4·7	16·80	26·3	21·02	25·1	24·80	18·0
Montgomeryshire	16·40	13·7	14·70	−10·4	14·90	1·4	16·50	10·7
Radnor	10·40	−7·4	11·40	9·6	11·81	3·6	17·90	51·6
Cardiff	24·00	20·3	26·30	9·6	18·99	−27·8	19·90	4·8
Vale of Glamorgan	19·00	15·3	22·00	15·8	22·93	4·2	23·70	3·4
Port Talbot	41·00	20·5	41·00	0·0	40·30	−1·7	42·20	4·7
Lliw Valley	28·10	13·1	28·10	0·0	29·54	5·1	28·20	−4·5
Neath	26·00	9·8	24·50	−5·8	22·20	−9·4	24·10	8·6
Swansea	33·50	13·5	35·20	5·1	35·47	0·8	36·50	2·9

Total district rate and year on year change

	1985-86 (p)	*per cent. change*	*1986-87 (p)*	*per cent. change*	*1987-88 (p)*	*per cent. change*
Total district						
Alyn and Deeside	28·33	11·1	31·10	9·8	30·47	−2·0
Colwyn	36·12	12·5	38·11	5·5	48·09	26·2
Delyn	31·64	2·4	34·13	7·9	35·20	3·1
Glyndwr	28·46	8·6	28·83	1·3	31·46	9·1
Rhuddlan	35·05	6·2	35·14	·3	35·68	1·5
Wrexham Maelor	33·14	6·9	35·31	6·5	36·99	4·8

	1985-86 (p)	per cent. change	1986-87 (p)	per cent. change	1987-88 (p)	per cent. change
Carmarthen	25·74	23·2	27·10	5·3	30·14	11·2
Ceredigion	23·00	23·0	24·25	5·4	26·80	10·5
Dinefwr	17·10	1·2	21·44	25·4	26·01	21·3
Llanelli	39·83	20·3	43·86	10·1	47·13	7·5
Preseli	23·99	10·0	24·43	1·8	25·80	5·6
South Pembroke	25·50	18·1	27·55	8·0	29·32	6·4
Blaenau Gwent	37·29	14·4	44·37	19·0	46·28	4·3
Islwyn	36·00	12·5	37·00	2·8	38·50	4·1
Monmouth	33·06	18·9	34·52	4·4	38·10	10·4
Newport	38·54	12·4	38·60	·2	38·54	−·2
Torfaen	44·53	−3·6	44·86	·7	45·28	·9
Aberconwy	36·98	6·9	40·17	8·6	45·66	13·7
Arfon	35·75	5·8	38·59	7·9	40·80	5·7
Dwyfor	39·09	8·6	42·22	8·0	45·31	7·3
Meirionnydd	36·03	7·2	36·03	·0	36·15	·3
Ynys Mon	35·77	10·7	37·87	5·9	40·02	5·7
Cynon Valley	30·62	3·8	33·15	8·3	36·65	10·6
Merthyr Tydfil	42·62	8·2	43·56	2·2	43·66	·2
Ogwr	34·95	11·0	41·35	18·3	43·64	5·5
Rhondda	37·00	37·0	43·60	17·8	47·70	9·4
Rhymney Valley	37·64	·6	38·88	3·3	41·34	6·3
Taff Ely	40·80	39·2	40·44	−·9	42·91	6·1
Brecknock	27·46	10·7	32·02	16·6	37·51	17·1
Montgomeryshire	15·93	−3·5	20·90	31·2	22·73	8·8
Radnor	21·28	18·9	25·81	21·3	25·75	−·2
Cardiff	20·72	4·1	20·69	−·1	19·95	−3·6
Vale of Glam	26·38	11·3	26·83	1·7	27·22	1·5
Port Talbot	40·00	−5·2	38·30	−4·3	39·34	2·7
Lliw Valley	30·23	7·2	33·54	10·9	37·38	11·4
Neath	24·16	·2	25·20	4·3	28·9	14·8
Swansea	38·35	5·1	40·38	5·3	44·54	10·3

Mr. Geraint Howells asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the total annual value of domestic rate relief accruing to registered charities in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: Registered charities are rated on a commercial basis and do not, therefore, qualify for domestic rate relief. However, they are eligible for 50 per cent. mandatory relief under Section 40(1) of the General Rate Act 1967, and for 1986-87 this amounted to £1·2 million.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list, by speciality, the number of people awaiting non-emergency operations and treatment in the Pembrokeshire health district together with average waiting time in each specialty; and how these figures compare with the average for *(a)* Wales and *(b)* England.

Mr. Grist: The number of persons waiting for in-patient or day-care admission to hospitals of the Pembrokeshire Health Authority at 31 March 1987 were as follows:

	In-Patients	Day-Cases
General Surgery	1,534	230
Ear, Nose and Throat	—	48
Traumatic and Orthopaedic Surgery	789	470
Opthalmology	—	9
Dental Surgery	—	99
Orthodontics	—	48
Gynaecology	187	94

Information on median waiting times is derived only for a limited range of specialties which have relatively large numbers of patients admitted to hospital from waiting lists. The latest available information, which is provisional for 1986, is as follows:

Median waiting time (days) for in-patients and day-cases admitted from waiting lists during 1986

	Pembrokeshire	Wales
General Surgery (including Urology)	61	36
Traumatic and Orthopaedic Surgery	70	66
Gynaecology	37	38

Information relating to waiting times in England is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Services.

Coal Industry

Mr. Win Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list by county for each year, since and including 1976, the opencast coalmining applications that have been considered by him on appeal, and the result of those appeals in each case.

Mr. Grist: No opencast coalmining planning applications have been considered on appeal by my right hon. Friend, from and including 1976, in respect of the counties of Clwyd, Gwynedd, Powys and South Glamorgan. Details of appeals for the other counties are given in the following table:

Developer	Site	Date of Decision	Decision
Dyfed			
NCB	Garnant Farm, Amman Valley	22 July 1986	allowed
I. N. Magnascan	Honeyscroft Farm, Jeffreston	22 December 1986	dismissed

Developer	Site	Date of Decision	Decision
Gwent			
James and Emmanuel	Cefn Crib, Hafodyrynys	18 June 1980	dismissed
Blaendare Coal Co.	Penyrheol Reservoir, Upper Race, Pontypool	19 January 1983	dismissed
W. Roach	Penyfan Ganol Farm, Manmoel	31 March 1983	dismissed
W. Roach	Penyfan Ganol Farm, Manmoel	19 December 1985	allowed
Mid Glamorgan			
E. Thomas	Pencoedcae Farm, Rhymney	6 February 1980	allowed
Taylor Woodrow Construction	Mountain Hare, Merthyr Tydfil	14 July 1987	allowed
West Glamorgan			
W. Morgan	Gelliwarog Farm, Pontardawe	28 December 1979	dismissed
James and Emmanuel	Llechart Fawr Farm, Pontardawe	12 February 1980	dismissed
Delves Solid Fuels	Gilfach-yr-Haidd and Gilfach Goch Farm, Ystabyfera	20 May 1982	allowed
Delves Solid Fuels	Gelliwarog Farm, Pontardawe	17 February 1986	allowed
IMN, HEC, MRL, JVP	Cwm Nant Lleiby Farm, Ynysmendwy	18 February 1986	allowed

Nuclear Accident Response Unit

Mr. Win Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether he was informed of the existence of a nuclear accident response unit at Saint Athan when it was established there.

Mr. Grist: It has been the practice of successive Governments not to discuss the roles of particular units which may be involved in a response to an accident involving defence nuclear material.

Local Government Staff

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list by Welsh county and district authority the number of full-time and full-time equivalent staff employed in each of the last 10 years, together with the percentage increase or decrease over the preceding year.

Mr. Peter Walker: The information held by the Department regarding full-time and part-time employees for each year is set out in the following tables. No information on employees by individual authorities is held by the Department prior to December 1978. Information on the number of full-time equivalent employees is not held by the Department and it is not possible to apply national factors to convert part-time employees to full-time equivalent terms.

Figures for Police authorities, Probation and Aftercare committees and Magistrates Courts are separately identified in the tables and are excluded from the county council totals.

Local authority employees (Full-time)

	March 1979	*Percentage change since 1978*	*March 1980*	*Percentage change since 1979*	*March 1981*	*Percentage change since 1980*	*March 1982*	*Percentage change since 1981*	*March 1983*	*Percentage change since 1982*
County councils										
Clwyd	9,007	n/a	8,914	−1·03	8,724	−2·13	8,643	−0·93	8,748	1·21
Dyfed	8,388	n/a	8,324	−0·76	8,091	−2·80	7,992	−1·22	7,984	−0·10
Gwent	10,929	n/a	10,742	−1·71	10,516	−2·10	10,480	−0·34	10,392	−0·84
Gwynedd	6,151	n/a	6,097	−0·88	6,120	0·38	6,048	−1·18	5,927	−2·00
Mid Glamorgan	14,770	n/a	15,157	2·62	13,977	−7·79	13,076	−6·45	13,512	3·33
Powys	3,285	n/a	3,228	−1·74	3,208	−0·62	3,133	−2·34	3,201	2·17
South Glamorgan	8,670	n/a	8,713	0·50	8,661	−0·60	8,396	−3·06	8,432	0·43
West Glamorgan	9,954	n/a	9,554	−4·02	9,228	−3·41	9,007	−2·39	9,056	0·54
District councils										
Aberconwy	564	n/a	537	−4·79	504	−6·15	488	−3·17	487	−0·20
Alyn and Deeside	499	n/a	490	−1·80	512	4·49	464	−9·38	453	−2·37
Arfon	582	n/a	542	−6·87	555	2·40	551	−0·72	542	−1·63
Blaenau Gwent	1,025	n/a	1,025	0·00	980	−4·39	976	−0·41	1,017	4·20
Brecknock	239	n/a	225	−5·86	221	−1·78	220	−0·45	299	35·91
Cardiff	3,770	n/a	3,665	−2·79	3,573	−2·51	3,576	0·08	3,625	1·37
Carmarthen	411	n/a	416	1·22	393	−5·53	387	−1·53	402	3·88
Ceredigion	453	n/a	443	−2·21	428	−3·39	426	−0·47	440	3·29
Colwyn	460	n/a	464	0·87	453	−2·37	404	−10·82	395	−2·23
Cynon Valley	830	n/a	822	−0·96	725	−11·80	731	0·83	736	0·68
Delyn	494	n/a	513	3·85	489	−4·68	463	−5·32	455	−1·73
Dinefwr	234	n/a	230	−1·71	233	1·30	235	0·86	230	−2·13
Dwyfor	214	n/a	209	−2·34	206	−1·44	213	3·40	225	5·63
Glyndwr	320	n/a	275	−14·06	266	−3·27	265	−0·38	269	1·51
Islwyn	809	n/a	808	−0·12	784	−2·97	768	−2·04	749	−2·47
Llanelli	797	n/a	844	5·90	776	−8·06	690	−11·08	655	−5·07
Lliw Valley	500	n/a	493	−1·40	475	−3·65	448	−5·68	441	−1·56

	March 1979	Percentage change since 1978	March 1980	Percentage change since 1979	March 1981	Percentage change since 1980	March 1982	Percentage change since 1981	March 1983	Percentage change since 1982
Meirionnydd	247	n/a	255	3·24	252	−1·18	258	2·38	259	0·39
Merthyr Tydfil	1,071	n/a	1,079	0·75	1,048	−2·87	960	−8·40	932	−2·92
Monmouth	540	n/a	561	3·89	562	0·18	555	−1·25	523	−5·77
Montgomeryshire	298	n/a	281	−5·70	288	2·49	267	−7·29	263	−1·50
Neath	566	n/a	552	−2·47	549	−0·54	540	−1·64	531	−1·67
Newport	1,654	n/a	1,599	−3·33	1,584	−0·94	1,579	−0·32	1,602	1·46
Ogwr	1,126	n/a	1,099	−2·40	1,100	0·09	1,098	−0·18	1,123	2·28
Port Talbot	843	n/a	843	0·00	791	−6·17	720	−8·98	819	13·75
Preseli	532	n/a	521	−2·07	500	−4·03	512	2·40	n/a	n/a
Radnor	136	n/a	135	−0·74	136	0·74	138	1·47	133	−3·62
Rhondda	1,041	n/a	1,073	3·07	853	−20·50	855	0·23	849	−0·70
Rhuddlan	446	n/a	429	−3·81	454	5·83	422	−7·05	435	3·08
Rhymney Valley	1,345	n/a	1,288	−4·24	n/a	n/a	1,298	n/a	1,270	−2·16
South Pembrokeshire	354	n/a	336	−5·08	330	−1·79	306	−7·27	298	−2·61
Swansea	2,413	n/a	2,304	−4·52	2,284	−0·87	2,330	2·01	2,270	−2·58
Taff-Ely	969	n/a	949	−2·06	911	−4·00	875	−3·95	847	−3·20
Torfaen	998	n/a	995	−0·30	977	−1·81	975	−0·20	963	−1·23
Vale of Glamorgan	904	n/a	834	−7·74	835	0·12	833	−0·24	797	−4·32
Wrexham Maelor	1,054	n/a	1,061	−0·66	1,061	0·00	1,004	−5·37	1,006	0·20
Ynys Mon	602	n/a	632	4·98	649	2·69	626	−3·54	639	2·08

Local authority employees (full-time)—Continued

	March 1984	Percentage change since 1983	March 1985	Percentage change since 1984	March 1986	Percentage change since 1985	March 1987	Percentage change since 1986
County Councils								
Clwyd	8,757	0·10	8,561	−2·24	8,460	−1·18	8,288	−2·03
Dyfed	8,058	0·93	7,846	−2·63	7,693	−1·95	7,883	2·47
Gwent	10,283	−1·05	10,035	−2·41	9,856	−1·78	9,652	−2·07
Gwynedd	5,689	−4·02	5,689	0·00	5,613	−1·34	5,596	−0·30
Mid Glamorgan	13,474	−0·28	13,166	−2·29	13,276	0·84	13,359	0·63
Powys	3,245	1·37	3,172	−2·25	3,078	−2·96	3,025	−1·72
South Glamorgan	8,539	1·27	8,384	−1·82	8,249	−1·61	8,290	0·50
West Glamorgan	8,964	−1·02	8,740	−2·50	8,584	−1·78	8,428	−1·82
District Councils								
Aberconwy	485	−0·41	469	−3·30	454	−3·20	436	−3·96
Alyn & Deeside	443	−2·21	445	0·45	443	−0·45	443	0·00
Arfon	524	−3·32	530	1·15	502	−5·28	489	−2·59
Blaenau Gwent	955	−6·10	932	−2·41	924	−0·86	926	0·22
Brecknock	225	−24·75	223	−0·89	228	2·24	228	0·00
Cardiff	3,370	−7·03	3,177	−5·73	3,153	−0·76	2,427	−23·03
Carmarthen	401	−0·25	398	−0·75	402	1·01	394	−1·99
Ceredigion	438	−0·45	441	0·68	436	−1·13	438	0·46
Colwyn	362	−8·35	362	0·00	347	−4·14	331	−4·61
Cynon Valley	718	−2·45	731	1·81	731	0·00	653	−10·67
Delyn	446	−1·98	447	0·22	448	0·22	469	4·69
Dinefwr	244	6·09	235	−3·69	236	0·43	226	−4·24
Dwyfor	219	−2·67	218	−0·46	219	0·46	223	1·83
Glyndwr	268	−0·37	269	0·37	258	−4·09	260	0·78
Islwyn	751	0·27	741	−1·33	746	0·67	683	−8·45
Llanelli	670	2·29	675	0·75	619	−8·30	622	0·48
Lliw Valley	444	0·68	463	4·28	451	−2·59	441	−2·22
Meirionnydd	254	−1·93	245	−3·54	243	−0·82	248	2·06
Merthyr Tydfil	917	−1·61	917	0·00	903	−1·53	745	−17·50
Monmouth	519	−0·76	551	6·17	505	−8·35	495	−1·98
Montgomeryshire	278	5·70	261	−6·12	259	−0·77	252	−2·70
Neath	531	0·00	554	4·33	545	−1·62	526	−3·49
Newport	1,535	−4·18	1,501	−2·21	1,457	−2·93	1,252	−14·07
Ogwr	1,106	−1·51	1,048	−5·24	967	−7·73	956	−1·14
Port Talbot	752	−8·18	640	−14·89	604	−5·63	620	2·65
Preseli	504	n/a	507	0·60	503	−0·79	494	−1·79
Radnor	137	3·01	135	−1·46	136	0·74	135	−0·74
Rhondda	833	−1·88	818	−1·80	781	−4·52	795	1·79
Rhuddlan	410	−5·75	406	−0·98	392	−3·45	405	3·32
Rhymney Valley	1,195	−5·91	1,185	−0·84	1,185	0·00	1,004	−15·27
South Pembrokeshire	287	−3·69	284	−1·05	282	−0·70	278	−1·42
Swansea	2,192	−3·44	2,177	−0·68	2,199	1·01	2,209	0·45
Taff-Ely	859	1·42	797	−7·22	792	−0·63	710	−10·35
Torfaen	895	−7·06	796	−11·06	786	−1·26	960	22·14
Vale of Glamorgan	744	−6·65	693	−6·85	705	1·73	711	0·85
Wrexham Maelor	98	−0·80	1,003	0·50	996	−0·70	1,003	0·70
Ynys Môn	642	0·47	631	−1·71	626	−0·79	650	3·83

Local Authority Employees (Full-Time)—continued

	March 1979	Per cent. change since 1978	March 1980	Per cent. change since 1979	March 1981	Per cent. change since 1980	March 1982	Per cent. change since 1981	March 1983	Per cent. change since 1982
Police Authorities										
Dyfed Powys	1,136	n/a	1,156	1·76	1,159	0·26	1,146	−1·12	1,148	0·17
Gwent	1,185	n/a	1,200	1·27	1,210	0·83	1,190	−1·65	1,199	0·76
North Wales	1,651	n/a	1,636	−0·91	1,655	1·16	1,644	−0·66	1,664	1·22
South Wales	3,922	n/a	4,080	4·03	4,069	−0·27	4,058	−0·27	4,080	0·54
Probation and after care committees										
Clwyd	77	n/a	79	2·60	80	1·27	83	3·75	86	3·61
Dyfed	37	n/a	36	−2·70	37	2·78	40	8·11	43	7·50
Gwent	60	n/a	67	11·67	64	−4·48	66	3·13	69	4·55
Mid Glamorgan	108	n/a	129	19·44	117	−9·30	116	−0·85	119	2·59
Powys	8	n/a	9	12·50	9	0·00	13	44·44	15	15·38
South Glamorgan	103	n/a	108	4·85	110	1·85	112	1·82	112	0·00
West Glamorgan	66	n/a	65	−1·52	65	0·00	70	7·69	79	12·86
Magistrates courts committees										
Clwyd	59	n/a	62	5·08	65	4·84	65	0·00	66	1·54
Dyfed	48	n/a	53	10·42	55	3·77	54	−1·82	55	1·85
Gwent	77	n/a	78	1·30	77	−1·28	80	3·90	84	5·00
Gwynedd	32	n/a	33	3·13	35	6·06	33	−5·71	35	6·06
Mid Glamorgan	97	n/a	102	5·15	100	−1·96	101	1·00	105	3·96
Powys	13	n/a	13	0·00	13	0·00	12	−7·69	8	−33·33
South Glamorgan	61	n/a	62	1·64	65	4·84	70	7·69	71	1·43
West Glamorgan	63	n/a	70	11·11	78	11·43	73	−6·41	72	−1·37

Local authority employees (full-time)—continued

	March 1984	Per cent. change since 1983	March 1985	Per cent. change since 1984	March 1986	Per cent. change since 1985	March 1987	Per cent. change since 1986
Police authorities								
Dyfed Powys	1,141	−0·61	1,144	0·26	1,148	0·35	1,142	−0·52
Gwent	1,221	1·83	1,227	0·49	1,227	0·00	1,233	0·49
North Wales	1,669	0·30	1,675	0·36	1,658	−1·01	1,679	1·27
South Wales	4,082	0·05	4,091	0·22	4,039	−1·27	4,128	2·20
Probation and after care committees								
Clwyd	90	4·65	96	6·67	96	0·00	97	1·04
Dyfed	43	0·00	50	16·28	50	0·00	50	0·00
Gwent	69	0·00	69	0·00	69	0·00	84	21·74
Mid Glamorgan	124	4·20	122	−1·61	121	−0·82	123	1·65
Powys	15	0·00	15	0·00	16	6·67	16	0·00
South Glamorgan	114	1·79	118	3·51	115	−2·54	122	6·09
West Glamorgan	80	1·27	80	0·00	85	6·25	89	4·71
Magistrates courts committees								
Clwyd	68	3·03	70	2·94	73	4·29	70	−4·11
Dyfed	56	1·82	57	1·79	54	−5·26	53	−1·85
Gwent	82	−2·38	80	−2·44	79	−1·25	78	−1·27
Gwynedd	36	2·86	38	5·56	38	0·00	38	0·00
Mid Glamorgan								
105	0·00	112	6·67	110	−1·79	110	0·00	
Powys	10	25·00	12	20·00	10	−16·67	10	0·00
South Glamorgan	75	5·63	72	−4·00	71	−1·39	71	0·00
West Glamorgan	76	5·56	76	0·00	75	−1·32	76	1·33

Local authority employees (part-time)

	March 1979	Per cent. change since 1978	March 1980	Per cent. change since 1979	March 1981	Per cent. change since 1980	March 1982	Per cent. change since 1981	March 1983	Per cent. change since 1982
County councils										
Clwyd	6,045	n/a	6,021	−0·40	5,959	−1·03	6,138	3·00	6,513	6·11
Dyfed	5,296	n/a	5,374	1·47	4,996	−7·03	5,123	2·54	5,336	4·16
Gwent	7,860	n/a	7,584	−3·51	7,839	3·36	7,531	−3·93	7,735	2·71
Gwynedd	3,649	n/a	3,725	2·08	3,607	−3·17	3,361	−6·82	3,662	8·96
Mid Glamorgan	8,689	n/a	9,146	5·26	9,411	2·90	9,212	−2·11	9,661	4·87
Powys	1,804	n/a	1,793	−0·61	1,672	−1·73	1,771	0·51	2,065	16·60

	March 1979	Per cent. change since 1978	March 1980	Per cent. change since 1979	March 1981	Per cent. change since 1980	March 1982	Per cent. change since 1981	March 1983	Per cent. change since 1982
South Glamorgan	6,038	n/a	5,970	−1·13	5,936	−0·57	5,865	−1·20	5,863	−0·03
West Glamorgan	5,594	n/a	5,329	−4·74	5,349	0·38	5,590	4·51	5,756	2·97
District councils										
Aberconwy	38	n/a	48	26·32	42	−12·50	39	−7·14	40	2·56
Alyn and Deeside	153	n/a	144	−5·88	160	11·11	109	−31·88	96	−11·93
Arfon	39	n/a	41	5·13	40	−2·44	56	40·00	51	−8·93
Blaenau Gwent	107	n/a	100	−6·54	99	−1·00	93	−6·06	106	13·98
Brecknock	32	n/a	29	−9·38	24	−17·24	28	16·67	23	−17·86
Cardiff	230	n/a	200	−13·04	222	11·00	211	−4·95	305	44·55
Carmarthen	55	n/a	54	−1·82	57	5·56	68	19·30	63	−7·35
Ceredigion	28	n/a	33	17·86	28	−15·15	19	−32·14	24	26·32
Colwyn	50	n/a	56	12·00	54	−3·57	52	−3·70	50	−3·85
Cynon Valley	90	n/a	89	−1·11	86	−3·37	95	10·47	102	7·37
Delyn	122	n/a	155	27·05	159	2·58	145	−8·81	171	17·93
Dinefwr	39	n/a	27	−30·77	27	0·00	26	−3·70	22	−15·38
Dwyfor	17	n/a	24	41·18	20	−16·67	19	−5·00	21	10·53
Glyndwr	35	n/a	35	0·00	26	−25·71	28	7·69	32	14·29
Islwyn	87	n/a	62	−28·74	50	−19·35	48	−4·00	51	6·25
Llanelli	80	n/a	54	−32·50	63	16·67	53	−15·87	51	−3·77
Lliw Valley	46	n/a	43	−6·52	38	−11·63	35	−7·89	28	−20·00
Meirionnydd	54	n/a	47	−12·96	47	0·00	45	−4·26	45	0·00
Merthyr Tydfil	80	n/a	85	6·25	84	−1·18	88	4·76	88	0·00
Monmouth	79	n/a	82	3·80	91	10·98	85	−6·59	88	3·53
Montgomeryshire	79	n/a	82	3·80	91	10·98	85	−6·59	88	3·53
Neath	33	n/a	34	3·03	33	−2·94	33	0·00	34	3·03
Newport	162	n/a	167	3·09	148	−11·38	154	4·05	166	7·79
Ogwr	248	n/a	208	−16·13	174	−16·35	175	0·57	189	8·00
Port Talbot	113	n/a	112	−0·88	99	−11·61	100	1·01	92	−8·00
Preseli	39	n/a	42	7·69	41	−2·38	41	0·00	n/a	n/a
Radnor	28	n/a	27	−3·57	30	11·11	30	0·00	31	3·33
Rhondda	125	n/a	124	−0·80	142	14·52	167	17·61	169	1·20
Rhuddlan	97	n/a	90	−7·22	104	15·56	112	7·69	85	−24·11
Rhymney Valley	173	n/a	181	4·62	n/a	n/a	201	n/a	225	11·94
South Pembrokeshire	21	n/a	18	−14·29	18	0·00	22	22·22	26	18·18
Swansea	194	n/a	177	−8·76	212	19·77	133	−37·26	118	−11·28
Taff-Ely	94	n/a	99	5·32	98	−1·01	102	4·08	105	2·94
Torfaen	124	n/a	134	8·06	148	10·45	150	1·35	176	17·33
Vale of Glamorgan	43	n/a	43	0·00	51	18·60	61	19·61	70	14·75
Wrexham Maelor	160	n/a	160	0·00	169	5·63	164	−2·96	178	8·54
Ynys Mon	63	n/a	62	−1·59	57	−8·06	68	19·30	65	−4·41

Local authority employees (part-time)—continued

	March 1984	Per cent. Change since 1983	March 1985	Per cent. Change since 1984	March 1986	Per cent. Change since 1985	March 1987	Per cent. Change since 1986
County councils								
Clwyd	6,843	5·07	7,030	2·73	6,933	−1·38	7,022	1·28
Dyfed	5,349	0·24	5,341	−0·15	5,538	3·69	6,166	11·34
Gwent	7,810	0·97	8,063	3·24	8,286	2·77	8,674	4·68
Gwynedd	3,717	1·50	3,848	3·52	3,925	2·00	4,071	3·72
Mid Glamorgan	10,493	8·61	10,513	0·19	10,704	1·82	10,793	0·83
Powys	2,072	0·34	2,050	−1·06	2,024	−1·27	2,181	7·76
South Glamorgan	6,009	2·49	6,257	4·13	6,361	1·66	6,921	8·80
West Glamorgan	5,726	−0·52	5,751	0·44	5,785	0·59	6,044	4·48
District councils								
Aberconwy	44	10·00	41	−6·82	44	7·32	47	6·82
Alyn and Deeside	95	−1·04	88	−7·37	96	9·09	101	5·21
Arfon	57	11·76	59	3·51	64	8·47	66	3·13
Blaenau Gwent	129	21·70	113	−12·40	120	6·19	120	0·00
Brecknock	24	4·35	20	−16·67	21	5·00	22	4·76
Cardiff	308	0·98	335	8·77	366	9·25	406	10·93
Carmarthen	59	−6·35	59	0·00	59	0·00	68	15·25
Ceredigion	24	0·00	26	8·33	30	15·38	28	−6·67
Colwyn	47	−6·00	51	8·51	45	−11·76	53	17·78
Cynon Valley	95	−6·86	95	0·00	95	0·00	95	0·00
Delyn	147	−14·04	153	4·08	138	−9·80	159	15·22
Dinefwr	21	−4·55	22	4·76	21	−4·55	19	−9·52
Dwyfor	20	−4·76	18	−10·00	26	44·44	17	−34·62
Glyndwr	28	−12·50	28	0·00	30	7·14	29	−3·33
Islwyn	54	5·88	52	−3·70	50	−3·85	49	−2·00

	March 1984	Per cent. Change since 1983	March 1985	Per cent. Change since 1984	March 1986	Per cent. Change since 1985	March 1987	Per cent. Change since 1986
Llanelli	71	39·22	64	−9·86	78	21·88	64	−17·95
Lliw Valley	32	14·29	37	15·63	51	37·84	70	37·25
Meirionnydd	48	6·67	56	16·67	52	−7·14	51	−1·92
Merthyr Tydfil	87	−1·14	89	2·30	98	10·11	87	−11·22
Monmouth	68	−22·73	63	−7·35	64	1·59	63	−1·56
Montgomeryshire	68	−22·73	83	22·06	79	−4·82	84	6·33
Neath	35	2·94	41	17·14	42	2·44	49	16·67
Newport	162	−2·41	158	−2·47	196	24·05	242	23·47
Ogwr	175	−7·41	170	−2·86	176	3·53	176	0·00
Port Talbot	94	2·17	90	−4·26	87	−3·33	67	−22·99
Preseli	38	N/A	42	10·53	46	9·52	53	15·22
Radnor	31	0·00	27	−12·90	26	−3·70	28	7·69
Rhondda	168	−0·59	182	8·33	189	3·85	189	0·00
Rhuddlan	49	−42·35	65	32·65	54	−16·92	47	−12·96
Rhymney Valley	186	−17·33	213	14·52	214	0·47	216	0·93
South Pembrokeshire	24	−7·69	24	0·00	26	8·33	25	−3·85
Swansea	145	22·88	143	−1·38	144	0·70	161	11·81
Taff-Ely	111	5·71	120	8·11	146	21·67	149	2·05
Torfaen	150	−14·77	159	6·00	173	8·81	175	1·16
Vale of Glamorgan	78	11·43	114	46·15	121	6·14	137	13·22
Wrexham Maelor	168	−5·62	173	2·98	179	3·47	187	4·47
Ynys Mon	70	7·69	71	1·43	72	1·41	70	−2·78

Local authority employees (part-time)—continued

	March 1979	Percentage change since 1978	March 1980	Percentage change since 1979	March 1981	Percentage change since 1980	March 1982	Percentage change since 1981	March 1983	Percentage change since 1982
Police authorities										
Dyfed Powys	45	n/a	45	0·00	45	0·00	45	0·00	52	15·56
Gwent	57	n/a	55	−3·51	57	3·64	58	1·75	58	0·00
North Wales	77	n/a	77	0·00	78	1·30	78	0·00	79	1·28
South Wales	159	n/a	153	−3·77	154	0·65	154	0·00	153	−0·65
Probation and after care committees										
Clwyd	9	n/a	9	0·00	10	11·11	12	20·00	16	33·33
Dyfed	7	n/a	21	200·00	24	14·29	30	25·00	29	−3·33
Gwent	12	n/a	13	8·33	14	7·69	17	21·43	13	−23·53
Mid Glamorgan	20	n/a	11	−45·00	23	109·09	23	0·00	19	−17·39
Powys	3	n/a	3	0·00	3	0·00	2	−33·33	8	300·00
South Glamorgan	13	n/a	14	7·69	15	7·14	15	0·00	14	−6·67
West Glamorgan	13	n/a	15	15·38	13	−13·33	14	7·69	11	−21·43
Magistrates courts committees										
Clwyd	4	n/a	5	25·00	3	−40·00	4	33·33	11	175·00
Dyfed	13	n/a	13	0·00	10	−23·08	11	10·00	11	0·00
Gwent	16	n/a	16	0·00	18	12·50	13	−27·78	11	−15·38
Gwynedd	10	n/a	9	−10·00	9	0·00	13	44·44	12	−7·69
Mid Glamorgan	28	n/a	30	7·14	30	0·00	31	3·33	32	3·23
Powys	2	n/a	2	0·00	2	0·00	2	0·00	10	400·00
South Glamorgan	15	n/a	16	6·67	14	−12·50	14	0·00	14	0·00
West Glamorgan	18	n/a	22	22·22	17	−22·73	21	23·53	23	9·52

Local authority employees (part-time)—continued

	March 1984	Per cent. change since 1983	March 1985	Per cent. change since 1984	March 1986	Per cent. change since 1985	March 1987	Per cent. change since 1986
Police authorities								
Dyfed Powys	55	5·77	52	−5·45	57	9·62	54	−5·26
Gwent	57	−1·72	58	1·75	57	−1·72	62	8·77
North Wales	79	0·00	86	8·86	99	15·12	101	2·02
South Wales	149	−2·61	149	0·00	166	11·41	161	−3·01
Probation and after care committees								
Clwyd	20	25·00	23	15·00	25	8·70	26	4·00
Dyfed	26	−10·34	23	−11·54	25	8·70	21	−16·00
Gwent	15	15·38	15	0·00	22	46·67	9	−59·09
Mid Glamorgan	21	10·53	25	19·05	22	−12·00	24	9·09
Powys	11	37·50	12	9·09	12	0·00	13	8·33
South Glamorgan	19	35·71	22	15·79	32	45·45	32	0·00

	March 1984	Per cent. change since 1983	March 1985	Per cent. change since 1984	March 1986	Per cent. change since 1985	March 1987	Per cent. change since 1986
West Glamorgan	13	18·18	18	38·46	19	5·56	18	−5·26
Magistrates courts committees								
Clwyd	11	0·00	10	−9·09	10	0·00	18	80·00
Dyfed	11	0·00	10	−9·09	10	0·00	10	0·00
Gwent	13	18·18	14	7·69	14	0·00	14	0·00
Gwynedd	9	−25·00	10	11·11	11	10·00	8	−27·27
Mid Glamorgan	32	0·00	32	0·00	30	−6·25	39	30·00
Powys	12	20·00	7	−41·67	11	57·14	12	9·09
South Glamorgan	15	7·14	21	40·00	20	−4·76	23	15·00
West Glamorgan	22	−4·35	21	−4·55	21	0·00	20	−4·76

Rating Reforms

Mr. Geraint Howells asked the Secretary of State for Wales what estimate he has made of the likely cost of introducing the community charge in Wales, during the transition period, including the recruitment of staff, the installation of computer systems, extra furniture and fittings and the initial canvass.

Mr. Peter Walker: No estimate has been made but an assessment of costs will be considered in due course in discussion with the Welsh Consultative Council on Local Government Finance.

Mr. Geraint Howells asked the Secretary of State for Wales what would be the total community charge for 1987-88 payable per resident in all boroughs and districts in Wales, assuming the full replacement of domestic rates by community charge, the implementation of the proposals in "Paying for Local Government" and the full payment of community charge by *(a)* 95 per cent., *(b)* 90 per cent., *(c)* 85 per cent. and *(d)* 81 per cent. of those eligible, both with and without the safety net.

Mr. Peter Walker: Estimates are given in the following table:

1987-88 Community Charge Figures (£)

Rating authority	—with safety net—assuming full payment by:— 95 per cent. of those eligible	90 per cent. of those eligible	85 per cent. of those eligible	81 per cent. of those eligible	—without safety net—assuming full payment by:— 95 per cent. of those eligible	90 per cent. of those eligible	85 per cent. of those eligible	81 per cent. of those eligible
Alyn and Deeside	171	181	191	201	139	147	156	163
Colwyn	198	209	221	232	152	160	169	178
Delyn	173	183	194	203	145	153	162	170
Glyndwr	148	156	166	174	145	153	162	170
Ruddlan	172	181	192	201	141	149	158	166
Wrexham Maelor	156	165	175	183	147	155	164	172
Carmarthen	117	123	130	137	143	151	160	168
Ceredigion	129	136	144	151	135	142	151	158
Dinefwr	107	113	120	125	132	139	147	154
Llanelli	131	138	146	154	157	166	176	185
Preseli Pembrokeshire	123	130	137	144	133	141	149	156
South Pembrokeshire	144	152	161	169	131	138	146	153
Blaenau Gwent	111	117	124	130	154	162	172	181
Islwyn	118	125	132	139	144	152	161	169
Monmouth	155	164	173	182	138	146	155	162
Newport	174	184	195	205	139	147	156	163
Torfaen	146	154	163	171	150	158	167	175
Aberconwy	163	172	182	191	133	141	149	156
Arfon	120	127	134	141	130	138	146	153
Dwyfor	152	161	170	179	135	143	151	159
Meirionnydd	147	155	164	172	133	141	149	157
Ynys Mon	148	156	165	174	129	137	145	152
Cynon Valley	98	104	110	115	142	150	159	167
Merthyr Tydfil	113	120	127	133	157	165	175	184
Ogwr	136	143	152	159	150	158	167	176
Rhondda	81	85	90	95	159	168	178	187
Rhymney Valley	125	132	139	146	156	165	174	183
Taff-Ely	133	140	148	155	155	164	173	182
Brecknock	122	129	137	144	128	135	143	150
Montgomeryshire	120	127	134	141	113	120	127	133
Radnor	126	133	141	147	118	125	132	139
Cardiff	177	186	197	207	109	115	122	128
Vale of Glamorgan	160	169	179	187	123	130	138	145
Port Talbot	144	152	161	169	190	201	213	223
Lliw Valley	128	135	143	150	173	183	193	203
Neath	137	145	153	161	156	165	175	183
Swansea	175	185	195	205	181	191	202	212
Wales average	143	151	160	168	143	151	160	168

Hospitality

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Wales how much has been spent on official hospitality by his Department in each of the last two financial years.

Mr. Peter Walker: The following amounts were spent on official hospitality:

	£
1985-86	35,466·63
1986-87	29,930·00

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the estimated expenditure of his Department in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

Mr. Peter Walker: £100,000.

Conservative Party Organisation (Press Release)

Mr. Alan Williams asked the Secretary of State for Wales why he authorised the use of an official departmental press release to announce the appointment of an hon. Member to advise him on matters relating to Conservative party organisation in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: I authorised the issue on 16 July of an official Departmental press release to announce the appointment of my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford (Mr. Shepherd) as my parliamentary private secretary. I also took the opportunity to announce that other Welsh Members had been asked by me to specialise in a number of issues affecting Wales. I thought it right to explain that my hon. Friend the Member for Delyn (Mr. Raffan) was not included in these tasks because he had taken on duties of a party political nature—none of the details of which were given in the press notice. It would perhaps have been better for the reference to my hon. Friend the Member for Delyn (Mr. Raffan) to have been mentioned in a separate press release issued by myself. I have therefore arranged to reimburse the Department for the cost of the Release.

National Museum of Wales

Mr. Faulds asked the Secretary of State for Wales what instructions have been given by his Department to the National Museum of Wales about the circumstances in which permission should be sought from his Department to raise funds voted for museum purposes.

Mr. Wyn Roberts [*pursuant to his reply*, 10 July 1987, c. *291-2*]: The terms on which the grant in aid voted for the National Museum of Wales may be drawn down are contained in the museum's financial memorandum, a copy of which is available in the Library. Changes made subsequent to the issue of the present financial memorandum will be incorporated in a revised version which is now in preparation.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales in respect of land within environmentally sensitive areas, how many farmers have applied to enter into management agreements in each of these areas and what is the total area of land involved; and how many agreements have so far been concluded with farmers in each of these areas, and what is the total area of land involved.

Mr. Peter Walker [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: There have been 150 applicants to enter management agreements in the Cambrian mountains ESA. Until the applications are finalised the area of land involved cannot be assessed. Five agreements have so far been concluded involving 817 hectares.

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the extent in hectares of the Cambrian mountains environmentally sensitive area, the total area of agricultural land within the environmentally sensitive area, and an estimate of the number of farmers eligible to enter into management agreements in that area.

Mr. Peter Walker [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: The Cambrian mountains ESA covers 72,800 hectares of which 53,900 hectares is agricultural land excluding woodland. About 400 farmers are likely to be eligible for management agreements.

Forestry

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the total area of land which was referred to the Welsh Office Agriculture Department by the Forestry Commission under the forestry grant consultation procedures for each of the years ended 31 March 1986 and 31 March 1987; and if he will list in the *Official Report* in respect of each of the area offices of his Department the area of land which it advised was *(a)* acceptable to award forestry grant and *(b)* inappropriate to afforest on agricultural grounds.

Mr. Peter Walker [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: The information is as follows:

1985-86	*Area acceptable (hectares)*	*Area inappropriate for forestry (hectares)*
Divisional Office		
Caernarfon (Gwynedd)	68	—
Cardiff (Glamorgans and Gwent)	102	—
Carmarthen (Dyfed)	201	—
Llandrindod Wells (Powys)	837	—
Ruthin (Clwyd)	—	—
Total	1,208	—
1986-87		
Caernarfon	783	—
Cardiff	2	—
Carmarthen	369	—
Llandrindod Wells	601	—
Ruthin	442	145
Total	2,197	145

Planning Appeals

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas) on 17 July, he will list those planning permissions granted for residential housing developments on appeal in each year since 1979.

Mr. Grist [*pursuant to my reply*, 23 July 1987]: A list of those planning permissions granted for residential housing developments, on appeal, in each year since 1979 has been placed in the Library of the House.

Education Costs

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will publish a table showing the amount spent by local authorities on *(a)* school transport and *(b)* school meals in the latest year for which figures are available; and what are the comparable figures for each year since 1978-79 in cash terms using 1986-87 prices and using an index of 100 for 1978-79.

Mr. Wyn Roberts [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: The information requested is as follows:

1. School transport (gross expenditure).

Year	*£000 cash*	*£000 1986-87 prices*	*Index 1978-79 = 100*
1978-79	12,679	24,652	100
1979-80	15,274	25,412	103
1980-81	18,315	25,689	104
1981-82	19,556	25,977	101
1982-83	20,831	24,806	101
1983-84	22,630	25,798	105
1984-85	22,784	24,906	101
1985-86	22,510	23,187	94

2. School meals and milk (gross expenditure).

Year	*£000 cash*	*£000 1986-87 prices*	*Index 1978-79 = 100*
1978-79	36,981	71,901	100
1979-80	39,416	65,744	91
1980-81	39,067	54,795	76
1981-82	40,003	51,092	71
1982-83	43,327	51,596	72
1983-84	45,121	51,438	72
1984-85	46,086	50,378	70
1985-86	44,249	45,580	63

EMPLOYMENT

Job Training Scheme

Mr. Rees asked the Secretary of State for Employment for how many people on the job training scheme placements have been found with employers.

Mr. Cope: I regret that this information is not yet available.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will require Manpower Services Commission to monitor, record and publish by area the number of disabled people who *(a)* apply for and *(b)* secure a place on the job training scheme.

Mr. Cope: I have no plans for an increase in the information about participation by disabled people in the job training scheme, which is described in my reply of 13 July 1987, at column *348*, to the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley), but I will be keeping this matter under review. Applications for a place on the scheme come from a number of different sources including restart interviews, jobcentres and self referral and collecting information about their characteristics would involve disproportionate cost.

Mr. David Nicholson asked the Secretary of State for Employment whether statistical information, including lists of all practical work experience provided with trainees allocated to them, will be made available to area manpower board representatives of trade unions which have indicated their hostility to the job training scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: Statistical information about the operation of the new job training scheme is presented to the Manpower Services Commission's area manpower boards each month. At its meeting on 23 July the commission agreed that it should change this procedure so far as the provision of lists of practical experience placements is concerned.

Mr. David Nicholson asked the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has as to occasions when Open Tech unit staff have withdrawn their support for the job training scheme as a result of instructions from local education authorities opposed to job training scheme; what action he has taken or proposes to take in those circumstances; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: There have been no occasions when staff of the Manpower Services Commission's open learning branch (formerly the open tech unit) have taken any action involving withdrawal of support for the job training scheme. My hon. Friend may be referring to the now independent organisations established under the open tech programme (which was completed on 31 March 1987). MSC initiated these organisations by contracting with LEAs, among other bodies. Under these contracts, which are now at an end, LEA staff sold and supported open learning materials under the title open tech delivery project. I would deplore directions issued by LEAs about withdrawing support from the scheme.

Community Programme Wage Levels

Mrs. Fyfe asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will undertake a review of the community programme wage levels.

Mr. Lee: We keep under review the maximum level of wages which can be reimbursed under the community programme and make changes when this would improve the cost-effective use of taxpayers' money. There are no plans at present to increase the maximum level of wages for participants.

Rehabilitation Centres

Mr. Hannam asked the Secretary of State for Employment what percentage of clients who attend employment rehabilitation centres between November 1986 and 31 March 1987 were able-bodied.

Mr. Lee: Figures for this precise period are not available. However, for the period 1 October 1986 to 31 March 1987 the percentage of able-bodied people attending employment rehabilitation centres was 7·6 per cent.

Manpower Services Commission

Mr. Hannam asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will consider increasing the representation of the voluntary organisations on the Manpower Services Commission following the decision by the Government to reduce trade union representation.

Mr. Fowler: I have no plans to reduce trade union representation on the Manpower Services Commission, but I will consider my hon. Friend's suggestions.

Benfleet Water Tower, Essex (Installations)

Sir Bernard Braine asked the Secretary of State for Employment when the assessment by the Health and Safety Executive as to field strengths of the 600mm microwave dishes and sundry antennae installed at Benfleet water tower, Essex, and their possible effect on public health was completed; what were the findings; and why these have not yet been made public.

Mr. Cope: The assessment by the Health and Safety Executive has not yet been completed.

Radio Frequency and Microwave Radiation

Sir Bernard Braine asked the Secretary of State for Employment what action has been taken or is now proposed regarding the recommendation of the National Radiological Protection Board that standards of permissible exposure of humans to radio frequency and microwave radiation should be revised; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: The National Radiological Protection Board is re-examining the proposals contained in its consultative document on possible standards of protection in this field. It expects to report further on this topic in due course, taking account of the comments made on the consultative document and recent consultation with the Medical Research Council on the biological effects of radio frequency and microwave radiation.

CIMAH Small Inventory Top Tier Sites

Mr. Bill Michie asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the Health and Safety Executive's estimate for the number of CIMAH small inventory top tier sites; and for how many CIMAH small inventory top tier sites the plans required by CIMAH regulation 11 are prepared or in preparation.

Mr. Cope: At 31 March 1987, the Health and Safety Executive was aware of 66 premises which appeared to meet the criteria laid down for small inventory top tier sites. To date, the HSE has confirmed that 29 sites attract regulations 7 to 12 of the Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazard Regulations 1984. Of these, 12 have off-site plans completed or in preparation. Inspectors are continuing to check sites for potential risks.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the percentage unemployment in each parliamentary constituency at 11 June.

Mr. Lee: My Department calculates unemployment rates for self-contained labour market areas only; the smallest such areas are travel-to-work areas.

Sir Barney Hayhoe asked the Secretary of State for Employment what change has taken place since August 1985 in the unemployment figures for the Brentford and Isleworth constituency; and when was the last time that the figures were at the present level.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. On 8 August 1985, the number of unemployed claimants in the Brentford and Isleworth constituency was 4,349. On 11 June 1987, the number was 3,524, which was the lowest total since unemployment figures for parliamentary constituencies were introduced in June 1983. The comparison is affected by minor changes in the coverage of the data.

Mr. Battle asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many people in Leeds, West have been employed in *(a)* service industries and *(b)* manufacturing industries for each of the last four years.

Mr. Lee: The latest available estimates for the Leeds, West constituency, from the census of employment, indicate that at September 1984 there were 13,300 employees in employment in service industries and 7,900 in manufacturing industries. An industry breakdown for parliamentary constituencies from the previous 1981 census of employment was not produced.

Mr. Battle asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the total number of job vacancies in Leeds, West for the latest date available.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the library. Vacancy statistics are not available by parliamentary constituency as such. However, the Leeds, West constituency corresponds to most of the Bramley jobcentre area and part of the Leeds jobcentre area, and at these jobcentres there were 213 and 1,710 unfilled vacancies, respectively, on 6 June 1987. Vacancies at jobcentres do not represent the total number of vacancies in the economy. Estimates suggest that nationally about a third of all vacancies are notified to jobcentres, but equivalent local estimates are not available.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is his estimate of the numbers of persons employed by *(a)* banks, *(b)* building societies, *(c)* estate agents and *(d)* lawyers; and if he has comparable information on the Federal Republic of West Germany.

Mr. Lee: The Department's employment statistics are classified according to the 1980 standard industrial classification, which does not separately identify building societies. The latest available estimates of the numbers of employees in employment in banking and bill-discounting and house and estate agents are for March 1987. Quarterly estimates of employees in employment in legal services are not made; the latest available is from the September 1984 census of employment.

The available information for Great Britain is as follows.

Employees in Employment: Great Britain

	Numbers
AH 8140[1] Banking and bill-discounting	[2]407,000
AH 8340[1] House and estate agents	[2]102,000
AH 8350[1] Legal services	[3]141,000

[1] Activity Heading of the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.
[2] March 1987.
[3] September 1984.

The latest readily available figures for the Federal Republic of Germany are less detailed and show that in 1984 1,593,000 employees (7 per cent. of all employees) in the Federal Republic worked in banking and finance, business services and renting. Banking and finance accounted for 37 per cent. of this total.

Accident Statistics

Mr. Barry Field asked the Secretary of State for Employment what are the statistics for accidents among local government employees over the last five years; and what information he has on rates of accidents in comparable activities in the private sector.

Mr. Cope: The table gives the available information.

Reported Occupational Injuries to Employees in Local Government Service, Great Britain[1]

	1981	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
Fatal injuries	14	13	11	10	8
Major injuries	1,006	852	987	876	867
Over 3-day accidents	41,848	40,278	..	..	..

[1] As defined in the Notification of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1980 and reported to relevant enforcing authorities.

.. not available, because the industrial injury benefit scheme, which was the source of this information, effectively ceased in April 1983.

The category of employees in local government service is as defined in MLH 906 of the 1968 standard industrial classification. Information for comparable activities within the private sector could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Data collected under the new reporting regulations, which came into force in April 1986 are not yet available.

AIDS

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to provide protection for AIDS carriers against unfair dismissal by employers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: Under the existing employment protection legislation, most employees, including AIDS sufferers, who believe they have been dismissed unfairly may complain to an industrial tribunal, providing they have completed two years' continuous employment with their employer.

Jobclub Places

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will take steps to remove the current six-month period of ineligibility for jobclub places which applies to persons who have just completed a 12-month placement on a community programme scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: Many community programme managing agents and sponsers already do a great deal to help participants find permanent jobs. In addition, I have asked the Manpower Services Commission to explore new ways of doing this and a number of different pilot projects will be tested in the autumn. Access to jobclubs will be an important element of the pilot projects.

Hospitality

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Employment how much has been spent by his Department on official hospitality in each of the last two financial years.

Mr. Cope: £22,000 in 1985-86 and £31,000 in 1986-87.

Industrial Injury

Mr. Cryer asked the Secretary of State for Employment what number of days were lost due to industrial injury for each year from 1975 to 1986 inclusive; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: The table shows the estimated number of days of certified incapacity resulting from compensated industrial accidents. This information is available only up to April 1983 when industrial injury benefit was effectively abolished.

Year (June to May)	*Number of days (millions)*
1974-75	14·9
1975-76	n.a.
1976-77	14·5
1977-78	15·2
1978-79	15·2
1979-80	12·8
1980-81	10·6
1981-82	10·5
1982-83[1]	9·3

[1] Year ending 31 March 1983.
Note Figures for 1975-76 are not available.

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Mr. Cryer asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the number of *(a)* improvement and *(b)* prohibition notices issued under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the number of prosecutions for breach of the Act and associated regulations by the Health and Safety Commission for each year from 1975 to 1986.

Mr. Cope: The table shows the available information for 1975 to 1985. Data for 1986 are not yet available.

Year	*Number of:* *(a) improvement notices*	*(b) prohibition notices*	*(c) prosecutions (cases heard)*
1975	5,149	2,450	1,588
1976	7,499	2,534	1,327
1977	9,253	3,130	1,623
1978	12,217	3,434	1,671
1979	13,517	3,674	1,373
1980	12,625	3,238	1,443
1981	12,321	3,185	1,260
1982	13,034	3,266	1,427
1983	12,268	3,805	1,366
1984	12,237	3,737	1,269
1985	11,052	3,479	1,286

(a), (b) all improvement and prohibition notices, including those issued by local authorities.

(c) prosecutions taken by enforcing authorities, excluding those taken by local authorities.

Mr. Cryer asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list those responsibilities set out in regulations made under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 which are enforced by local authorities; and if he will give the dates when these responsibilities were given.

Mr. Cope: Under the Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) Regulations 1977, local authorities are responsible for enforcing all relevant statutory provisions, as defined in section 53 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, in premises where the main activity is one specified in schedule 1 to the Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) Regulations 1977, subject to certain exceptions set out in regulation 4. These regulations came into operation on 1 June 1977. Schedule 1 was amended by regulations which came into operation on 29 December 1980 and 1 October 1985.

Factories Act 1961

Mr. Cryer asked the Secretary of State for Employment whether there are any provisions under negotiation with the European Economic Community regarding health and safety at work which will affect the provisions of section 14 of the Factories Act 1961; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The European Commission is preparing a proposal for a directive to harmonise the laws of the member states relating to the safety of machines. The proposal is not yet in its final form and so negotiations at Council of Ministers level have not yet begun. The Government are being advised on the health and safety aspects of the proposal by the Health and Safety Commission. When the European Commission has completed its proposal it will be published in the *Official Journal of the European Communities* and will be available for consideration by the appropriate Select Committee of this House in the usual way.

It does seem likely that the European Commission's proposal will have a bearing on section 14 of the Factories Act, but this remains to be seen.

Manual Handling

Mr. Cryer asked the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what progress has been made in producing a code of regulations dealing with the problem of manual handling following publication of the consultative document in 1982; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will introduce legislation to remove the anomaly whereby agricultural workers are subject to a lifting limit of 170 lb, textile workers 120 lb, and other workers to reasonable loads; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: The Health and Safety Commission has set up a working group to prepare revised proposals on manual handling at work, in the light of the considerable volume of comment received on its 1982 proposals. The working group is considering the anomalous limits in earlier health and safety legislation.

Mr. Cryer asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many accidents resulting in time off work were caused by manual handling in each year from 1980 to 1986 and in 1987 to the most recent practicable date.

Mr. Cope: The available information is for accidents described as "over exertion, strenuous or awkward movements and free bodily motion" and is shown in the table.

Year	*Major injuries[1] to employees reported to Her Majesty's Factory Inspectors*	*All reported injuries[2] to employees in manufacturing and construction industry*
1981	517	44,710
1982	417	39,904
1983	385	n/a
1984	396	n/a
1985	388	n/a

[1] As defined in the Notification of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, 1980.

[2] Injuries resulting in more than three days absence from work and where industrial injury benefit was claimed.

n/a = Not available, because the industrial injury benefit scheme effectively ceased in April 1983.

Noise

Mr. Cryer asked the Secretary of State for Employment what progress is being made in producing regulations on the subject of noise at work; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: The Health and Safety Commission intends to publish consultative proposals within the next six months for regulations on this subject to be made under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

Underground Fires

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many outbreaks of fire below ground and withdrawals of men due to smoke were reported in small licensed coal mines in 1986-87.

Mr. Cope: There were no incidents reported in 1986-87.

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many outbreaks of fire below ground and withdrawals of men due to smoke were reported in British Coal Corporation collieries in 1986-87.

Mr. Lee: Nineteen incidents were reported during 1986-87.

Collieries (Statistics)

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many major injury accidents to persons on British Coal Corporation colliery books were reported in 1986-87.

Mr. Cope: There were 843 major injury accidents recorded at British Coal collieries in 1986-87.

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many part I and part II dangerous occurrences were reported in British Coal Corporation collieries in the years 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984-85 and 1985-86, respectively.

Mr. Cope: The information requested is listed as follows:

	Number
1976	[1]201
1977	[1]201
1978	[1]201
1979	226
1980	197
1981	256

	Number
1982	311
1983	328
1984-85[2]	222
1985-86	272

[1] Average.
[2] 15-month period including a period of industrial action.

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many part I and part II dangerous occurrences were reported in small licensed coal mines in 1986-87.

Mr. Cope: There was one part I dangerous occurrence and five part II dangerous occurrences reported in 1986-87.

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many part I and part II dangerous occurrences were reported in British Coal Corporation collieries in 1986-87.

Mr. Cope: There were 24 part I dangerous occurrrences and 338 part II dangerous occurences reported in 1986-87.

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Employment what was the major injury accident rate per 100,000 manshifts to persons on colliery books, reported in 1986-87 in British Coal Corporation collieries.

Mr. Cope: The major injury accident rate at British Coal collieries in 1986-87 was 3·05 per 100,000 manshifts.

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will place in the Library an analysis of all the major injury accidents to persons on British Coal Corporation colliery books that were reported in 1986-87.

Mr. Cope: The information is not yet available. Publications containing the information required will be placed in the Library as soon as they become available.

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Employment what was the major injury accident rate per 100,000 manshifts in British Coal Corporation collieries and to persons not on British Coal Corporation colliery books, but working at British Coal Corporation collieries, reported in 1981-82, 1982-83, 1983-84, 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87, respectively.

Mr. Lee: Information is available only for those persons on British Coal Colliery books and it was as follows:

Year	Per 100,000 manshifts
1981-82	1·69
1982-83	1·69
1983-84	1·82
1984-85	1·43
1985-86	1·94
1986-87	3·05

It is not possible to supply rates for those persons not on colliery books.

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Employment what was the major injury accident rate per 100,000 manshifts in British Coal Corporation collieries to persons not on colliery books in 1986-87.

Mr. Cope: It is not possible to provide rates for those persons not on colliery books.

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many major injury accidents in British Coal Corporation collieries affecting persons not on colliery books were reported in 1986-87.

Mr. Cope: Eighty-seven major injury accidents were reported in 1986-87.

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many fatalities and major injury accidents were reported in small licensed coal mines in 1986-87.

Mr. Lee: Fifty-two major injury accidents and three fatal accidents were reported in 1986-87.

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will provide the following information in respect of each major injury accident occurring in 1986-87 to persons on British Coal Corporation colliery books *(a)* location, distinguishing between underground or surface, *(b)* occupation of accident victims, *(c)* location in colliery and site of accident, *(d)* time and date of accident and *(e)* brief description of accident.

Mr. Cope: The information is not available in the form requested. It could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Employment what effect the introduction of the Riddor regulations has had on the number of part I and part II dangerous occurrences reported in British Coal Corporation collieries.

Mr. Cope: In British coal mines 24 dangerous occurrences were reported in 1986-87 under part I of RIDDOR. Two of these are attributable to the effect of RIDDOR, one being a new category and one transferred from part II.

Two hundred and thirty eight dangerous occurrences were reported under part II of RIDDOR; 106 incidents were in new categories introduced by RIDDOR; seven accidents were reported which would have been dangerous occurrences under part II of the previous reporting arrangements.

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Employment what effect the introduction of the Riddor regulations has had on the number of major injury accidents reported in the coal industry.

Mr. Cope: There were 982 major injury accidents in 1986-87 in coal mines, compared with 732 major injury accidents in 1985-86, representing an increase of 34·2 per cent.

Of the 982 accidents reported in 1986-87, 295 (representing 30.04 per cent.) were estimated to be due to the effects of RIDDOR.

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Employment what effect the introduction of the Riddor regulations has had on the number of part I and part II dangerous occurrences reported in small licensed coal mines.

Mr. Cope: In 1986-87 at licensed coal mines there was one dangerous occurrence reported under part I of RIDDOR and five dangerous occurrences under part II. The one incident in part I was attributable to the introduction of RIDDOR. The five incidents under part II would have been reported under the previous arrangements.

Tourist Grant (Kidderminster)

Mr. Anthony Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will ensure that the proposed application for tourist grant, via the English Tourist Board, for a hotel, conference and leisure complex in Kidderminster, will be dealt with expeditiously.

Mr. Lee: Yes. The English Tourist Board always aims to deal with applications for section 4 assistance as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the estimated expenditure of his Department in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

Mr. Cope: The estimated expenditure in the Department of Employment group in 1987-88 on management and computer consultancy is £3·1 million.

Small Businesses

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on present initiatives to help small businesses.

Mr. Cope: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) on 20 July at columns *3-5* which set out some of the recent and current initiatives being pursued by my Department as part of its assistance to small businesses.

Hotel Classifications

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make it his policy to require the availability either of 24-hour room service or of mini-bar facilities to be featured in hotel classifications.

Mr. Cope: This is a matter for the English Tourist Board. However, I understand that the availability of 24-hour room service is one of the requirements for a hotel to be awarded five crowns under the English Tourist Board's crown classification scheme.

Professional and Executive Register

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Employment when Her Majesty's Government intend to privatise the Professional and Executive Register: if opportunities will be provided to outside organisations and companies to bid for it; and what was the financial performance of the Professional and Executive Register in the more recent year for which figures are available.

Mr. Fowler [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 July 1987, c. *165*]: As my right hon. and learned Friend the Paymaster General said earlier this year, the Government have

"no present plans to change the basis of operation of the service but its future is kept under review".

According to provisional accounts PER bettered its objective of recovering all its expenditure from fee income by some £37,000 in 1986-87.

Wider Opportunities Training Programme

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will state the amount of money by which the funding of the wider opportunities training programme is to be reduced, when this reduction will start, how many places in the programme will be lost and what is his estimate as to how many places in the programme will be lost and what is his estimate as to how many of the places lost will be for women and how many for men.

Mr. Cope [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: We have no present plans to reduce either the funding of the wider opportunities training programme (WOTP) or the number of places for men or women.

Youth Training

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will detail the number and percentage of youth opportunities programme and youth training scheme graduates who *(a)* gain employment, *(b)* go on to further training, *(c)* return to (i) full-time and (ii) part-time education, *(d)* become unemployed and *(e)* went on to other destinations for each of the last 10 years; and if these dates can be further analysed by social class of the graduate's parents.

Mr. Cope [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: Information is not available in the precise form requested.

The information on the destination of trainees after leaving the youth opportunities programme or youth training scheme is given in the table. The figures relating to the youth opportunities programme are taken from a postal follow-up survey of trainees, conducted 12 months after they joined the programme. Information on the youth training scheme is taken from a regular postal follow-up survey, covering 15 per cent. of leavers. From April 1985 the survey was extended to cover all (100 per cent.) youth training scheme leavers.

Destination of youth opportunities programmes and youth training scheme leavers

	Youth opportunities programmes[1]				*Youth training scheme*[2]	
	1979-80	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	[3]*1984-85*	[4]*1985-86*
Full time job with some employer	22	20	21	18	24	28
Full time job with different employer	30	24	25	27	31	25
Part-time job	[5]—	[5]—	[5]—	[5]—	[6]1	[7]4
Full-time course	2	3	2	3	3	3
On another youth training scheme	8	8	8	9	6	6
Something else	4	4	5	6	3	6
Unemployed	34	40	39	37	32	28

[1] Figures for the youth opportunities programme refer to those studying their scheme in the relevant year.
[2] Figures for youth training scheme refer to those leaving their scheme in the relevant year.
[3] This year is made up of two separate periods. April 1984 to July 1984 a survey of 10 per cent. of leavers in nine selected area offices and June 1984 to March 1985 a 15 per cent. national follow-up of youth training scheme leavers.

[4] 100 per cent. national follow-up of youth training scheme leavers.
[5] No separate analysis of part-time employment carried out.
[6] Although there was no separate question on part-time work, the answer was written by 1 per cent. leavers.
[7] A separate question on part-time work was introduced for the first time in this survey.

It is not possible further to analyse this data by the social class of the graduate's parents.

Publicity (Departmental Expenditure)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Employment what was the total spending by his Department on press and public relations in 1986-87; and what is the estimated expenditure for the current year.

Mr. Fowler [*pursuant to his reply*, 24 July 1987]: The information requested is given in the table:

Department of Employment

	£ million
1986-87	1·1
1987-88	1·17

Note: These figures represent general administrative expenditure relating to costs for staff, accommodation and for regional services.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Employment what was the total spending by the Manpower Services Commission on press and public relations in 1986-87; and what is the estimated expenditure for the current year.

Mr. Fowler [*pursuant to his reply*, 24 July 1987]: The information requested is given in the table:

Manpower Services Commission

	£ million
1986-87	0·99
1987-88	1·22

Note:
These figures represent general administrative expenditure relating to costs for staff, accommodation and for regional services.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what was the total spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising and estimated expenditure for the current year;

(2) what was the total spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising and estimated expenditure for the current year.

Mr. Fowler [*pursuant to his reply*, 24 July 1987]: The total spending by my Department for 1986-87 was as follows:

£ million expenditure
Department of Employment

	£ million
TV	9·3
Press	3·0
Other	4·1
Total	16·4

Note:
The figures for radio advertising are not available separately.
The estimated expenditure for my Department for the current year is £11·2 million. A detailed breakdown of this amongst the various media is not yet available.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Employment what was the total spending by the Manpower Services Commission on television, radio and newspaper advertising and other promotional literature in 1986-87; and what is the estimated expenditure for the current year.

Mr. Fowler [*pursuant to his reply*, 24 July 1987]: The total spending by the MSC for 1986-7 was as follows:

£ million expenditure
Manpower Services Commission

	£ million
TV	15·6
Press	7·2
Other	12·1
Total	34·9

Note:
The figures for radio advertising are not available separately.
The estimated expenditure for the current year for the MSC is £32·2 million. A detailed breakdown of this amongst the various media is not yet available.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Condoms

Mr. Irving asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will take steps to ensure that condoms sold in the United Kingdom must conform to the British Standards Institute and carry the BSI kite mark of quality testing and control.

Mr. Newton: There are no plans to control the sale of condoms, but we endorse the advice issued by the Family Planning Association that people should check that condoms conform to British Standard BS 3704. General guidance for the health service urges Health Authorities to purchase only products which conform to British Standard specifications.

Waiting Lists (Nottingham)

Mr. Allen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will specify the waiting list for the City, Highbury General and QMC hospitals, Nottingham, in each of the specialties for which figures are held centrally *(a)* in 1979 and *(b)* at the latest date for which figures are available.

Mr. Newton: The information requested is given in the table. In 1979 only the first phase of the Queen's medical centre development was open. The second and larger phase was not completed until 1985. This development affected the local pattern of waiting lists. Waiting lists for the Nottingham district health authority as a whole were 8,327 at 31 December 1979 and 7,122 at 31 December 1986. In 1979 73,992 cases were treated in the district, compared to 98,352 in 1986.

Number of cases on in-patient waiting list at 31 December

Specialty	*1979*	*1986*
Nottingham city hospital		
Rheumatology	4	—
Geriatrics	—	—

Specialty	*1979*	*1986*
General surgery	264	140
Traumatic and orthopaedic	493	290
Urology	178	77
Plastic surgery	1,592	1,160
Thoracic surgery	26	47
Gynaecology	1,855	658
Paediatric surgery	—	—
Total	4,412	2,372
Highbury hospital		
Total	0	0
Nottingham general hospital		
Neurology	5	—
General surgery	266	—
Ear, nose and throat	1,108	—
Oral surgery	299	844
Gynaecology	—	—
Total	1,678	844
University hospital, Queen's medical centre		
Dermatology	—	16
Neurology	—	22
Geriatrics	—	7
General surgery	374	811
Ear, nose and throat	313	1,491
Traumatic and orthopaedic	45	352
Ophthalmology	—	666
Urology	27	124
Neurosurgery	—	26
Gynaecology	—	355
Total	759	3,870

Nurses

Mr. Leighton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many nurses have left the profession in the past 12 months;

(2) how many nursing posts are vacant in the United Kingdom; and how many of those are in London.

Ms. Abbott asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement about the shortage of nurses in London.

Sir Barney Hayhoe asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he is taking to improve the recruitment, retention and motivation of nursing and other staffs in the hospital services in London.

Mr. Newton: Information about nursing and midwifery staff vacancies and the number of nurses and midwives who left the profession are not collected centrally.

The NHS Management Board has commended to health authorities a number of measures to improve the recruitment and retention of nursing staff. The board is currently considering what further action may be required at national or local level in the light of the latest information about the recruitment and retention situation in London. Although the available information relates mainly to nursing, the relevance of any proposed action to other staff groups is also being considered.

Mr. Leighton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to how many British nurses are to work in the United States of America as a result of the recent nursing jobs fair.

Mr. Newton: Not enough to make an assessment.

Single Mothers (Benefit)

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the number of single mothers on benefit now and in 1979; and if the number can be given accurately as to whether the mother is aged between 16 and 17, 17 and 18, 18 and 19, 19 and 20, 20 and 21, 21 and 25, 25 and 30, and 30 and by the number of children for whom each mother is responsible.

Mr. Scott: The information is not available in exactly the form requested but the following details may be helpful:

Supplementary Benefit

The total number of lone mothers together with the total number of children at November 1979 and February 1986 is as follows:

	Lone mothers	*Children*
November 1979	302,000	524,000
February 1986	562,000	919,000

A limited amount of information is available on lone mothers not classified as widows, sick or disabled, or unemployed and this is as follows:

	Lone mothers	*Children*
November 1979	297,000	517,000
February 1986	553,000	910,000

Lone mothers by age (thousands)

Age	*November 1979*	*February 1986*
16	1	2
17	4	5
18	6	12
19	9	15
20	11	21
21-24	49	107
25-29	60	134
30-34	62	102
35 and over	95	156
Total	297	553

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Lone mothers by number of children

Thousands

Number of children	*November 1979 cases*	*February 1986 cases*
One	154	301
Two	89	173
Three	36	58
Four	14	16
Five	4	3
Six	1	1
Seven	[1]—	[1]—
Eight	—	—
Nine	—	—
Total	297	553

[1] Less than 500.

Note: Columns may not sum to totals due to rounding.

Source: All data: Annual Statistical Enquiries.

One Parent Benefit

The total number of lone parents receiving one parent benefit (the vast majority of which will be lone mothers) together with the total number of children at 1979 and 1987 is as follows:

	Lone parents	*Children*
December 1979	381,000	595,000
June 1987	642,000	964,000

Table 31.34 of "Social Security Statistics 1986", a copy of which is in the Library, records the numbers of families receiving one parent benefit and the numbers of children in those families for years up to 1985.

Widowed mother's allowance with dependent children

The number receiving widowed mother's allowance with dependent children in 1979 and 1986 is as follows:

	Widowed mothers	*Children*
November 1979	86,590	132,230
September 1986	58,280	86,310

Tables 11.34, 11.38 and 11.39 of the "Social Security Statistics 1986" give some information about the age ranges of widows and the average number of children.

Family income supplement

Family income supplement payable to female lone parents in 1979 and 1986 is as follows:

	Lone parents female	*Children (approx.)*
December 1979	44,000	93,000
April 1986	83,000	131,000

Table 32.30 and 32.40 of the "Social Security Statistics 1986" give some information about the numbers of children in one parent families where the female is head of household and the age ranges of heads of families.

Cancer Screening

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) when he expects a screening centre will be established in the Mid Staffordshire health authority following the recommendations of the working group chaired by Professor Sir Patrick Forrest;

(2) when he expects a screening centre will be established in the South East Staffordshire health authority following the recommendations of the working group chaired by Professor Sir Patrick Forrest.

Mr. Anthony Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects a screening centre will be established in Kidderminster following the recommendations of the working group chaired by Professor Sir Patrick Forrest.

Mrs. Currie: I refer my hon. Friends to the reply I gave yesterday to my hon. Friend the Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs). For information about plans for further centres in the regions and more details about the first centres, including catchment areas, I suggest my hon. Friends consult the regional health authorities concerned.

NHS (Consultants)

Mr. Galbraith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table showing the number of whole-time and the number of part-time consultants in each surgical specialty in each hospital in England and Wales.

Mr. Newton: The information is not held centrally in the form requested. The table sets out available data in respect of employing authorities in England. The information about Wales is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Wales.

Hospital medical consultants in surgical specialties [1] analysis by specialty and nature of contract with employing authority in England
30 September 1986
Surgical specialties

Number

Employing Authority	*General Surgery*			*Cardio-thoracic Surgery*			*Otolaryngology*		
	Whole-time	*[2]Part-time*	*Honorary*	*Whole-time*	*[2]Part-time*	*Honorary*	*Whole-time*	*[2]Part-time*	*Honorary*
Northern RHA	27	32	—	5	—	—	9	13	—
Newcastle DHA	5	6	2	4	1	1	2	6	—
Yorkshire RHA	11	37	—	—	3	—	4	14	—
Leeds Western DHA	—	6	1	—	1	—	—	2	—
Leeds Eastern DHA	—	4	1	2	1	—	1	1	—
Trent RHA	13	30	—	4	2	—	4	17	—
Leicestershire DHA	2	7	5	3	—	—	1	4	—
Nottingham DHA	3	6	3	1	1	—	1	3	1
Sheffield DHA	7	3	4	3	1	—	2	3	—
East Anglia RHA	6	20	1	3	2	—	1	12	—
Cambridge DHA	1	3	2	1	2	—	—	3	—

Employing Authority	General Surgery			Cardio-thoracic Surgery			Otolaryngology		
	Whole-time	[2]Part-time	Honorary	Whole-time	[2]Part-time	Honorary	Whole-time	[2]Part-time	Honorary
North West Thames RHA	7	43	1	2	3	—	4	12	1
Paddington and North Kensington DHA	2	4	6	—	1	1	—	2	1
Riverside DHA	1	7	5	—	1	1	—	5	—
North East Thames RHA	6	42	1	2	—	1	2	16	2
Hampstead DHA	1	4	4	1	—	—	1	2	—
Bloomsbury DHA	1	6	6	1	2	1	1	12	3
City and Hackney DHA	—	10	3	1	1	—	1	4	—
Tower Hamlets DHA	—	5	3	—	3	—	—	2	—
South East Thames RHA	8	47	4	4	1	—	4	18	—
West Lambeth DHA	—	6	3	—	2	—	—	3	—
Camberwell DHA	1	3	3	—	2	—	—	3	—
Lewisham and North Southwark DHA	1	9	5	—	3	—	3	4	—
South West Thames RHA	2	42	4	2	3	4	5	20	—
Wandsworth DHA	—	6	2	2	2	—	—	4	—
Wessex RHA	7	28	1	—	—	—	7	14	—
Southampton and South West Hampshire DHA	—	4	3	2	4	—	1	2	—
Oxford RHA	4	28	—	2	—	—	6	8	—
Oxfordshire DHA	1	9	5	1	—	—	—	3	1
South Western RHA	13	32	6	3	3	1	3	16	1
Bristol and Western DHA	—	8	3	2	1	—	—	4	—
West Midlands RHA	15	64	3	5	4	—	10	29	—
Central Birmingham DHA	3	7	4	2	2	—	3	2	—
Mersey RHA	12	28	1	3	—	—	4	7	1
Liverpool Central DHA	3	5	6	6	2	—	—	4	1
North Western RHA	16	43	—	3	5	—	5	22	—
Central Manchester DHA	—	4	3	2	1	—	—	3	—
South Manchester DHA	2	4	3	4	2	—	1	3	—
Salford DHA	1	3	2	1	—	—	—	2	—
Hospital for Sick Children	—	—	—	—	3	—	1	2	—
The National Hospitals for Nervous Diseases	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	—
Moorfields Eye Hospitals	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
The Bethlem Royal Hospital and Maudsley Hospital	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
The National Heart and Chest Hospitals	—	—	—	1	9	1	1	1	—
The Royal Marsden Hospital	—	4	1	—	—	—	—	1	—
Hammersmith Special Health Authority and Queen Charlotte's Hospital for Women	—	1	10	—	1	3	—	—	1
The Eastman Dental Hospital	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	182	660	120	78	75	15	89	310	13

[1] Including Senior Hospital Medical Officer with allowance. Figures relate to the number of contracts. Consultants holding multiple contracts within same or different Employing Authority are counted more than once.
[2] Including maximum part time.

Number

Employing authority	Neurosurgery			Ophthalmology			Paediatric Surgery		
	Whole-time	Part-time[2]	Honorary	Whole-time	Part-time[2]	Honorary	Whole-time	Part-time[2]	Honorary
Northern RHA	2	—	—	12	10	—	—	—	—
Newcastle DHA	3	1	—	3	5	—	2	—	1

Employing authority	Neurosurgery			Ophthalmology			Paediatric Surgery		
	Whole-time	Part-time[2]	Honorary	Whole-time	Part-time[2]	Honorary	Whole-time	Part-time[2]	Honorary
Yorkshire RHA	1	3	—	5	21	—	—	1	—
Leeds Western DHA	2	—	—	1	2	—	—	1	—
Leeds Eastern DHA	—	—	—	—	2	—	1	—	—
Trent RHA	2	—	—	1	17	1	—	—	—
Leicestershire DHA	2	—	—	—	5	2	—	—	—
Nottingham DHA	3	—	—	—	5	1	2	—	—
Sheffield DHA	3	—	—	—	4	1	2	—	—
East Anglia RHA	2	1	—	10	8	—	—	—	—
Cambridge DHA	1	2	—	1	3	1	—	—	—
North West Thames RHA	—	—	2	3	13	1	—	—	—
Paddington and North Kensington DHA	—	1	—	1	4	—	—	—	1
Riverside DHA	1	1	—	1	6	1	—	2	—
North East Thames RHA	1	2	—	5	14	—	—	—	—
Hampstead DHA	—	2	—	—	2	—	—	—	—
Bloomsbury DHA	1	1	—	—	4	—	1	—	—
City and Hackney DHA	—	2	—	—	2	—	—	—	—
Tower Hamlets DHA	—	1	1	—	2	—	—	—	—
South East Thames RHA	2	2	1	4	24	—	1	1	—
West Lambeth DHA	—	—	1	1	8	—	—	—	—
Camberwell DHA	—	1	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
Lewisham and North Southwark DHA	2	—	—	1	4	—	—	2	—
South West Thames RHA	—	4	1	5	19	1	1	2	1
Wandsworth DHA	2	2	—	—	3	1	1	—	—
Wessex RHA	1	—	—	4	16	—	—	—	—
Southampton and South West Hampshire DHA	—	—	1	1	4	—	2	1	—
Oxford RHA	1	1	1	1	14	—	—	—	—
Oxfordshire DHA	1	2	1	—	3	3	—	—	—
South Western RHA	2	4	—	5	19	2	—	—	—
Bristol and Weston DHA	—	—	—	—	5	2	1	1	—
West Midlands RHA	2	5	3	6	32	—	—	—	—
Central Birmingham DHA	—	3	—	1	1	—	1	2	—
Mersey RHA	5	1	—	6	10	—	1	—	—
Liverpool Central DHA	—	—	—	—	6	—	2	1	1
North Western RHA	5	4	—	6	21	—	—	1	1
Central Manchester DHA	1	1	1	1	6	1	2	1	1
South Manchester DHA	—	—	—	—	2	—	2	—	—
Salford DHA	2	1	—	—	3	—	1	1	—
Hospital for Sick Children	—	2	—	—	3	—	1	2	3
The National Hospitals for Nervous Diseases	1	3	2	—	2	—	—	—	—
Moorfields Eye Hospital	—	—	—	—	21	9	—	—	—
The Bethlem Royal Hospital and Maudsley Hospital	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
The National Heart and Chest Hospitals—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
The Royal Marsden Hospital	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—
Hammersmith Special Health Authority and Queen Charlotte's Hospital for Women	—	—	—	2	—	—	1	—	—
The Eastman Dental Hospital	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	52	55	15	87	360	27	25	19	9

[1] Including Senior Hospital Medical Officer with allowance. Figures relate to the number of contracts. Consultants holding multiple contracts within same or different Employing Authority are counted more than once.
[2] Including maximum part-time.

Number

Employing authority[1]	Plastic Surgery			Traumatic and Orthopaedic Surgery			Urology		
	Whole time	Part time[2]	Honorary	Whole time	Part time[2]	Honorary	Whole time	Part time[2]	Honorary
Northern RHA	2	3	—	17	27	—	2	7	—
Newcastle DHA	—	4	—	3	3	1	1	3	—
Yorkshire RHA	1	4	—	10	33	—	2	8	—
Leeds Western DHA	—	—	—	1	3	1	—	2	—
Leeds Eastern DHA	1	2	—	—	4	1	1	1	—
Trent RHA	—	5	—	7	30	—	3	3	—
Leicestershire DHA	—	2	—	—	8	1	—	3	—
Nottingham DHA	1	2	—	—	8	1	2	2	—
Sheffield DHA	2	1	—	1	7	1	2	2	—
East Anglia RHA	1	4	—	9	20	1	1	7	—
Cambridge DHA	—	2	—	—	5	1	1	2	—
North West Thames RHA	—	8	—	10	24	1	1	4	—
Paddington and North Kensington DHA	—	1	—	1	3	—	—	2	—
Riverside DHA	—	4	—	—	8	1	—	4	—
North East Thames RHA	—	6	1	6	36	1	2	6	2
Hampstead DHA	—	1	—	—	3	—	—	1	—
Bloomsbury DHA	—	4	—	2	13	4	1	9	3
City and Hackney DHA	—	2	—	1	4	—	—	2	—
Tower Hamlets DHA	—	2	1	—	4	1	—	1	2
South East Thames RHA	1	5	—	3	35	—	4	9	—
West Lambeth DHA	—	1	—	—	3	—	—	3	1
Camberwell DHA	—	1	—	—	4	—	—	3	—
Lewisham and North Southwark DHA	1	2	—	2	5	—	—	3	1
South West Thames RHA	—	5	—	1	32	3	—	9	—
Wandsworth DHA	—	2	1	—	4	—	—	3	—
Wessex RHA	1	5	—	7	25	—	2	6	—
Southampton and South West Hampshire DHA	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	2	—
Oxford RHA	2	5	—	9	16	1	—	5	—
Oxfordshire DHA	—	2	—	1	7	2	—	1	—
South Western RHA	1	5	1	7	26	4	3	6	—
Bristol and Weston DHA	—	—	—	1	8	1	—	2	—
West Midlands RHA	2	7	—	20	65	4	6	12	—
Central Birmingham DHA	—	2	—	—	7	—	—	2	—
Mersey RHA	3	2	—	8	19	—	3	3	—
Liverpool Central DHA	2	3	1	4	4	2	3	1	—
North Western RHA	1	6	—	7	50	—	2	11	—
Central Manchester DHA	—	1	—	—	2	—	—	2	—
South Manchester DHA	1	3	—	—	5	—	1	1	3
Salford DHA	—	1	—	2	2	2	—	2	—
Hospital for Sick Children	—	2	—	—	3	—	—	2	1
The National Hospitals for Nervous Diseases	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Moorfields Eye Hospital	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
The Bethlem Royal Hospital and Maudsley Hospital	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
The National Heart and Chest Hospitals	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
The Royal Marsden Hospital	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	3	—
Hammersmith Special Health Authority and Queen Charlotte's Hospital for Women	1	—	—	—	2	1	1	—	—
The Eastman Dental Hospital	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	24	118	5	140	567	38	44	160	13

[1] Including Senior Hospital Medical Officer with allowance. Figures relate to the number of contracts. Consultants holding multiple contracts within same or different Employing Authority are counted more than once.
[2] Including maximum part-time.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when his Department last invited proposals from National Health Service managers on the provision of new consultant posts; what arrangements exist for the funding of consultant posts, including the initial funding of new posts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Under normal circumstances, funding for consultant posts is a matter for regional and special health authorities to determine, within their overall budget and as an integral part of service development. In addition to this, the Department has recently invited bids from health authorities for additional consultant posts in general medicine, general surgery and traumatic and orthopaedic surgery, under the pump-priming scheme set out in last year's consultative document "Hospital Medical Staffing: Achieving a Balance". This scheme is intended to boost normal consultant expansion, both on service and career grounds, by providing an additional 100 posts over the two years 1987-88 to 1988-89. The first 45 of these posts were announced on 20 July, when HAs were also asked to bid for the remaining 55, to be allocated in 1988-89.

The Department has set aside £8·6 million for this purpose. This additional funding will be provided centrally to each regional and special health authority and will be earmarked up to the end of 1990-91. After that time it will be built into each authority's baseline revenue allocations.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what studies have been made by his Department of the impact of new consultant posts on waiting lists for National Health Service treatment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: No specific studies have been made. However several of the projects funded from the £25 million waiting list fund in 1987-88 involve the appointment (or earlier appointment) of consultants. Such projects will certainly result in more waiting list cases being treated but since these posts could also, in time, attract additional referrals from general practitioners the overall impact on waiting lists is more difficult to predict. There could, however, be a reduction in waiting times. The projects will be closely monitored.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether his Department has invited proposals from National Health Service managers on the provision of new consultant posts in connection with waiting lists for treatment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: A number of the projects proposed by regions and supported from the waiting list fund have involved the appointment or earlier appointment of consultants (some on a temporary basis) in areas with problem waiting lists. An additional 100 consultant posts are also to be established as a result of the consultative document "Hospital Medical Staffing: Achieving a Balance", in general medicine, general surgery, and trauma and orthopaedic surgery. These appointments should have a further impact on waiting lists. The allocation to regions of the first 45 posts, announced on 20 July, took account of current staffing levels in those specialties, to ensure that they were allocated where most needed on service as well as career grounds.

Benefits

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will state the total number of people, including children, who are dependent on supplementary benefit for each of the years 1979 and 1987; and what is the projected number for 1990;

(2) if he will state the total number of supplementary benefit recipients for each of the years 1979 and 1987; and what is the projected number for 1990.

Mr. Scott: The information is as follows:

	Number of supplementary benefit claimants (thousands)	*Number dependent on supplementary benefit (thousands)*
November 1979[1]	2,855	4,370
February 1987[1]	5,008	8,350
1989/90[2]	5,075	n/a

[1]The November 1979 figure is derived from the Annual Statistical Enquiry. The February 1987 figure is derived from the Quarterly Statistical Enquiry. The two figures are therefore not strictly comparable.
[2]Supplementary benefit will be replaced by income support in April 1988. The figure quoted is from the public expenditure White Paper, and is the projected average number of income support claimants in the financial year 1989/90. The estimate is based on the assumption that there will be no change from the number of people who would have been receiving supplementary benefit if it were not being replaced by income support.

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will state the total number of supplementary benefit recipients, including dependents, as defined for community charge purposes.

Mr. Scott: No such figures are available at present. The estimated increases in housing benefit caseload, as a result of the community charge replacing domestic rates, shown in Annex J of the Green Paper, Paying for Local Government (Cmnd. 9714) include those currently receiving supplementary benefit.

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will state the total number of supplementary benefit recipients and the total cost for each year since 1979 to the latest date available.

Mr. Scott: The information is as follows:

Supplementary benefit claimants and cost

Date	*Number (thousands)*[1]	*Financial year*	*£ million*[2]
November 1979	2,855	1979-80	2,436
December 1980	3,118	1980-81	3,172
December 1981	3,723	1981-82	4,840
December 1982	4,267	1982-83	6,261
December 1983	4,349	1983-84	[3]5,592
December 1984	4,609	1984-85	6,472
February 1986	4,938	1985-86	7,512
February 1987	5,008	1986-87	8,022

[1] The figures for 1979 to 1986 are derived from the Annual Statistical Enquiry. The figure for 1987 is derived from the Quarterly Statistical Enquiry. The 1987 figures are therefore not strictly comparable with those for the earlier years.

[2] The expenditure figures are drawn from the public expenditure White Papers.

[3] The reduction is due to the introduction of Housing Benefit.

Mortality and Morbidity

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what action is being taken by his Department in response to the increased rate of *(a)* mortality and *(b)* morbidity in winter periods compared with summer periods amongst (i) late neonatal babies, (ii) post-neonatal babies and (iii) pensioners.

Mrs. Currie: The underlying reasons for seasonal differences are very complex. We are concerned to reduce health problems encountered by vulnerable groups during the winter and policy is kept under active review. Among the steps already taken are the following.

The Government already provide considerable help with fuel costs to the least well off through the supplementary benefit scale rates and heating additions. We have extended automatic payments in heating additions to householders aged 65 or over and to those with young children.

The exceptionally cold weather scheme gives additional help to vulnerable groups. This year help has been given to twice as many people as in the previous scheme.

The Health Education Authority, which is funded by Government, gives further advice in its publication—The Pregnancy Book—on the care of babies in cold weather. It has also published a booklet jointly with Age Concern—Warmth in Winter—on how to cut the cost of keeping warm.

Cancer

Mr. William Powell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many persons were known to be suffering from cancer and cancer-related diseases in the Kettering district health authority area in each year since 1982;

(2) how many persons died of cancer and cancer-related diseases in the Kettering district health authority area in each year since 1982.

Mrs. Currie: Statistics from the registration of newly diagnosed cases of cancer are the nearest available data on the number of people suffering from cancer, and the latest available figures are shown in the table for usual residents of Kettering District Health Authority. The table also shows the number of deaths registered with underlying cause as cancer.

Number of registrations of newly diagnosed cases of cancer 1982, 1983 and number of deaths with underlying cause as malignant neoplasm (cancer)[1] *1982-1986 persons, all ages*[2]*, to usual residents of Kettering District Health Authority*

Year	*Cancer registrations*	*Cancer deaths*
1982	1,121	610
1983	1,026	603
1984	n/a	637
1985	n/a	708
[2]1986	n/a	681

[1] International Classification of Diseases 9th revision 140-208.

[2] Provisional, aged 28 days and over.

n/a not available.

Homoeopathy

Mr. McAllion asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether the review of homoeopathic medicines, scheduled for 1990, will take full account of the unsuitability of clinical trials as the paramount indicators of safety and efficacy to homoeopathic and herbal medicines.

Mrs. Currie: Formal clinical trials for herbal medicines are required only when claims are made for the treatment of serious diseases. This policy was published in a Medicines Act Information letter of November 1985. The relevant advice of the Medicines Commission and of the Committee on Review of Medicines is given in their 1985 annual reports, copies of which are in the Library. Of the two, only herbal medicines are subject to the European Community requirement of review by 1990.

Laundry Services (NHS)

Mr. Allen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the progress of privatising laundry services in the National Health Service.

Mr. Newton: Health authorities in England have made good progress with competitive tendering for laundry services. As at 31 March 1987, 83 per cent. of these services had been put out to tender. Total annual savings generated by contracts awarded at that date are estimated at £7·2 million—£5·6 million from 101 tenders secured by in-house organisations and £1·6 million from 23 contracts won by private contractors.

Abortions

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the number of abortions carried out in the United Kingdom in each year since 1967 *(a)* in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and *(b)* in each week from the 12th to 28th week.

Mr. Newton: I regret that the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the numbers of non-National Health Service abortions performed under agency arrangements on National Health Service patients resident in each regional health authority and in each district health authority in England and Wales in 1986 and the estimated numbers of women aged 15 to 44 years resident in each regional health authority and district health authority in England and Wales in mid 1986.

Mr. Newton: The information is given in the table.

Number of notifications of abortions carried out under the Abortion Act 1967 in non-NHS premises to NHS patients under agency arrangements by Regional Health Authority (RHA) and District Health Authority (DHA) of usual residence, and estimated resident population of women aged 15-44 years

England and Wales *1986*

Area of usual residence	*Agency abortions*	*Estimated female population aged 15-44 years*
Northern RHA	2	661,091
Hartlepool DHA	—	19,568
North Tees DHA	—	39,972
South Tees DHA	1	64,150
East Cumbria DHA	1	37,619
South Cumbria DHA	—	36,005
West Cumbria DHA	—	28,981
Darlington DHA	—	26,264
Durham DHA	—	51,947
North West Durham DHA	—	17,848
South West Durham DHA	—	32,695
Northumberland DHA	—	63,430
Gateshead DHA	—	43,440
Newcastle	—	61,357
North Tyneside DHA	—	39,778
South Tyneside DHA	—	31,955
Sunderland DHA	—	66,082
Yorkshire RHA	410	777,219
Hull DHA	—	66,105
East Yorkshire DHA	—	39,526
Grimsby DHA	—	34,174
Scunthorpe DHA	—	42,112
Northallerton DHA	—	24,526
York DHA	1	58,090
Scarborough DHA	—	28,400
Harrogate DHA	—	29,209
Bradford DHA	—	72,433
Airedale DHA	—	35,901
Calderdale DHA	—	40,972
Huddersfield DHA	250	45,876
Dewsbury DHA	157	35,896
Leeds Western DHA	—	78,492
Leeds Eastern DHA	1	76,549
Wakefield DHA	1	32,384
Pontefract DHA	—	36,574
Trent RHA	157	1,008,165
North Derbyshire DHA	—	76,231
Southern Derbyshire DHA	—	113,082
Leicestershire DHA	71	194,110
North Lincolnshire DHA	—	58,032
South Lincolnshire DHA	—	63,217
Bassetlaw DHA	7	22,799
Central Nottinghamshire DHA	—	61,592
Nottingham DHA	—	137,061
Barnsley DHA	5	47,543
Doncaster DHA	69	62,901
Rotherham DHA	5	55,081
Sheffield DHA	—	116,516
East Anglian RHA	2	429,333
Cambridge DHA	—	61,545
Peterborough DHA	—	45,768
West Suffolk DHA	2	50,454
East Suffolk DHA	—	66,742
Norwich DHA	—	96,712
Great Yarmouth and Waveney DHA	—	39,089
West Norfolk and Wisbech DHA	—	37,668
Huntingdon DHA	—	31,355
North West Thames RHA	929	803,853
North Bedfordshire DHA	—	56,168
South Bedfordshire DHA	2	63,209
North Hertfordshire DHA	—	41,311
East Hertfordshire DHA	2	65,159
North West Hertfordshire DHA	2	56,977
South West Hertfordshire DHA	2	52,649
Barnet DHA	2	69,956
Harrow DHA	32	44,638
Hillingdon DHA	—	51,148
Hounslow and Spelthorne DHA	2	62,404
Ealing DHA	6	70,009
Brent DHA	870	61,338
Paddington and North Kensington DHA	5	31,821
Riverside DHA	4	77,038
North East Thames RHA	26	845,423
Basildon and Thurrock DHA	—	63,765
Mid Essex DHA	—	66,375
North East Essex DHA	—	61,233
West Essex DHA	—	54,411
Southend DHA	—	67,491
Barking Havering and Brentwood DHA	—	96,257
Hampstead DHA	8	28,953
Bloomsbury DHA	5	34,564
Islington DHA	3	41,418
City and Hackney DHA	—	45,923
Newham DHA	—	47,140
Tower Hamlets DHA	—	33,959
Enfield DHA	3	58,493
Haringey DHA	5	47,060
Redbridge DHA	—	49,303
Waltham Forest DHA	2	49,078
South East Thames RHA	135	781,282
Brighton DHA	9	61,591
Eastbourne DHA	3	43,753
Hastings DHA	2	30,158
South East Kent DHA	—	54,636
Canterbury and Thanet DHA	1	59,429
Dartford and Gravesham DHA	2	48,889
Maidstone DHA	—	43,722
Medway DHA	2	74,255
Tunbridge Wells DHA	1	41,545
Bexley DHA	—	49,162
Greenwich DHA	2	49,299
Bromley DHA	—	62,702
West Lambeth DHA	102	39,800
Camberwell DHA	8	50,713
Lewisham and North Southwark DHA	3	71,628
South West Thames RHA	41	641,945
North West Surrey DHA	—	44,699
West Surrey and North East Hampshire DHA	2	64,894
South West Surrey DHA	2	39,318
Mid Surrey DHA	1	34,201
East Surrey DHA	2	39,356
Chichester DHA	2	34,356
Mid Downs DHA	10	60,552
Worthing DHA	7	43,621
Croydon DHA	5	72,516
Kingston and Esher DHA	—	38,135
Richmond Twickenham and Roehampton DHA	1	51,740
Wandsworth DHA	7	45,844
Merton and Sutton DHA	2	72,713

Area of usual residence	Agency abortions	Estimated female population aged 15–44 years
Wessex RHA	546	612,601
East Dorset DHA	155	36,276
West Dorset DHA	25	39,737
Portsmouth and South East Hampshire DHA	50	114,653
Southampton and South West Hampshire DHA	27	88,326
Winchester DHA	45	45,373
Basingstoke and North Hampshire DHA	58	50,047
Salisbury DHA	29	25,819
Swindon DHA	40	53,116
Bath DHA	101	85,659
Isle of Wight DHA	16	23,595
Oxford RHA	15	571,934
East Berkshire DHA	1	91,487
West Berkshire DHA	1	103,418
Aylesbury Vale DHA	—	33,562
Wycombe DHA	2	59,893
Milton Keynes DHA	1	41,253
Kettering DHA	3	55,994
Northampton DHA	5	68,933
Oxfordshire DHA	2	127,394
South Western RHA	16	669,135
Bristol and Weston DHA	3	30,777
Frenchay DHA	1	49,057
Southmead DHA	—	51,117
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly DHA	—	91,137
Exeter DHA	3	60,434
North Devon DHA	—	26,575
Plymouth DHA	—	70,959
Torbay DHA	2	45,106
Cheltenham and District DHA	1	45,328
Gloucester DHA	2	66,859
Somerset DHA	4	81,786
West Midlands RHA	4,529	1,122,743
Bromsgrove and Redditch DHA	12	37,772
Herefordshire DHA	2	31,712
Kidderminster and District DHA	—	22,176
Worcester and District DHA	4	50,989
Shropshire DHA	6	85,573
Mid Staffordshire DHA	11	70,295
North Staffordshire DHA	—	97,268
South East Staffordshire DHA	3	58,295
Rugby DHA	190	17,741
North Warwickshire DHA	334	38,998
South Warwickshire DHA	425	49,494
Central Birmingham DHA	267	38,941
East Birmingham DHA	301	40,463
North Birmingham DHA	184	35,648
South Birmingham DHA	350	54,193
West Birmingham DHA	486	45,712
Coventry DHA	654	66,835
Dudley DHA	381	64,892
Sandwell DHA	480	68,386
Solihull DHA	139	44,705
Walsall DHA	9	55,871
Wolverhampton DHA	291	52,784
Mersey RHA	—	524,441
Chester DHA	—	39,168
Crewe DHA	—	53,891
Halton DHA	—	32,025
Macclesfield DHA	—	39,306
Warrington DHA	—	41,033
Liverpool DHA	—	103,305
St. Helens and Knowsley DHA	—	78,421
Southport and Formby DHA	—	23,888
South Sefton DHA	—	38,809
Wirral DHA	—	74,643
North Western RHA	3	857,737
Lancaster DHA	—	26,300
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde DHA	—	61,506
Preston DHA	—	26,052
Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley DHA	—	56,697
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale DHA	—	47,294
West Lancashire DHA	—	24,644
Chorley and South Ribble DHA	—	43,621
Bolton DHA	—	56,924
Bury DHA	—	37,455
North Manchester DHA	—	31,069
Central Manchester DHA	—	28,838
South Manchester DHA	1	40,804
Oldham DHA	—	47,821
Rochdale DHA	2	46,747
Salford DHA	—	50,008
Stockport DHA	—	63,429
Tameside and Glossop DHA	—	53,288
Trafford DHA	—	47,161
Wigan DHA	—	68,075
Wales	8	596,188
Clwyd DHA	1	84,265
East Dyfed DHA	—	46,093
Pembrokeshire DHA	—	23,651
Gwent DHA	3	94,724
Gwynedd DHA	—	47,179
Mid Glamorgan DHA	2	114,828
Powys DHA	—	22,179
South Glamorgan DHA	1	87,413
West Glamorgan DHA	1	75,856

NHS Treatment (Cost-effectiveness)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what research is being undertaken by or on behalf of his Department into the cost-effectiveness of different types of treatment in the National Health Service.

Mrs. Currie: The main Government-funded body for carrying out research on the effectiveness of different medical treatments is the Medical Research Council, which receives its grant-in-aid from the Department of Education and Science.

A principal purpose of the Department's own research programmes is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the National Health Service. Many of the studies detailed in the latest edition of the Department's Handbook of Research and Development include a cost-effectiveness element. A copy is in the Library.

Perioperative Death and Complication Rates

Mr. Devlin asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the different levels of perioperative death and complication rates between the regional health authorities.

Mrs. Currie: I am sorry I cannot give my hon. Friend the information he seeks. Information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Speech Therapists (Pay)

Mr. Devlin asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the cost of implementing the claim of speech therapists for pay parity with clinical psychologists; and if he will make a statement on his consideration of the claim.

Mr. Newton: It is not possible to make meaningful comparisons between the pay of speech therapists and clinical psychologists because of differences in entry requirements, training, grading, job content and conditions of service. Pay negotiation is a matter for the Whitley council. I understand that negotiations are in progress on the 1987 pay claim.

North Tees General Hospital

Mr. Devlin asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the current shortfall in funding at North Tees general hospital.

Mrs. Currie: The provision of services locally is a matter for individual health authorities. My hon. Friend may therefore wish to write to the chairman of North Tees health authority for further information.

Nurseries and Childminders Act 1948

Mrs. Fyfe asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will take steps to update the Nurseries and Childminders Act 1948 as amended in 1968, to *(a)* tighten the definition of a fit person and *(b)* give the local authorities more control in the vetting procedures of registration.

Mrs. Currie: Proposals for rationalising and improving the law governing the regulation of day care services for pre-school age children in Great Britain are contained in the White Paper the Law on Child Care and Family Services published in January 1987. Legislation will be introduced as soon as the Parliamentary timetable allows.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the latest available figures for the proportion of applications for housing benefit for private rented accommodation who, as a result of the amount of benefit awarded to them *(a)* have been unable to take up such accommodation or *(b)* have been unable to remain in such accommodation.

Mr. Portillo: Local authorities have statutory responsibility for administering the housing benefit scheme and information is not collected centrally on decisions taken in respect of individual awards of housing benefit.

Disablement Services Authority

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the progress of the work of the Disablement Services Authority.

Mr. Scott: The Disablement Services Authority came into existence on 1 July 1987, and it held its first meeting on that day. The Chairman, Lord Holderness, has discussed with me his preliminary plans for the authority's work, and I have every confidence in them, and in the authority.

I intend to adopt arrangements for an annual review of the authority's work similar to those which apply to other health authorities.

NHS (Funding)

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will make it his policy to link funding of the National Health Service to the growth in national income; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will estimate the additional funding required to bring the funding of the National Health Service in line with national income predictions over the next two years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I assume my hon. Friend is referring to the proposal in the recent report by the Institute of Health Service Management/British Medical Association/Royal College of Nursing. We are studying the report's analysis and comments, taking account of the fact that the proper measure of the National Health Service is the record and growing amount of treatment and care it provides.

The additional cost of increasing present planned gross expenditure on the National Health Service (Great Britain) in line with forecast growth of 2·5 per cent. per annum in GDP would be:

	£ million
1988-89	1,032
1989-90	1,605

Rating Reform

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, when he plans to publish details of the proposed rebate system for community charge for those on low incomes.

Mr. Scott: Our aim is to issue draft regulations for consultation later this year.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the estimated expenditure of his Department in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

Mr. Moore: A total of £19·460 million. There may be additional added expenditure on certain computer projects which are currently being reviewed.

Hospital Food

Mr. Hinchliffe asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will take steps to amend national guidelines on hospital food to cover the usage of cook-chill catering methods; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) on 23 July.

Mr. Hinchliffe asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will arrange for his Department's inspectorate to undertake an urgent inquiry into proposals by Wakefield District Health Authority to introduce a cook-chill system of catering into Wakefield hospitals.

Mrs. Currie: No. The Yorkshire regional health authority has set up an expert committee which is looking

at the implementation in the Region of cook-chill, which can offer a safe and cost-effective way of providing patients with good quality food.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the total number of National Health Service patient meals produced by cook-chill and their proportion of the total; and what was the equivalent figure for each of the years since 1982, by National Health Service region.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that this local information is not collected centrally.

Severe Weather Payments

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* the amount of money paid out in the last financial year by way of severe weather payments, the number of claims successfully made, the number of claims refused and the equivalent figures for the previous year.

Mr. Scott: The information which is available is as follows:

1985-86
Total number of payments: 458,061
Total amount of benefit paid: £11,633,541
Notes:
(1) Payments made in this year were in respect of a prolonged period of exceptionally severe weather which lasted for most of February.
(2) Information on the number of claims refused is not available.

1986-87
Total number of £5 payments: 2,040,372
Total amount of benefit paid: £10,201,860
Notes:
(1) Payments were available in respect of 2 weeks of very cold weather in January. In some areas, payments were available for a third or fourth week.
(2) Precise information on the number of successful claims is not available, but it is estimated that the number of claimants receiving help was approximately 950,000.

Information on the number of claims refused in 1986-87 will be available shortly, and I will write to the hon. Member.

Hypothermia

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* the figures showing the number of deaths in each of the constituent parts of the United Kingdom which occurred last winter and which had hypothermia as a cause or contributory factor listed on the death certificate.

Mrs. Currie: The provisional numbers of deaths registered in the constituent parts of the United Kingdom with any mention of hypothermia on the death certificate, irrespective of whether it was or was not the underlying cause of death, during the period 1 October 1986 to 31 March 1987 are shown in the table.

Number of deaths registered with any mention of hypothermia 1 October 1986—31 March 1987, persons, all ages England and Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland—Provisional

Country	Number
England and Wales	438
Scotland	133
Northern Ireland	7
United Kingdom	578

NHS (Waiting Lists)

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what recent exchanges have taken place between his Department and National Health Service managers on initiatives to reduce waiting lists for National Health Service treatment; what further decisions will be announced before the autumn; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The current initiative to make significant improvements in waiting times for hospital treatment is a high priority for Ministers, the National Health Service Management Board and for managers and clinicians in the health service. It features regularly on the agendas of meetings between the Department and health services managers, to make sure that improvements are made this year and that efforts and resources are targetted most effectively for next year. This will be the aim of any further decisions to be announced.

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on current initiatives to reduce the waiting lists for joint replacements.

Mr. Newton: The projects supported from the £25 million waiting list fund in 1987-88 include at least 5,000 extra hip replacements. In 1985 37,650 such operations were carried out in England, an increase of 34 per cent., compared with 1979. The aim is to achieve a total of 48,000 operations per year by 1990, that is 1,500 operations per million population per year.

Waiting List Fund

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a list showing the nature, location and value of expenditure authorised for 1987-88 and 1988-89 from the waiting list fund announced in November 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Full details of more than 350 schemes planned by Regional Health Authorities for the improvement of waiting lists and times in their districts supported from the waiting list fund of £25 million for 1987-88 were placed in the Library on 23 March 1987. Since then there have been only minor alterations to some of the projects to take account of changing circumstances. No expenditure has yet been authorised from the £25 million fund for 1988-89.

Telephone Exchange for the Deaf

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received concerning the future of the telephone exchange for the deaf.

Mr. Scott: We have received representations from the Royal National Institute for the Deaf and from five hon. and right hon. Members.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if his Department will provide the resources to guarantee the future of the Royal National Institute for the Deaf's telephone exchange for the deaf; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will consider revenue funding for the telephone exchange for the deaf run by the Royal National Institute for the Deaf.

Mr. Scott: The Manpower Services Commission is at present providing staffing assistance for the exchange through the community programme, and equipment has been provided by British Telecom. We are considering representations from the Royal National Institute for the Deaf about the long-term future of the project.

Pensioners

Mr. Battle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people of pensionable age there are at present in Leeds, West; what proportion of the population of Leeds, West they represent; and what were the corresponding figures for 1957, 1967 and 1977.

Mrs. Currie: The available information on the number of persons of pensionable age (males aged 65 and over and females aged 60 and over) for parliamentary constituencies comes from the 1971 and 1981 Censuses of Population.

The information for Leeds, West is as follows:—

	Persons of pensionable age Number (thousands)	*Per cent. of total population*
1971 (1974 boundary)[1]	14·0	16·0
1981 (1974 boundary)[2]	13·7	17·7
1981 (1983 boundary)[2]	16·5	18·9

[1] Population present in Leeds West on Census night.
[2] Population usually resident in Leeds West.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Battle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many single parent families live on or below supplementary benefit level in Leeds, West; and what proportion of single parent families in Leeds, West this represents;

(2) how many people of pensionable age in Leeds, West are on or below supplementary benefit level; and what proportion of people of pensionable age they represent.

Mr. Scott: I regret that statistically reliable figures cannot be provided in the manner requested.

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a breakdown of current times from the lodging of an appeal against refusal of supplementary benefit single payment to the appeal being heard by the Social Security Tribunal for the different tribunal locations in England and Wales.

Mr. Portillo: National administrative statistics of social security appeals are not disaggregated for localities smaller than a social security region.

In the quarter ending 31 December 1986 (the latest period for which statistics are available) the average number of weeks from lodgement of a single payment appeal to hearing was as follows:—

Social Security Region	*Number of Weeks*
Northern Eastern	11·5
London North	14·1
London South	18·8
Wales and South Western	11·7
Midlands	12·5
North Western	11·4
Great Britain	12·4

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the total expenditure on supplementary benefit for each year since 1979.

Mr. Scott: The information requested is as follows:

Supplementary benefit expenditure, Great Britain

£ million

Year	*Cash Expenditure*
1979-80	2·436
1980-81	3·172
1981-82	4·840
1982-83	6·261
1983-84	[1]5·592
1984-85	6·472
1985-86	7·512
[2]1986-87	8·022

[1] The fall between 1982-83 and 1983-84 reflects the introduction of housing benefit; in 1982-83 and earlier years the housing requirements of supplementary benefit recipients living in local authority housing or in privately rented accommodation were met by supplementary benefit. From November 1982 some, and from April 1983 all, such people had those requirements met by housing benefit.
[2] Estimated outturn; final figures are not yet available.

Mr. Bowis asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the reasons for the pocket money differential in supplementary benefit payments to long-term patients in mental hospitals and to boarders in residential care accommodation of £7·90 and £11·50 per week, respectively; and if he will explain how these figures are calculated.

Mr. Portillo [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: The pocket money allowance for people in hospital is currently £7·90 and this represents 20 per cent. of the basic retirement pension. The personal expenses allowance for people in residential care and nursing homes is £9·25. For people in ordinary board and lodging and hostels, there are two rates of personal expenses; the short term rate of £10·00 and the long term rate of £11·15.

The personal expenses rate for people in residential care and nursing homes was introduced in 1985 and it was pitched roughly midway between the hospital pocket money allowance (and the personal expenses allowance for people in local authority residential accommodation which is at the same rate) and the personal expenses allowance for ordinary board and lodging. This reflects the fact that people in residential care and nursing homes tend to have fewer incidental expenses than people in ordinary board and lodging but more than people in hospital.

Milk

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether he will take steps to develop an education programme promoting the consumption of whole milk, with particular reference to infants and children up to the age of five years of age; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the role of milk and dairy products in achieving a healthy and balanced diet;

(3) what assessment his Department makes, and what expert advice he receives from outside his Department, concerning the nutriousness and palatibility of milk and dairy products and as to their role within a healthy and varied diet.

Mrs. Currie: We look to the Chief Medical Officer's Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy (COMA) for advice about food and health. Earlier this year the COMA panel on child nutrition published advice to health

professionals recommending the use of whole cows' milk for children under five. We also plan to produce a health education booklet of guidance to health professionals based upon the forthcoming COMA report, "Present-Day Practice in Infant Feeding". In general we consider milk and dairy products a valuable part of the diet of infants and children under five years of age and as contributing to a balanced diet for adults.

Allowances

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people in Wales are currently receiving invalid care allowance and attendance allowance.

Mr. Scott: At 31 March 1986, the latest date for which information is available, attendance allowance was in payment to some 44,000 people in Wales. I regret that information is not available for invalid care allowance.

Residential Homes

Mrs. Mahon asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the total cost to his Department of payments to residents to enable them to stay in private residential homes.

Mr. Portillo: Provisional estimates show that in February 1986 the total annual cost of supplementary benefit payments to people in private and voluntary residential care and nursing homes was £459 million. It is not possible to separate out amounts paid to people in private homes alone.

Mrs. Mahon asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the private residential homes that have been opened since 1979 in Halifax; and if he will break down the list to indicate the purpose and the number of beds.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that information is not available centrally in the form requested. Details held on residential homes relate to the numbers of homes, places and residents, by client group, within each local authority social services area. In 1979 there were eight private homes for the elderly, with a total 100 places, in the Calderdale district. In 1986 the number of such homes had increased to 22 and the number of places to 306. There are no private homes in Calderdale for client groups other than the elderly. The "Directory of Private Hospitals and Health Services" includes a list of registered homes in Calderdale and elsewhere. A copy of the latest edition, published in november 1986, is in the Library.

Invalidity Payments

Mr. Blunkett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the number of cases where applications relating to invalidity payments for married women have been outstanding *(a)* for more than 12 months, *(b)* for more than six months, *(c)* for more than three months and *(d)* in total.

Mr. Scott: I regret that the requested information is not available, but at 17 July some 120,000 invalid care allowance claims had been received from married women of which about 31,500 were awaiting decision. The average time taken to process an invalid care allowance claim is currently about 19·2 weeks.

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will take steps to ensure that applicants for invalid care allowance are informed whether award of invalid care allowance will affect any other allowance of any kind for any member of the same family; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: Information about the effect of invalid care allowance (ICA) on social security and related benefits which may be paid to claimants or members of their families is contained in leaflet NI 212 which incorporates the ICA claim form and is seen by all claimants. It would not be practicable to attempt an exhaustive account of any wider effect on domestic incomes of ICA payments.

Nye Bevan Lodge, Southwark

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what assurances or information were given which led to his Department's inspectorate excluding Nye Bevan lodge from its investigation into residential care in Southwark;

(2) what information he has about the inquiries conducted by Southwark council into Nye Bevan lodge in Southwark, referred to in his answer by the then Minister of State, the hon. Member for Oxford, West and Abingdon (Mr. Patten) on 17 June 1985, *Official Report*, column *56*.

Mrs. Currie: At the time the SSI inspection was agreed in July 1985 the local authority had before it a report from the acting officer in charge at Nye Bevan lodge. In the light of this report the Social Services Committee decided to set up a formal management inquiry. It was in that knowledge that the decision was made to set up an investigation by the Department's inspectorate into the authority's other homes. The report of the inspectorate was presented to Southwark Social Services Committee on 6 January 1986.

Health Care, Tynedale

Mr. Amos asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will pay an official visit to the Tynedale area of Northumberland to discuss the implications for medical services in Tynedale and other general health care problems in the area of the proposal to transfer £250,000 from the Tynedale health unit to Ashington.

Mrs. Currie: We have no immediate plans to do so. The allocation of resources to district health authorities, in the light of available resources and competing local priorities, is the responsibility of the regional health authority. If my hon. Friend has any concerns about this particular development perhaps he would write to the chairman of Northern regional health authority.

Residential Care

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he hopes to receive the final report of the Wagner Committee on the role of residential care; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Lady Wagner's working party on the role of residential care is expected to report early in 1988. Residential care is part of a range of community care services and the working party's report will be taken into account, along with advice from Sir Roy Griffiths following his overview of community care policy and the results of other studies, in developing our policies.

Disabled People

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) when he next expects to meet the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation and other appropriate voluntary organisations to ascertain the response of disabled persons to the non-implementation of a number of provisions in the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986;

(2) when he next expects to meet the organisation, MENCAP, to discuss the implementation of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986;

(3) when he next expects to meet the Spastics Society to discuss early implementation of the relevant sections of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 in respect of the right of disabled persons to appoint representatives;

(4) when he next expects to meet the organisation MIND to discuss implementation of the sections of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 relating to assessments of the needs of patients who are being discharged from long-stay psychiatric hospitals.

Mr. Scott: All the organisations to which the hon. Member specifically refers are members of the steering group of disability organisations set up to oversee implementation of the Act. As I indicated in my reply to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) on 7 July at column *119*, I shall be writing to the steering group shortly setting out a suggested framework for involving voluntary organisations where appropriate in future work on the implementation of the Act.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the number of disabled people who at present get high extra additions under supplementary benefit for clothing, laundry and domestic additions whilst awaiting attendance allowance and dietary additions; and what are the equivalent figures for 1984, 1985 and 1986.

Mr. Scott: The available information is contained in table 10.7 of the "Supplementary Benefits Statistics, Annual Enquiries", December 1984 and February 1986, copies of which are in the Library. There was no comparable enquiry in 1985.

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects resources to become available to introduce the sections of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 which have not yet been implemented.

Mr. Scott: More work is needed on the costs of the various sections of the Act and decisions on the timing of implementation will then need to be taken in the light of competing priorities for public spending.

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to introduce enabling orders so as to implement the sections of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986, which relate to assessments of the needs of physically disabled and mentally handicapped school-leavers.

Mr. Scott: I am unable to add to my reply to the hon. Member on 30 June at column *75*.

Hospitality

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how much has been spent by his Department on official hospitality in each of the last two financial years.

Mr. Moore: Expenditure on the full range of official hospitality in each of the last two financial years was:

	£
1985-86	79,500
1986-87	89,500

Hospitals (Bath)

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what plans exist to close the geriatric ward at St. George's hospital, Semington; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he is satisfied that Bath district health authority have acted in accordance with the service circular in halting geriatric admissions to St. George's, Semington, and all admissions to Melksham hospital; and if he will make a statement;

(3) why admissions to Melksham hospital were stopped on 20 July; and what alternatives are available;

(4) what communication he has had from Bath district health authority and any interested parties concerning the future of the St. George's hospital, Semington and Melksham hospital; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: On 29 June Bath district health authority issued a consultation document on a proposal to re-locate geriatric beds provided at St. George's hospital, Semington. The proposals include the development of a 14-bed geriatric unit at Melksham hospital and a consequential reduction at that hospital in the number of beds available for general practitioners from 38 to 28. The consultation period ends on 30 September.

I understand that the Health Authority has stopped admissions of all elderly patients to St. George's, and of patients to Melksham until the number of patients is reduced to the proposed new level of beds. We have received representations from my hon. Friend the Member for Westbury and from the local community health council expressing concern that action should be taken to implement the proposals before the DHA has considered the results of consultation.

If the community health council opposes the proposals and the regional health authority endorses them then the final decision will be referred to Ministers in the usual way.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the total numbers of beds in *(a)* psychiatric wards, *(b)* mental hospitals and *(c)* community care for the current year by National Health Service region; and what are the equivalent figures for each year since 1982.

Mrs. Currie: The table shows the average daily number of available beds in National Health Service mental illness hospitals and units in England, by regional health authority, for the years 1982 to 1985. Figures for local authority care are not readily available; the only relevant information relates to places in residential homes for mental illness supported by local authorities in the above

years and is published in "Homes and Hostels for the Mentally Ill and the Mentally Handicapped, at 31 March, England", copies of which are in the Library.

Table showing number of beds in Mental Illness (MI) hospitals and number of beds in Mental Illness wards in other hospitals by Regional Health Authority (RHA) for 1982-1985.

	1982		1983		1984		1985	
Region (RHA)	*MI Hospitals*	*MI Wards*	*MI Hospitals*	*MI Wards*	*MI Hospitals*	*MI Wards*	*MI Hospitals*	*MI Wards*
Northern	4,855	1,026	4,875	966	4,802	930	4,681	979
Yorkshire	4,442	2,456	4,207	2,409	4,087	2,355	3,910	2,284
Trent	6,546	687	6,421	749	5,947	940	5,658	1,043
East Anglian	1,448	1,505	2,489	558	2,425	513	2,248	493
North West Thames	5,786	1,675	5,630	1,639	5,363	1,566	5,031	1,495
North East Thames	4,882	1,759	4,767	1,671	4,636	1,692	4,376	1,639
South East Thames	5,076	1,558	4,905	1,553	4,646	1,510	4,286	1,601
South West Thames	5,460	1,236	5,424	1,159	5,684	609	5,593	603
Wessex	2,486	1,615	2,451	1,584	2,329	1,582	2,179	1,509
Oxford	2,018	326	1,952	350	1,880	391	1,874	405
South Western	4,204	1,164	4,039	1,075	3,753	1,035	3,628	1,029
Mid West Midlands	6,469	1,632	5,541	2,263	4,451	2,983	4,622	2,452
Mersey	3,077	3,126	3,720	2,205	3,519	2,107	3,259	2,095
North Western	2,809	3,947	2,881	3,872	2,707	3,967	2,527	3,867
England	59,558	23,712	59,302	22,053	56,229	22,180	53,872	21,494
Special Health Authority	—	442	—	442	—	457	—	456

Note: 1986 figures are not yet available.

NHS (Ancillary Workers)

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of National Health Service ancillary workers have an income below the Council of Europe poverty level.

Mr. Newton: No definition of a poverty level has been endorsed either by any member state of the Council of Europe or by its Governmental Committee on the European Social Charter.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what are the current rates of pay for ancillary workers in the National Health Service, and the equivalent for 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986;

(2) when he expects the new pay scales for National Health Service ancillary workers to be agreed.

Mr. Newton: The basic weekly rates of pay for adult staff from 1 October 1986 range from £77·13 to £93·57 for non-supervisors and £85·95 to £101·75 for supervisors. On this date the Ancillary Staffs Whitley Council introduced a revised payments and grading structure and rates for earlier years are therefore not directly comparable. However, the range for all adult ancillary staff for the previous years was as follows:

	Rates
1982-83	£62·83 to £83·55
1983-84	£65·84 to £89·06
1984-85	£68·98 to £92·20
1985-86	£72·53 to £95·75

An offer of improved basic rates of pay from 1 April 1987 was made by the Management Side of the Council on 16 July. The trade union side is to consult its members and a response is not expected before the end of August.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of ancillary workers in the National Health Service are in receipt of any form of state benefit.

Mr. Newton: I regret that the information requested is not held centrally.

Sickness Benefit

Mr. David Atkinson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his estimate of the number of those who will have their sickness benefit reduced on reaching the official retirement age; what estimate he has made of the cost of maintaining that benefit at the same rate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that the information is not available in the form requested. However a one per cent. sample of the 180,000 people receiving sickness benefit as at 5 April 1986 contained 8 people over pensionable age. Of these, only persons who were entitled to less than 80 per cent. of the full retirement pension would lose benefit. Due to the small numbers in the sample any estimate of the total numbers and cost of maintaining benefit at the same rate for all such people would be unreliable.

Health Expenditure

Mr. Galbraith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the latest estimates for gross expenditure on health for England and Wales for the years 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90.

Mr. Newton: Estimated gross expenditure on the National Health Service in England is as follows

	£ million
1987-88	17,184
1988-89	17,566
1989-90	18,332

Expenditure for Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Wales.

Mr. Galbraith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the National Health Service per capita expenditure net of charges retained by family practitioners for each region of England.

Mr. Newton: I will write to the hon. Member.

ASH (Grant)

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what grant is currently paid by his Department to Action on Smoking and Health in the current year; what grant will be paid in the succeeding year; and when he last had a meeting with the organisation's officers.

Mrs. Currie: The full amount that ASH will receive this year has still to be decided; it has so far received £88,500. The level of grant in aid for 1988-89 has yet to be discussed. Officials last met officers of ASH formally on 7 May. I am hoping to visit the organisation's headquarters shortly.

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to transfer the funding of Action on Smoking and Health from public to private sources.

Mrs. Currie: None. However last year ASH received £36,000 from membership subscriptions and sales of literature, and estimates for 1987-88 from this source are in excess of that amount. They work closely with industry as the recent publication "Smoking Policies at Work" demonstrates.

Health Education Authority

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has any plans to appoint a fund-raiser to the Health Education Authority.

Mrs. Currie: No. The authority is a special health authority and is part of the National Health Service.

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of the current budget of the Health Education Authority is devoted to campaigns against smoking tobacco.

Mrs. Currie: Approximately 10 per cent. is allocated directly to health education about smoking; additional amounts are devoted to campaigns like "Look After Your Heart" which include messages to the public about the health risks of smoking cigarettes.

National Health Service (Voluntary Assistance)

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the effectiveness of assistance given to the National Health Service by voluntary organisations.

Mrs. Currie: I am happy to pay tribute to the important contribution which voluntary organisations and individual volunteers make to the National Health Service. Voluntary organisations complement the work of the National Health Service, for example in providing services which help to make a patient's stay in hospital more pleasant and in raising extra funds for amenities and equipment. Voluntary organisations can also provide a useful channel for consumer input to the development of statutory services, while they increase the direct involvement of individual volunteers which strengthens the National Health Service's links with local communities. There are a growing number of voluntary and self help groups supporting patients with particular ailments, many of which receive grant aid both from DHSS and local health authorities.

We have good reason to be grateful to voluntary organisations and to those who work in them.

Midwives and Health Visitors (Yorkshire)

Mr. Gregory asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many midwives and health visitors are employed by each of the health authorities in the Yorkshire regional health authority.

Mrs. Currie: The figures are shown in the table:

National Health Service midwives and health visitors in post Yorkshire region by district health authority at 30 September 1985

	Whole time equivalents[1]	
	Midwives[2]	*Health visitors*[3]
Hull district health authority	98	56
East Yorkshire district health authority	61	40
Grimsby district health authority	78	30
Scunthorpe district health authority	58	35
Northallerton district health authority	22	25
York district health authority	89	54
Scarborough district health authority	43	36
Harrogate district health authority	61	25
Bradford district health authority	183	91
Airedale district health authority	70	36
Calderdale district health authority	89	54
Huddersfield district health authority	78	54
Dewsbury district health authority	90	40
Leeds Western (teaching) district health authority	118	67
Leeds Eastern (teaching) district health authority	156	78
Wakefield district health authority	79	31
Pontefract district health authority	86	38
Yorkshire regional health authority	1,457	790

Source: DHSS Annual Census of National Health Service Non-Medical Manpower.

[1] All figures are independently rounded to the nearest whole time equivalent.

[2] Includes Agency Midwives.

[3] Includes Health Visitor Fieldwork Teachers., Health Visitors (TB), Dual Triple Posts (HV/DN/MID) Bank and School Health Visitors.

Midwives

Mr. Gregory asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will make a statement on the trend in the number of student midwives;

(2) how many qualified midwives no longer practise midwifery.

Mr. Newton: In recent years there has been a decline in the numbers entering midwifery training in England and information supplied by the English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting shows that during the year ended March 1987 the number of entrants decreased by 6·8 per cent. to 2,759 compared with 2,960 in the previous 12 months. There has, however, been an encouraging improvement in the proportion passing their examinations from about 78 per cent. in the year ended

March 1986 to 95 per cent. in the year ended March 1987. Also information supplied by the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting shows that the number of newly qualified midwives registered in England continues to increase and in the year ended March 1987 3,820 registered — an increase of 47 per cent. over the previous 12 months. The work load has also changed over recent years and the average number of births per midwife in England in 1985 (the latest date for which such information is available) was 34·1 compared to 37·5 in 1981.

AIDS

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on co-operation with other nations on research for treatment of AIDS.

Mr. Newton: In February 1987 my right hon. Friend, the then Secretary of State for Social Services, announced that the Government were granting to the Medical Research Council £14½ million over three years for a directed programme of research for the development of a vaccine for prevention and drugs for the treatment of AIDS. Following this the council is developing a programme of research to study the treatment of AIDS and HIV infection. The council has also established a therapeutic trials committee.

The council and the DHSS maintain close contact with European research through the EC medical and health research programme which includes research on AIDS, and with the World Health Organisation which is co-ordinating world-wide action on AIDS.

Research on antiviral treatment for AIDS and other Medical Research Council therapeutic investigations are to be co-ordinated with those undertaken in other countries.

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he proposes to launch a further phase of the AIDS publicity campaign.

Mr. Newton: We will be launching a new phase of the campaign to warn of the dangers of transmitting AIDS through injecting drug use in early September. This will run in parallel with the next stage of the Government's drug prevention campaign.

Claimants (Appeals)

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to be able to make a statement on the outcome of the discussions between his Department and interested groups about arrangements to help claimants with their appeals against local office decisions on social security claims.

Mr. Portillo: It is desirable that appellants to social security Tribunals should be provided with a list of local agencies who may be willing to represent them at the appeal. Local Office Managers will investigate in their areas whether a voluntary organisation is willing and able to compile such a list, which can then be issued by the DHSS local office. Where such arrangements cannot be made, local office managers will be asked to compile and issue the list.

Disablement Services Authority

Mr. Maples asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will announce the remaining member of the Disablement Services Authority.

Mr. Scott: I previously announced on 29 June 1987 at column *19* the appointment of seven further members of the Disablement Services Authority. I am delighted now to announce the appointment of Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones as a member of the Authority. I am sure that Mr. Carter-Jones, with his considerable experience of the problems associated with physical disability and his commitment to disabled people generally, will make a significant and worthwhile contribution to the authority.

Dental Manpower

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has received the Report of the departmental review group on dental manpower; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Health Ministers have agreed the main recommendations of the Department's review group on dental manpower and copies of the report have today been deposited in the Library.

The review group has concluded that to meet expected demand for treatment the estimated number of dentists should be increased from the present figure of around 24,700 to 30,700 by 2025; a 25 per cent. increase in the estimated number of dentists over the period.

The group believes that it is essential to avoid an over-supply over the next 30 years. If dentists are trained at the present rate, there would be 1,700 more dentists than needed by the year 2015.

The review group has recommended that in order to achieve the desirable level of supply of dentists it will be necessary to reduce intake to United Kingdom dental schools by 10 per cent. from 1988, but the precise implications for individual dental schools are a matter for the University Grants Committee in conjunction with the Department of Education and Science and other interested parties.

The University Grants Committee has been conducting its own review of dental school provision concurrently with the review group and has been made aware of its findings.

Teaching Hospitals (Health Authorities)

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he will be appointing new chairmen and members of the special health authorities for London postgraduate teaching hospitals; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The term of office of about half the chairmen and members of the special health authorities for London postgraduate teaching hospitals expires on 31 March 1988. We are likely to require a number of new nominations and any right hon. or hon. Member wishing to recommend anyone for appointment to these authorities should write to me by 30 September 1987. Reappointments and changes will be announced in due course.

Heating Allowance

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the value in real terms of the supplementary pension rates, including the lower rate of heating addition, for a single or married pensioner after the April 1987 uprating, compared with their value after the 1977 uprating; and what is the difference between the percentage of average earnings at the time represented by the 1977 and 1987 rates.

Mr. Scott [*pursuant to his reply*, 7 July 1987, c. *121-22*]: I regret that the figure of 147·7 in the last line of the final column of the first table (the value of the lower rate heating addition at April 1987 where the November 1977 rate = 100) is incorrect. The correct value is 119·6.

Hospitals (Manchester)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will visit south Manchester to discuss with the district health authority and representatives of hospital staffs there the impending cuts in expenditure of £5·9 million in the period up to 31 March 1989.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 20 July 1987, c. *70*]: I regret that my earlier reply contained an error. The figure quoted for real terms growth in revenue expenditure in South Manchester health authority between 1982-83 and 1985-86 should read 1·6 per cent. For this year the district's initial cash allocation is £88·5 million.

Psittacosis

Sir Anthony Grant asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the incidence of psittacosis in Cambridgeshire in comparison with the rest of Britain; if he will approve at the earliest opportunity the order of the South Cambridgeshire district council making psittacosis a notifiable disease under section 16 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 22 July 1987]: We do not collect comprehensive statistics about the incidence of this disease which would allow this comparison to be made. I understand that laboratory reports sent to the communicable disease surveillance centre in recent years were as follows:

	Number
1984	410
1985	322
1986	[1]329

[1] Provisional.

My officials are in touch with South and East Cambridgeshire district councils which are I understand concerned about local incidence. A decision about the approval of an order to make this disease notifiable in their areas will be taken as soon as possible.

Birth Statistics

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list for the years 1985 and 1986 the estimated percentages of women delivering in *(a)* England and *(b)* England and Wales (i) whose labours were induced, (ii) whose labours were of spontaneous onset and (iii) who had elected caesarean sections.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 23 July 1987]: The available information is shown in the table. The change in the method of collection of national (England and Wales) hospital data between 1985 and 1987 means that there will be no English data analysed for 1986.

Estimated percentages of women delivering by type of onset of labour. (a) England and (b) England and Wales — 1985

	Percentage of all deliveries	
Type of onset of labour	*England*	*England and Wales*[1]
1. Induced	17·5	[2]95·0
2. Spontaneous onset of labour	77·6	
3. Elective caesarian section	4·9	5·0

Source: England Maternity HIPE.
[1] *Provisional.*
[2] *Aggregation reflects Wales.*

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list for the years 1985 and 1986 the estimated percentages of women delivered in *(a)* England and *(b)* England and Wales whose deliveries were (i) spontaneous, including abnormal presentation of head and breach spontaneous, (ii) instrumental including forceps, vacuum and breach extractions, (iii) caesarean section and (iv) other and unspecified means.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 23 July 1987]: The available information is shown in the table. The change in the method of collection of national (England and Wales) hospital data between 1985 and 1987 means that there will be no English data analysed for 1986.

Estimated percentages of women delivering by specified modes of delivery (a) England and (b) England and Wales — 1985

	Percentage of all deliveries	
Mode of delivery	*(a) England*	*(b)* [1]*England and Wales*
1. Spontaneous including abnormal presentation of head and breech spontaneous	78·8	78·8
2. Instrumental including forceps, vacuum and breach extractions	10·7	10·6
3. Caesarian section	10·4	10·6
4. Other and unspecified	[2]0·1	[2]0·1

Source: England Maternity HIPE
Wales HAA
Percentages may not add exactly to 100 because of rounding.
[1] Provisional
[2] Deliveries not coded to this category for Wales.

ENVIRONMENT

Defective Housing

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what, in each of the years since the Housing Defects Act has been in force, has been the allocation of cash to each local authority for specified system-built homes, by name for *(a)* repurchase and *(b)* repair; whether he will estimate how much of the money allocated has been spent in each year; and what have been the national allocations under the Act each year.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Government do not allocate cash for specific purposes like this. It is for local authorities to

decide how to use the resources they have available to meet their expenditure needs, including their obligations under the Housing Defects Act.

Total expenditure by local authorities on repurchase and repair grants in each year since the legislation came into force has been as follows:

£ million

	Repurchase	*Repair grants*
1984-85	4	—
1985-86	60	3
1986-87[1]	62	8

[1] Provisional.

Individual authorities record their expenditure on these matters in their HIP 2 forms, copies of which are available in the Library.

Severn-Trent Water Authority

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will list the current members of the Severn-Trent water authority, giving their occupations and working backgrounds, their remuneration and an estimate of how many hours a year, by name, each spend on this activity.

Mr. Moynihan: I shall answer this question shortly.

Inner Cities

Mr. Leighton asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what changes there have been in the Government's policies towards the inner cities since the general election.

Mr. Trippier: The Government's policies for the inner cities will give increased emphasis to encouraging enterprise and investment in those areas, to increasing employment opportunities and to improving the physical environment. Our legislative proposals on housing, on local government finance and for promoting competition will help to ensure enhanced quality, choice and accountability in housing and services for inner city residents.

Mr. Battle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table listing the total amount of money received by inner-city partnership authorities from 1979 to date, through the inner city programme, by authority and in total; and if he will list the amounts in cash and real terms.

Mrs. Roe: The urban programme grant payments for the partnership authorities for the years 1978-79 to 1987-88 are shown in cash and real terms in the tables. The figures for 1986-87 are estimated outturn and those for 1987-88 are estimates.

The urban programme grant payments shown are, in general, less than the allocation for the authority for the year in question because:

(a) grant is paid at a rate of 75 per cent. on local authority expenditure;

(b) some grant claims are submitted after the relevant financial year; and

(c) many capital projects are financed through loans, and the grant payment in that case is towards loan charges over a maximum period of 40 years.

Table 1

Urban programme grant payments to partnership authorities 1978-79—1987-88 in £ million

	1978-79	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*[1]	*1985-86*[1]	*Estimated 1986-87*[1]	*Estimated 1987-88*
Partnerships										
Birmingham	1·8	3·1	5·3	5·7	7·7	10·2	9·1	8·6	10·0	10·0
Hackney	0·5	1·0	1·6	2·3	3·3	4·6	4·5	4·9	8·0	8·0
Islington	0·9	1·7	3·9	4·1	5·0	4·3	7·7	5·7	7·0	7·0
Lambeth	0·9	1·9	3·1	3·7	4·2	4·9	4·7	5·0	5·0	5·0
Liverpool	1·3	3·5	6·2	8·6	11·9	14·8	16·8	17·4	18·0	18·5
Manchester	1·0	1·9	3·1	4·3	5·1	5·8	5·8	6·1	6·0	6·8
Salford	0·7	1·4	1·6	2·4	2·7	3·2	2·9	3·3	3·5	4·0
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	0·8	1·5	1·9	2·1	2·4	3·5	4·5	8·5	5·0	5·5
Gateshead	0·6	1·2	1·7	2·1	2·8	3·1	3·8	3·7	5·0	5·5
Totals	8·5	17·2	28·4	35·3	45·1	54·4	59·8	63·2	67·5	70·3

[1] Final adjustments will be necessary as claims are submitted and certified by auditors.

Table 2

Urban programme grant payments to partnership authorities 1978-79—1987-88 at 1987-88 prices in £ million

	1978-79	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*[1]	*1985-86*[1]	*Estimated 1986-87*[1]	*Estimated 1987-88*
Partnerships										
Birmingham	3·7	5·3	7·7	7·6	9·5	12·1	10·4	11·6	10·5	10·0
Hackney	1·0	1·7	2·3	3·1	4·1	5·5	5·1	6·4	8·4	8·0
Islington	1·8	3·0	5·7	5·5	6·2	5·1	8·8	9·0	7·3	7·0
Lambeth	1·8	3·3	4·5	4·9	5·2	5·8	5·4	5·7	5·2	5·0
Liverpool	2·6	6·1	9·1	11·4	14·8	17·6	19·1	19·8	18·8	18·5
Manchester	2·0	3·3	4·5	5·7	6·3	6·9	6·6	7·0	6·3	6·8
Salford	1·4	2·4	2·3	3·2	3·3	3·8	3·3	3·5	3·7	4·0
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	1·6	2·6	2·8	2·3	3·0	4·2	5·1	9·7	5·2	5·5

	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85[1]	1985-86[1]	Estimated 1986-87[1]	Estimated 1987-88
Gateshead	1·2	2·0	2·5	2·8	3·5	3·7	4·3	4·8	5·2	5·5
Totals	17·1	29·7	41·4	47·0	55·9	64·7	68·1	77·5	70·6	70·3

[1] Final adjustments will be necessary as claims are submitted and certified by auditors.

Mr. Battle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report*, the total amount of rate support grant paid to inner-city partnership authorities from 1979 to date, by authority and in total.

Mr. Trippier: The figures requested are provided in the table:

£ million

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88
Hackney	43·387	49·775	45·204	44·665	46·117	44·742	46·652	75·213	68·883
Lambeth	55·368	60·596	55·966	58·969	53·131	49·555	50·690	51·228	77·618
Islington	40·604	46·167	31·091	32·043	34·727	3·877	25·029	45·421	56·952
Birmingham	175·149	201·981	176·660	170·825	190·475	196·008	193·851	19·539	188·709
Liverpool	116·194	141·059	120·518	117·256	123·571	118·674	124·156	135·450	135·823
Manchester	112·237	131·579	115·140	99·252	101·490	95·963	97·143	99·996	103·584
Salford	55·318	64·528	59·426	56·527	57·447	57·126	53·616	57·738	60·752
Newcastle	52·541	62·427	49·395	38·640	39·589	35·634	40·530	20·469	42·610
Gateshead	43·613	52·957	44·171	42·696	44·409	44·435	44·333	50·486	53·010
Total	694·411	811·069	697·571	660·873	690·956	646·014	676·000	555·540	787·941

Notes:

(1) For 1979-80 and 1980-81, rate support grant comprised needs and resources elements and domestic rate relief grant, and was not paid on a basis comparable with later years.

(2) From 1981-82 onwards, rate support grant comprises block grant and domestic rate relief grant. In 1981-82 Metropolitan police and GLC entitlements were paid to the rating authorities in their areas. In 1982-83 only the Metropolitan police entitlement was paid in this way.

(3) The rate support grant figures for the years 1979-80 to 1982-83 are final entitlements. The domestic rate relief grant elements for 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86 are also final entitlements; those for 1986-87 and 1987-88 are first estimates. The block grant elements for 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86 are entitlements after holdback based upon provisional outturn; those for 1986-87 are entitlements based on revised budgets, and those for 1987-88 are entitlements based on budgets.

(4) All figures are in cash terms.

Housing Association Properties (Rents)

Mr. Leighton asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his Department's estimate of the rent which would be required for a private house costing a housing association £50,000 with 30 per cent. subsidy.

Mr. Waldegrave: I will write to the hon. Member.

Local Authority Swimming Pools

Mr. Squire asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what statistical or other evidence the Government have as to the number of local authority swimming pools which have been *(a)* closed and *(b)* opened over the past 10 years.

Mr. Chope: In 1977 a total of 894 public indoor pools and 229 public outdoor pools were operating in England. The respective figures for 1984 are estimated to be 950 and 167. Comprehensive information for the period 1984 to 1987 is not yet available, but in 1984 43 new indoor pools were planned for construction by 1987. A number of poorer quality pools have been closed in recent years but the closure rate is now declining.

Mr. Squire asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how many local authority swimming pools in England and Wales can be classified as free form leisure pools and as to how many local authority traditional pools now include leisure equipment.

Mr. Moynihan: It is estimated that there are 45 local authority free form leisure pools in England and Wales. Information on the number of local authority traditional pools containing leisure equipment is not available.

PSA (Occupancy Audit)

Sir Eldon Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he received his officials' report on the occupancy audit of the Property Services Agency 's eastern region area office at Newmarket; if he will make known its conclusions to the House; if, before authorising action to be taken on these and other recommendations relating to the government offices in Newmarket and Cambridge, he will evaluate the benefits of transferring still more functions out of congested high price areas into more easily accessible and less expensive accommodation; and if he will make it his policy to release for the private development of houses, high-tech business premises and university research facilities all or most of the under-utilised land owns in the Eastern region.

Mr. Chope: Occupancy audits are independent checks on the efficient use of accommodation. The audit of PSA's eastern region area office, Newmarket, was carried out in April-May 1987. My officials' are considering its conclusions which relate only to internal office moves to improve space utilisation.

My ministerial colleagues and I will continue to look critically at the Government estate in the eastern region, as elsewhere, to ensure that Departments retain no more land than is necessary to carry out their functions.

Government Offices (Suffolk and Cambridgeshire)

Sir Eldon Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to help provide land for private housing and industrial development in the Suffolk and Cambridgeshire area by moving single storey Government offices out of prime city centre sites into less expensive and more efficient accommodation in smaller market towns.

Mr. Chope: The use of any such sites by Government Departments is reviewed regularly.

Rating Reform

Mr. Malcolm Bruce asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will set out the estimated costs of *(a)* the collection of the uniform business rate and *(b)* the total rate reform proposals including community charge.

Mr. Howard: There is no reason to assume that the cost of collecting the uniform business rate will be different from the cost of collecting non-domestic rates at present. Our preliminary estimate is that the cost per person liable of collecting the community charge may be broadly similar to the cost per person liable of collecting domestic rates.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will set out the estimated costs of collection for the community charge in terms of the cost per £ sterling of collection; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: Our preliminary estimate is that the cost per person liable of collecting the community charge may be broadly similar to the cost per person liable of collecting domestic rates. The cost to an individual local authority will largely depend on how far they are successful in reducing unit costs.

Sir Barney Hayhoe asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will publish tables indicating the range of domestic rates for indicative bands of rateable values for each local authority together with the estimated amount of the comparable community charge.

Mr. Howard: I have today placed in the Library information on rate bills in each authority of properties with rateable values of the national average—£200—half the national average and double the national average.

The amount of the community charge payable by those living in houses of those descriptions will depend on the numbers of adults living there.

Sir Barney Hayhoe asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make it his policy to exclude the use of electoral rolls as evidence for liability to pay community charge in the legislation proposals for the reform of local government finance which he will be bringing before the House.

Mr. Howard: The community charges register in each area will be maintained separately from the electoral roll and will not have the same coverage. The Government do not, however, propose to deny community charge registration officers access to the electoral roll, which is a public document.

Sir Barney Hayhoe asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many of those now estimated not to be paying domestic rates are estimated to be the spouses of, or cohabiting with, ratepayers.

Mr. Howard: Based on data contained in the family expenditure survey, I estimate there are about 9½ million households with two adults where a rate is presently paid in whole or in part.

Sir Barney Hayhoe asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage of those over 18 years of age, living in England and Wales, have been assumed not to pay the community charge in detailed comparison between domestic rates and community charge payments issued by the Government because *(a)* of exemption and *(b)* of failure to register.

Mr. Howard: The figures published on 29 June in column *44*, are based on full estimates of adult population in each area. They do not take account of any exemptions from the personal community charge, nor of failure to pay. Nor, however, do they take account of income from the standard community charge on second homes and empty properties.

Sir Barney Hayhoe asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what assumptions have been made about revaluation of non-domestic rateable values in estimating the figures for the proposed unified business rate published by the Government; and what is the estimated differences of such revaluation compared with the existing position, by whatever geographical breakdown is available.

Mr. Howard: The exemplifications placed in the Library in response to a question from the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) on 29 June—column *44*—made no assumptions about the effect of the non-domestic revaluation in 1990. In broad terms, I expect that revaluation will result in relative increases in rateable value for prime shops and reductions for factories, and in relative increases in the south of England and reductions in the north and midlands.

Sir Barney Hayhoe asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what changes to the community charge proposal have been announced by the Government *(a)* following consultations and before the dissolution of the last Parliament and *(b)* since then.

Mr. Howard: Last December my right hon. Friend placed in the Library the document entitled "Paying for Local Government: The Community Charge", which set out the Government's detailed proposals for the new system in England and Wales. We subsequently made it clear—before the election—that there will be community charge rebates for those on low incomes, and that there will be community charge exemptions in England and Wales similar to those provided for in the Abolition of Domestic Rates, Etc. Scotland Act 1987.

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate as to the number of people who will be taken to court per year due to non-payment of the proposed community charges.

Mr. Howard: The community charge will be paid by a much larger number of people than the number who pay domestic rates. However, we do not anticipate a proportionate increase in the number of court cases for non-payment. We have published proposals for greater

use of reminders and for payment by instalments to become the norm. These will help to reduce the incidence of arrears.

Mr. Cyril Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if Her Majesty's Government have made any estimates as to the proportion of single adults on unemployment benefit who will receive community charge rebates.

Mr. Howard: No such estimates have been made since the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" — Cmnd. 9714 — was published in January 1986. Eligibility for community charge rebates will depend on the details of the rebate scheme, the level of the community charge and the income of the unemployed person concerned. All these matters remain to be determined.

Mr. Cyril Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the up-to-date community charge register will be made available to the public in computer-readable form; and whether local authorities will be empowered to sell this to non-political commercial organisations.

Mr. Howard: The Government have proposed that each individual will have the right to see all the information held about him or her on the community charge register; and that the general public will have the right to inspect only that part of the register that consists of a list of addresses and the names of those registered there.

We are considering whether registration officers should be authorised to sell copies of the part of the register that is available for public inspection.

Mr. Cyril Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how long the Government estimate it will take, on average, for new non-householder residents to register with their local authority for community charge.

Mr. Howard: Registration for the community charge in England will begin several months before 1 April 1990. Thereafter, all those liable for the community charge will be under a duty to ensure that they are registered within one month of becoming liable.

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what would be the total community charge payable per resident in all boroughs and districts in England in 1987-88, assuming the full replacement of domestic rates by community charge, the implementation of the proposals in "Paying for Local Government" (Cmnd. 9714), and the payment of full community charge liability by the following percentages of those eligible *(a)* 95 per cent., *(b)* 90 per cent., *(c)* 85 per cent. and *(d)* 81 per cent., both with and without a safety net.

Mr. Howard: The illustrative community charge figures published on 29 June in column 44 are based on full estimates of adult population in each area. A shortfall in the number of people paying the community charge in any area would produce a proportionate increase in the illustrative personal community charge for that area.

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the Government's estimate as to the percentage of those eligible for the community charge who would both appear on the community charge register and pay the charge.

Mr. Howard: The Government have made no such estimate. Local authorities will have every reason to ensure that those who are liable for the community charge are registered and pay.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if, based on the exemplifications which he placed in the Library on 29 June, he will publish further exemplifications comparing for each local authority and class of authority in England, and for local authorities in England as a whole, the implied effects on local taxes of changes in local authority expenditure under the present system and under the proposed system of a community charge and a national non-domestic rate, set out as follows: *(a)* the implied change in domestic rates per household if the expenditure assumptions used in the previous exemplifications were 1 per cent. higher, *(b)* the implied change in community charge per household, on the same basis as above and *(c)* a comparison of the information under *(a)* and *(b)* above expressed in terms of absolute amounts and of percentages.

Mr. Ridley: I will write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Fearn asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many central and local government staff he estimates will be needed to administer the proposals in "Paying for Local Government" for a community charge and a unified business rate; and how many people are now needed to administer domestic and non-domestic rates.

Mr. Howard: It is estimated from the CIPFA "Rate Collection Statistics 1985-86 Actuals" that there are around 8,000 full-time equivalent staff employed on rate collection in local authorities in England and Wales. The Inland Revenue valuation office employs around 4,000 full-time equivalent staff on domestic and non-domestic rating.

An estimate of the number of staff required to administer the community charge and the national non-domestic rate will be provided at the appropriate time. The eventual outcome will depend on the extent of the application of new technology and the savings which can be achieved in the valuation office when domestic rates are abolished.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if any studies have been carried out within his Department on likely registration rates or collection rates for the proposed poll tax; and if he will place any such studies in the Library.

Mr. Howard: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 13 July, at column 387.

Ms. Quin asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state, following his consultations with local authorities on the introduction of the poll tax, how many local authorities in England and Wales are in favour of the proposed poll tax; and if he will list those local authorities in favour.

Mr. Howard: Twenty-seven principal councils and 14 town and parish councils in England expressed support for the community charge. I do not have the permission of those who submitted comments to publish their views. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales is responsible for the consultation arrangements in Wales.

Ms. Quin asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, further to the answer of 13 July, *Official Report*, column *528*, what studies the Government have undertaken, in addition to the analyses of the impact on house prices of the abolition of domestic rates, on the effect of house prices of the introduction of the proposed poll tax.

Mr. Howard: Annex E of the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" — Cmnd. 9714 — addresses both issues. No further studies have been commissioned.

Ms. Quin asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, further to his answer of 16 July, *Official Report*, column *578*, of the 454 local authorities and associated bodies in England and Wales which responded to the Green Paper, "Paying for Local Government," how many were in favour of the poll tax proposed by the Government; and what proportion of the total number of local authorities in England and Wales the number in favour represents.

Mr. Howard: Twenty-seven principal councils in England, just over 6 per cent. of the total number, expressed support for the community charge, as did 14 town and parish councils and three local authority associated bodies in England. But overall, those who supported the abolition of domestic rates outnumbered those who supported their retention by 2 to 1.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales is responsible for the consultation arrangements in Wales.

Local Government Elections (Statistics)

Sir Barney Hayhoe asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will publish any statistical or survey evidence available to him on any correlation between the incidence of paying local taxes and voting at local elections in the United Kingdom or in any other country.

Mr. Howard: I am not aware of any research into this topic.

Rates (Non-payment)

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has as to in how many cases an authority for deduction for earning has been issued in respect of non-payment of rates in the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Howard: The option of an attachment of earnings order is not available to the courts in cases of unpaid rates. It is proposed to provide such a power in relation to the community charge.

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has as to how many people are currently in prison due to non-payment of rates; and at what annual cost.

Mr. Howard: It is estimated that on 31 May 1987, 11 people—all males—were being held in prison for wilful refusal or culpable neglect to pay rates. Estimates of annual costs per inmate are not available for specific types of prisoner, but information on average weekly costs for establishments was published in the "Report on the Work of the Prison Department 1985/86", Cm 11, Appendix 3, tables E, F.

Charities (Rate Relief)

Mr. Cyril Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total annual value of rate relief accruing to registered charities in England.

Mr. Howard: The total value of mandatory rate relief accruing to registered charities in England in respect of both domestic and non-domestic properties is estimated to be £103 million in 1987-88. Information on discretionary rate relief accruing to them is not collected centrally.

London Docklands

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state his estimate of the cost of land acquisition for each of the sections of new road planned in the London docklands as tabulated in his written answer of 3 July, *Official Report*, column *191*.

Mr. Trippier: The cost of land acquisition for these road improvements will depend upon the outcome of detailed negotiations with landowners and any necessary compulsory purchase procedures.

Firework Displays

Sir Barney Hayhoe asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will arrange for inquiries to be made by his officials into the noise and nuisance caused by public firework displays at times other than at the traditional period around 5 November.

Mr. Moynihan: Noise nuisance from firework displays is essentially a local matter. Local authorities can make an order to prevent the occurrence or recurrence of noise amounting to a nuisance, and individuals bothered in their homes by noise can take action in the magistrates' court, under the provisions of the Control of Pollution Act 1974. I have no reason to believe these powers are inadequate in relation to noise from firework displays.

UK 2000

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the terms of reference of UK 2000; what tasks it is currently handling; and what is the precise role of Mr. Richard Branson.

Mr. Trippier: The objectives of UK 2000 are:

(a) to increase the quality and quantity of practical improvements to the urban and rural environment;

(b) to offer challenging and worthwhile work experience for community programme participants and volunteers;

(c) to establish new enterprises based on the natural or man-made environment.

Work is focused on specific themes. Currently these are:

greening the cities, by bringing neglected land into use as parks, walkways, wildlife reserves, or city farms;

conserving and restoring industrial heritage, with work on canals, railways and mills;

tackling litter, especially on beaches and roadsides;

helping tourists by improving information and facilities;

making more of nature: improving lesser known and lesser cared for woodlands, ponds, paths and other habitats;

recycling rubbish, to encourage the conservation of natural resources.

At present UK 2000 has 214 projects under way involving 3,900 Community Programme workers and 7,000 volunteers.

Mr. Richard Branson is the chairman of the board set up to direct UK 2000.

Rent Arrears (Leeds)

Mr. Battle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many of the tenants of Leeds city council are behind with their rent payments; and what proportion of the total number of tenants they represent.

Mr. Waldegrave: The available information is the number of housing tenants in arrears with payments for rent, rates and other charges and appears on page 10 of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's report "Arrears Statistics September 1986", a copy of which is in the Library.

Tenancies

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to allow existing lettings to be converted into tradeable fixed-term leases for a fixed term or for the life of the existing tenant; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: No. I do not think such a proposal would be attractive to landlords, or useable by many tenants. We propose instead to tackle the very real problems of the private rented sector by deregulating new lettings.

Ministerial Cars (CS Gas)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether any cars currently allocated for ministerial use carry supplies of CS gas.

Mr. Chope: No.

Nuclear Installations (Discharges)

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he intends to review the system for reporting unplanned discharges from nuclear installations, in the light of the agreement on that subject made by member states at the recent meeting of the Paris Commission for the prevention of marine pollution.

Mr. Moynihan: No. Members of the commission will be reviewing existing notification arrangements at the next meeting of the technical working group.

Birtenshaw Farm, Bolton

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations he has received about the planning appeal decision at Birtenshaw farm, Bolton; how many supported the decision; and if he will list these representations by categories to include businesses, local residents and public authorities.

Mr. Waldegrave: Representations about the appeal decision, or about the proposal to remove the covenant on the land, have been made by 333 local residents. They have also been made by the Birtenshaw Land Appeal Group, students at two local schools, the local Labour party and the local Civic Trust. None has been made by businesses or by public authorities, nor have any been made in support of the appeal decision.

Mersey Basin Programme

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much money Her Majesty's Government expect Tameside metropolitan borough to receive from European funding for the Mersey basin programme over each year of the programme.

Mr. Trippier: The amount received by Tameside will depend on the value of eligible council projects for each year of the programme; the priority which it accords to those projects within its own capital investment programme; and the priorities of the Mersey basin campaign overall.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of money spent by Her Majesty's Government and by the European Community on the Mersey basin programme has been spent in the upper parts of the basin at Oldham, Tameside, Stockport and Manchester; and what amount in the lower part of the basin.

Mr. Trippier: Of the £65·6 million European regional development fund grants awarded under phase 1 of the Mersey basin programme, £4·1 million went to Oldham, £5·6 million to Tameside and £2·5 million to Manchester —18·6 per cent. in all. No grant went to Stockport, and the remaining £53·4 million went to the other parts of the programme area. Government expenditure in support of the Mersey basin campaign has been incurred under a wide range of powers and programmes but no record has been kept of its total extent.

Mr. Burt asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether, in view of the concern expressed by the textile districts of Greater Manchester over the implementation of phase 1 of the Mersey basin programme, he is satisfied that there has been adequate formal consultation with local authorities on the full programme of phase 2 prior to its submission to the European Economic Community.

Mr. Trippier: Yes — through the three formally-constituted local authority-led project groups of the Mersey basin campaign. The interests of the textile districts of Greater Manchester have been well catered for in the EC submission.

Local Government

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish, in relation to the exemplifications he placed in the Library on 29 June, the following assumptions for each local authority and class of local authority in England, and for local authorities in England as a whole: *(a)* the amount of "needs" grant, *(b)* the amount of "standard" grant, *(c)* the adult population, *(d)* the amount of non-domestic rateable value, *(e)* the amount received from the national non-domestic rate, *(f)* the amount of grant-related expenditure, *(g)* the amount of expenditure and *(h)* the amount of "minimum needs threshold" used to calculate the amount of "needs" grant.

Mr. Ridley: I have today placed in the Library the figures for expenditure, grant-related expenditure, grant, non-domestic rate income, non-domestic ratea ble value and adult population which underlay the illustrative community charge figures placed in the Library on 29 June. The figure for grant has been calculated by

deducting from the grant-related expenditure figure the sum of £178 per adult which represents the community charge required to finance spending at the GRE level. No separate calculations of needs and standard grant were made. Nor was there any need to estimate minimum needs thresholds.

Resource Recovery and Power Generation Plant (Liverpool)

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about the erection of a resource recovery and power generation plant at Stonebridge lane, Gillmoss in Liverpool; what discussions he has had with representatives of Liverpool city council about the matter; and if he will now reconsider his decision not to establish a full public inquiry.

Mr. Moynihan: Seventy-eight representations have been received about the proposed plant. Her Majesty's district inspector of pollution has discussed the general principles of the design with Liverpool city council, and further detailed examination and discussions will be necessary before he would be in a position to register the plant for air pollution control purposes. My right hon. Friend still sees no justification for holding a full public inquiry into these proposals.

Bradford Investments plc

Mr. Pike asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will set up an inquiry into the operation of rental purchase schemes by Bradford Investments plc.

Mr. Waldegrave: I will write to the hon. Member.

London Docklands Development Corporation

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much was spent by the London Docklands Development Corporation on hospitality, public relations and personal expenses in the last financial year.

Mr. Trippier I will write to the hon. Member.

Whale and Turtle Products

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what whale or turtle products have been purchased by this Department in each of the last two years.

Mr. Chope: None.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those individuals and organisations who have taken up import permits for whale and turtle products in each of the past two years.

Mr. Moynihan: I shall write to the hon. Member shortly.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek powers to ban imports of *(a)* whale products and *(b)* turtle products; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

Homelessness

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions he has had with the London Tourist Board concerning the use of London hotels by homeless people.

Mr. Waldegrave: My officials have discussed this matter with representatives of the London Tourist Board and other Government Departments concerned. Our code of guidance on part III of the Housing Act 1985 discourages authorities from using hotels as interim accommodation for homeless households except as a last resort and suggests various preferable alternatives such as empty council dwellings awaiting repair or a short term lease of empty private sector property. Our recent initiatives through Estate Action and through the Housing Corporation's mixed-funding programme have given practical assistance. Tourism matters of course fall within the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment.

Inner London Education Authority

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the estimated cost of the Inner London education authority moving out of County hall and relocating in alternative premises.

Mr. Chope: The acquisition of alternative premises is a matter for ILEA. The Government are currently considering requests from ILEA for assistance.

Enterprise Zones

Mr. David Nicholson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what periodic review is made by the Government of the effectiveness of enterprise zones; what response the Government have made to recent business or academic studies of this subject; what effect enterprise zones have had on business in the periphery of the zones but outside their boundaries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The progress of the enterprise zones experiment has been monitored since it began. In 1986, halfway through the 10-year period of designation of the earliest zones, we commissioned an evaluation study of the experiment and have recently received our consultants' report. We are considering future policy in the light of that report.

Funfairs

Mr. Harry Greenway asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to call in all planning applications for the permanent establishment of funfairs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: No. It is my right hon. Friend's policy to be very selective about calling in planning applications for his decision; applications will in general be called in only if planning issues of more than local importance are involved.

Mrs. R. Batts

Mr. Gerald Bowden asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the reason for

the delay in the purchase by Mrs. R. Batts of her council home at 26 Hilverson crescent, London SE 22; and when he expects Southwark council to complete the transaction.

Mr. Waldegrave: I understand that this case was delayed while Southwark council considered amendments to its standard form of lease to conform with the requirements of the Housing and Planning Act 1986. The lease has now been reprinted and Mrs. Batts should shortly receive the legal documentation from the council necessary to complete the purchase.

National Trust

Mr. Michael J. Martin asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what funds he has made available to the National Trust for the upkeep of historical buildings during the years 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86.

Mr. Moynihan: The National Trust has received grants from the Department—prior to 1 April 1984—from the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission and from the National Heritage Memorial Fund. The figures are summarised in the table below, which covers trust properties in England.

The major part of the NHMF payments relates to two major country houses — Calke Abbey, which the Government accepted in lieu of tax and allocated to the care of the trust, with endowment and repair funds channelled through the NHMF; and Belton House.

Some NHMF grants relate to gardens or land; a detailed breakdown is not possible in the time available.

£000s

	1983-84	*1984-85*	*1985-86*
Department of the Environment Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission	682	999	798
National Heritage Memorial Fund:			
Calke Abbey and Belton House	6,625	5,220	1,620
Other grants	2,100	470	1

Lead Pipes

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much money has been spent by local authorities since 1979 on programmes of lead pipe removal.

Mr. Moynihan: This information is not held by the Department.

Water

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give details of all outstanding complaints against the United Kingdom Government by the Commission of the European Community under directions relating to the quality of drinking water and bathing water in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Moynihan: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths) on 20 July, in column 104, concerning bathing waters. We have received representations from the Commission concerning one aspect of drinking water in one supply area, and will be responding shortly.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many of the regional water authorities are conducting biological analysis or designated bathing beaches to detect the presence of human enteric viruses in line with the provisions of the European Community bathing water directive.

Mr. Moynihan: During 1986, the last year for which results are available, four water authorities measured enteroviruses in bathing waters.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he proposes, in legislation for water privatisation, to ensure that the National Rivers Authority should have responsibility for the quality of public drinking water supplies in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Moynihan: No. It will be for the privatised water authorities, and the existing private sector statutory water companies, to maintain the quality of public water supplies in accordance with EC and other statutory requirements. It will remain the role of local authorities to ensure that water supplies are sufficient, and wholesome. The Secretary of State will continue to have responsibility for checking compliance with EC requirement.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest estimate of the cost of household water metering throughout the United Kingdom.

Mr. Moynihan: The Watts committee, which reported in August 1985 — Joint Study of Water Metering: Report of the Steering Group — concluded that the average annualised cost of metering per customer including meter provision, installation, and maintenance and additional meter reading and billing costs, would be of the order of £4·75 per year; that for the average consumer the economic benefits of 'traditional' metering would be of the same order of magnitude as the costs; and that recent developments, including electronic notebooks and doorstep billing, could remove some of the costs and problems of reading 'traditional' meters. They recommended controlled comprehensive experiments with domestic metering which, amongst other things, would test present cost assumptions.

The Public Utility Transfers and Water Charges Bill contains provisions which would enable water undertakers to carry out metering trials, and proposals for a co-ordinated programme of trials are being formulated by the water industry.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish the results of surveys of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in public drinking water supplies in the 10 regional water authority areas; and if he will comment on the public health significance of those surveys.

Mr. Moynihan: I will write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the current levels of bromate in public water supplies in each of the 10 regional water authority areas; and what is his estimate of the total quantity of organo-bromine biodes being biodegraded during sewage treatment to inorganic bromide, discharged to rivers, abstracted for drinking water and oxidised to bromate during disinfection at water treatment works.

Mr. Moynihan: I will write to the hon. Member.

Retail Developments

Mr. Aspinwall asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those applications for out-of-town retail developments of *(a)* below 250,000 sq ft and *(b)* above 250,000 sq ft currently before his Department.

Mr. Waldegrave: The information requested is being prepared and I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Mr. Aspinwall asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he is considering issuing new guidelines to local authorities concerning large retail developments proposed in inner-city areas; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will set out his Department's guidelines concerning proposed retail developments which could affect the vitality and viability of town or city centres as a whole; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Policy on major retail development is set out in the circular issued jointly by my Department and the Welsh Office last December—DOE circular 21/86, Welsh Office 58/86. That circular includes the text of a statement made on 5 July 1985 by the then Secretary of State for the Environment about the possible impact of new retail developments on the vitality and viability of existing town centres.

Mr. Aspinwall asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he intends to undertake studies into the employment displacement effects caused by the development of large retail outlets in out-of-town areas.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Department does not fund any such studies at present, but is aware of other research in progress on this subject—for example, the study funded by the Economic and Social Research Council into the impact of the Gateshead Metro centre on Tyneside.

Council House Sales

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will update the table giving information on sales of dwellings by each local authority in England referred to in the answer to the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) on 15 May, *Official Report*, column *395*.

Mr. Waldegrave: I have today placed in the Library the latest version of table 2 giving information reported by each local authority in England on the progress on council house sales up to the end of March 1987.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the estimated expenditure of his Department in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

Mr. Ridley: Provision in DOE(C) for management and computer consultancies during 1987-88 is £5·2 million, and for PSA £8·6 million.

Spectrum Arena

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when the consultations between Warrington and Runcorn development corporation and Warrington borough council over the Spectrum arena will take place.

Mrs. Roe: The chairman of the corporation wrote to the leader of the council on 14 July 1987.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the date when previous discussions took place on the Spectrum arena between Warrington borough council and Warrington and Runcorn development corporation.

Mrs. Roe: On 29 April 1986.

Medieval Wall Paintings

Mr. Cormack asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will discuss the results of the survey of English medieval wall paintings, currently being carried out by the Courtauld Institute and the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments, with the chairman of the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission with a view to making special funds available for the conservation of these paintings.

Mr. Moynihan: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Assured Tenancies

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his reply of 7 July, *Official Report*, column *140*, to the hon. Member for Brent, South (Mr. Boateng) if section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 applies to assured tenancies when the tenancy is renewed.

Mrs. Roe: No. But we propose to extend section 11 so as to apply to assured tenancies not only when first granted but also on renewal.

Canary Wharf

Ms. Gordon asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the total amount of public funds *(a)* committed and *(b)* spent to date on or in connection with the proposed Canary wharf development, broken down by category of expenditure.

Mr. Trippier [*pursuant to his answer*, 10 July, c. 296]: The information requested is as follows:

£ thousand cash

	(a) Committed on, or in connection with, the Canary wharf development	*(b) Spent to 30 June 1987*
Land acquisition	6,466	—
Roads	10,440	—
Other infrastructure	69	—
Relocations	625	—
Administration (Fees etc) (net)	1,570	420
City extension of Docklands light railway	[1]70,000	—
Total	89,170	420

[1] Present estimate of London Regional Transport's share of the project.

Housing Statistics

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many of the houses designated as

unfit in Wales, Scotland, England and each of English regions are lived in by pensioner households; and what proportion of those living in such housing pensioners represent;

(2) how many pensioners in Scotland, Wales, England and each of the English regions live in housing which has been designated as unfit; and in each case, what proportion of the total number of pensioners in each area that number represents.

Mr. Waldegrave [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 July 1987, c. *102*]: The most recent source of information on the numbers of pensioners and pensioner households in unfit housing in England is the 1981 English house condition survey. Figures are available only for three broad regions. These are as follows:

	Northern, Yorkshire and Humberside and North-East	*South-East including Greater London*	*East Midlands, West Midlands, East Anglia, South-West*	*England*
Number of pensioner[1] households in unfit dwellings	131,000	110,000	132,000	373,000
Pensioner households in unfit dwellings as a percentage of all pensioner households	9	8	9	8
Number of pensioners in unfit dwellings	404,000	361,000	314,000	1,079,000
Pensioners in unfit dwellings as a percentage of all pensioners	7	5	5	6

[1] Pensioner households are those where head of household is of pensionable age.

The figures for Scotland and Wales are the responsibility of the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales respectively.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will list the current members of the Severn-Trent water authority, giving their occupations and working backgrounds, their remuneration and an estimate of how many hours a year, by name, each spends on this activity.

Mr. Trippier [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987]: Information about current members and members' remuneration is to be found on pages 29 and 48 of the report and accounts of Severn-Trent water for 1986-87 which was presented to Parliament on 15 July 1987. Time spent by current members on authority business is as follows:

	Number of members
3 to 4 days per month	3
4 days per month	3
4 to 5 days per month	3
5 days per month	1
4 days per week	1
Full-time	3

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 21 October 1987

PRIME MINISTER

Excise Duties

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister whether Her Majesty's Government will agree to a substantial reduction in excise duties on alcoholic beverages and tobacco to enable all customs barriers on trade with the European Economic Community to be removed by 1992.

The Prime Minister: The Government have fundamental difficulties with the European Community Commission's proposals for the removal of fiscal barriers to trade in the Community—not least those relating to the rates of excise duty on alcoholic beverages and tobacco products.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister why she agreed to the removal of all customs barriers on trade between the United Kingdom and the rest of the European Economic Community by 1992; and what steps will be taken to protect British manufacturers of alcoholic beverages and tobacco from imports bearing a lower rate of excise duty.

The Prime Minister: Further to the provisions of the original treaty of Rome to which the United Kingdom acceded in 1972, the Single European Act, which was before Parliament when it passed the European Communities (Amendment) Act (which received Royal Assent on 6 November 1986), sets the framework for completion of the single market, which it defines as
"an area without internal frontiers,"
by 1992. The Government are committed to attainment of that goal. How this may be achieved is a matter for discussion within the Community and many member states, including the United Kingdom, can be expected to have strong views on the issue. United Kingdom interests have, however, been safeguarded both by the general declaration on articles 13 to 19 of the SEA allowing member states to maintain national measures for the control of immigration from third countries, as well as to combat drug smuggling, terrorism and crime; and by the requirement that fiscal legislation can only be adopted with the unanimous agreement of the member states.

The Commission's proposals are for harmonised rates of excise duty and would not allow alcoholic beverages and tobacco to be imported into the United Kingdom at rates of excise duty lower than those applied here.

Ministers (Private Office Staff)

Mr. Allan Stewart asked the Prime Minister if she will list the number of staff in the private office of each Minister in Her Majesty's Government.

The Prime Minister: This information is not held centrally.

Space Programme

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister, pursuant to her oral reply on 23 July, *Official Report*, column 482, what is now her estimate of the level of resources being made available from the private sector to the British national space centre and British space programme.

The Prime Minister: Following my remarks on 23 July, major aerospace companies agreed to continue work at company expense on certain key national space programmes until the European Space Agency ministerial council meeting in November. Information on the overall amount of funding being made available to these programmes by the private sector is not held by the Government.

World Decade for Cultural Development

Mr. Foulkes asked the Prime Minister what are Her Majesty's Government's plans for Britain's participation in the early years of the United Nations world decade for cultural development from 1988 to 1997.

The Prime Minister: We have no current plans to participate. Initial studies have been financed by UNESCO, of which the United Kingdom is not a member.

Windscale Fire 1957 (Papers)

Dr. Cunningham asked the Prime Minister if she will arrange for all papers concerning the 1957 Windscale fire to be made available under the 30-year rule.

The Prime Minister: The release of papers relating to the Windscale fire will be dealt with by the Departments concerned in the normal way. Release will be in accordance with the requirements of the Public Records Acts and will be as full as possible.

Intergovernmental Organisations

Mr Foulkes asked the Prime Minister if she will list all the intergovernmental organisations of which the United Kingdom is a member, giving for each one which Department has primary responsibility, which other Departments are involved, and in what ways and whether Her Majesty's Government have a permanent diplomatic mission at the relevant organisation's headquarters.

The Prime Minister: I shall reply to the hon. Gentleman shortly.

British Nuclear Fuels plc

Mr. Rooker asked the Prime Minister on how many occasions in 1987 members of her staff have been guests of British Nuclear Fuels plc; and if she will list them by title and date.

The Prime Minister: My chief press secretary took part in three BNF plc weekend information seminars in Cumbria in April, July and September, 1987 and in a dinner for the media in February. A member of the policy unit has visited a BNF plc plant and another attended a reception given by BNF plc in 1987.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Members' Pensions

Mr. Butler asked the Lord Privy Seal when he expects the TSRB to produce its report on the retrospective revision of Members' pension provision.

Mr. Wakeham: I refer my hon. Friend to the written answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) on Friday 24 July 1987, at column *502*.

Accommodation

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will list all the rooms in the Palace of Westminster and its outbuildings, their approximate size and the numbers of people who occupy each of them.

Mr. Wakeham: No, the information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

If the hon. Gentleman has a particular point in mind and would like to write to me, I shall see what I can do.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Open University

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the present level of funding for the Open University.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend expects to make an announcement later in the year about the Open University's grants for 1988. In reaching his decision he will take into account the advice of the Open University visiting committee.

University Statistics

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many European Economic Community nationals are attending university in Britain; and how many British citizens are attending university in other European Economic Community countries.

Mr. Jackson: There were 5,400 students from European Community countries attending universities in the United Kingdom in 1985-86, and 7,500 attending all higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. Available data for United Kingdom students studying in other European Economic Community countries cover all higher education, except for France and Netherlands, and are as follows:

Students from the United Kingdom studying in European Community countries

Host country	*Year*	*Students from the United Kingdom (thousands)*
Belgium	1984	0·3
Denmark	1983	0·2
France[1]	1983	2·3
Germany	1983	1·9
Greece	1981	0·1
Ireland	1982	1·2
Italy	1983	0·2
Luxembourg	—	—
Netherlands[1]	1984	0·2
Portugal	1982	—
Spain	1980	0·1

[1] Universities only.
Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, 1986.

United Nations International Literacy Year

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has for United Kingdom participation in the United Nations International Literacy Year in 1990.

Mr. Dunn: The Government are taking vigorous steps to counter illiteracy in this country through improving standards in schools, through Manpower Services Commission programmes and through the efforts of the adult literacy and basic skills unit. How the proposed International Literacy Year should be marked in 1990 will be considered later in the light of the success of these efforts.

Education Reform

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will state the bodies representative of parents from whom he received representations prior to the publication of his recent consultative papers; and if he will place copies of such representations in the Library.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend and his ministerial colleagues frequently meet parents and their representatives in the normal course of work. The reforms set out in our consultation documents take account of views expressed by parents and others over a number a years.

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish the formal responses he has received to his various consultative papers on educational change.

Mrs. Rumbold: No. It is for those originating responses to decide whether or not to make them publicly available. We are, however, arranging for copies of responses, other than those from individuals, to be placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* the numbers produced of each of his duplicated consultative documents on educational reform, the numbers he distributed initially without request, and those subsequently distributed with or without charge, respectively.

Mrs. Rumbold: The numbers of documents produced, to date, are as follows:

	Total number produced	*Number distributed initially*	*Number distributed subsequently*
The National Curriculum 5-16	60,000	1,200	56,800
Charges for school activities	9,000	1,100	7,000
Collective worship	500	390	34
Financial delegation to schools	10,500	514	9,683
Grant Maintained schools	12,000	514	10,874
Admission of pupils to Maintained schools	10,500	514	9,626
Changes in structure and national planning for higher education (polytechnics and colleges sector)	2,000	450	1,380
Changes in structure and national planning for higher education (contracts between the funding bodies and higher education institutes)	3,000	1,300	1,450
Changes in structure and national planning for higher education (Universities Funding Council)	2,000	466	1,489
Maintained further education: Financing, governance and law	7,000	1,687	5,063
Academic tenure and related matters	32	32	Nil
Organisation of education in inner London	4,000	1,975	1,947
Accounting and auditing in higher education	1,000	588	[1]Nil

[1] Document issued 20 October 1987.

All these documents are available free of charge from the Department.

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if, as a contribution to the consultations he is holding concerning the opting out procedures for maintained schools, he will estimate, or initiate studies to establish, the value to schools in *(a)* ILEA and *(b)* other local education authorities, of the professional, administrative and other goods or services not currently covered by current capitation allowances.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend has no plans to do so. Current capitation allowances commonly account for only a small proportion of school budgets and there would be little point in collecting information in the form proposed. As from September 1987 local education authorities have to provide governing bodies with an annual statement of all expenditure incurred at their schools, and we propose to extend the requirement to include information about the cost of central educational services.

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what consultations he had with the bodies currently responsible for determining the syllabuses of the main school examinations, prior to deciding the terms of paragraph 33 of his consultative paper on the national curriculum proposing transfer of these responsibilities to himself.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Government's consultation document on the national curriculum proposes that approval of the syllabuses prepared by the school examination bodies, which is currently undertaken on a non-statutory basis by the Secondary Examinations Council, should be put onto a statutory footing. The examination bodies have been invited to respond to this proposal and we shall take their comments into account, along with others we have received.

Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will list *(a)* the members of the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, *(b)* the criteria for selection of members, *(c)* the relevant qualifications of present members, *(d)* the number of Trades Union Congress-nominated places and *(e)* how many Trades Union Congress-nominated places are taken up by women.

Mrs. Rumbold: The membership of the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education is as follows:

Professor William Taylor (Chairman)
Vice Chancellor, University of Hull

Professor Anthony Becher
Professor of Education, University of Sussex

Mr. Andrew Collier
Chief Education Officer, Lancashire County Council

Dr. Marion Giles-Jones
Lecturer in Modern Languages, Department of Education, University of Wales

Dr. Mary Hallaway
Principal, Trinity and All Saints College, Leeds

Mr. Gordon McIntyre
Northern Ireland Regional Director, Open University

Mr. Renford Bambrough
Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge

Mr. Angus Clark
Board Director of Personnel, J. Sainsbury plc

Mr. Michael Dixon
Education Correspondent, Financial Times

Mr. Peter Griffin
Adviser, South Glamorgan, Local Education Authority

Mr. Alistair Lawton
Deputy Leader, Kent County Council

Dr. Bernice Martin
Reader in Sociology, Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, University of London

Dr. Derek Mortimer
Principal, Suffolk College of Higher and Further Education

Mr. Michael Pipes
Headmaster, City of Portsmouth Boys' School

Dr. David Shadbolt
Principal, Worcester College of Higher Education

Dr. David Winkley
Head, Grove Junior School, Handsworth

Councillor Patrick Mullany
Chairman, Doncaster Education Committee

Mr. Peter Scott
Principal Inspector, Schools, Lincolnshire

Mr. Peter Ward
Personnel Director (UK), Hewlett Packard

Mr. William Wright
Chief Education Officer, Wakefield

Appointments to the council are made by the Secretaries of State for Education and Science, and for Wales on a personal basis. The criteria for selection of members were set out in Department of Education and Science circular 3/84, Welsh Office circular 21/84:

"The membership of the Council will be drawn mainly from practising school teachers, teacher trainers and elected members of local education authorities, with the aim of giving the Secretaries of State the benefit of the advice of experienced professionals with a broad knowledge of the best practice in teacher education. It will also be desirable to facilitate links through the membership with the other main bodies concerned with the location, scale and quality of teacher education."

The council at present consists of five staff of teacher training institutions; four other higher education members; three teachers; six members or officers of local education authorities and three other members. One teacher member is also a councillor. Two LEA members and one teacher trainer member were originally appointed while serving teachers. There are no Trades Union Congress-nominated places on the council.

Lecturers

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has on average pay levels of higher and further education lecturers, and higher education lecturers, respectively, in each or all of the following: *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* Great Britain, *(c)* universities in the United Kingdom, *(d)* polytechnics in England and Wales and *(e)* all non-university higher education in Great Britain; and what equivalent information he has, converted to £ sterling, in relation to (i) France, (ii) Spain, (iii) Italy, (iv) West Germany and (v) the United States of America.

Mrs. Rumbold [*pursuant to her reply* 24 July 1987, c. *496*]: The available information is as follows:

Average pay levels £ at April 1987[1]	*England and Wales*	*Great Britain*	*United Kingdom*
Further and higher education lecturers	15,380	15,388	—
Maintained[2] sector further education lecturers	14,736	14,693	—
University Lecturers	17,611	17,644	17,658
Polytechnic lecturers	16,063	—	—

Notes

[1] The latest available data on actual average pay is 31 December 1984 for university lecturers and 31 March 1985 for maintained sector further and higher education lecturers. These figures have been increased by the pay settlements since these dates. This means that the maintained sector further education lecturers pay levels are as at 1 April 1986—no further settlement has been agreed since that date. The higher education lecturers pay levels are as at March 1987.

[2] This includes lecturers in both non-advanced and advanced further education. Separate data are not available.

At present the Department has no equivalent information on salary levels in other European countries, or in the USA, and is awaiting the results of a report which the EEC is funding at Leiden university in the Netherlands. The purpose of this study was to produce a comparative analysis of teachers' pay and conditions of service—at all levels, including higher education—in EEC member countries. I shall write to the hon. Member when the results of that study are available.

DEFENCE

Plutonium and Uranium

Mr. Morley asked the Secretary of State for Defence what studies have been undertaken in his Department concerning the peaceful uses to which plutonium and enriched unranium from nuclear warheads can be put in the event of successful multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: No substantive studies have been undertaken. Current disarmament proposals do not involve United Kingdom-owned nuclear weapons.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the estimated expenditure of his Department in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

Mr. Sainsbury: It is estimated that the Ministry of Defence will spend approximately £15·2 million on management and computer consultancies during the current financial year.

AIDS

Sir Russell Johnston asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the armed forces who have trained in East Africa have now contracted AIDS.

Mr. Freeman: It is not my Department's policy to disclose information on individual medical cases.

Sir Russell Johnston asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether, in view of the serious risk of AIDS infection, he will reconsider the use of training facilities in East Africa; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: AIDS is a worldwide problem. I see no need to reconsider the use of training facilities in East Africa, which are of great value. I am satisfied that the arrangements for briefing service units proceeding abroad, which cover AIDS as well as other health hazards, are adequate.

Master James Gibbs

Miss Nicholson asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he is now in a position to make a further statement about the accident to Master James Gibbs on Okehampton range on 22 April.

Mr. Freeman: Following the Army's inquiry into the incident which occurred on Okehampton range on 22 April, I am now able to add to the answer I gave the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) on 1 May, at columns 299-300.

James Gibbs was injured by an explosion when he and five other boys aged 18 or under, supervised by a local resident, were walking on the Okehampton ranges.

On the basis of statements received and the evidence examined by an explosive ordnance expert it seems most likely that a blind round (that is ammunition which failed to function correctly after ignition) detonated when James Gibbs struck it with another piece of metal. I regret that at some time an individual conducting a practice must have contravened the regulations which require all blinds

to be recorded and destroyed. It cannot be established precisely how long ago the round which caused James Gibbs injuries was fired.

The Okehampton range byelaws prohibit the taking of any projectile or other metal found within the danger area. Prominent notices advise visitors not to touch any metal objects. James Gibbs and his party had to pass one of these notices to gain access to the range. It seems that the adult in charge of the party was aware that the children were collecting metal from the range but made no attempt to stop them. James Gibbs himself was aged nearly 13 at the time of the accident and although he could not be expected to identify objects on the range he should have exercised caution and understood the dangers of his actions. This unfortunate incident, therefore, serves to underline the importance of observing range byelaws, warning flags and notices which are intended for public protection.

In order to do all we can to prevent this from happening again, the range on which the accident occurred was temporarily closed and fully searched for blinds; it has now been reopened. In addition, warning notices on the perimeter of Dartmoor ranges will be reviewed to ensure that there are enough of them. The wording of all notices will be changed so that a more forceful message is conveyed.

Falklands Campaign

Sir Marcus Fox asked the Secretary of State for Defence when the Government intend to respond to the Defence Committee's fourth report from the last Session on implementing the lessons of the Falklands campaign, HC 345-1, Session 1986/87.

Mr. Younger: The Government's response is being published today as Cm. 228.

EMPLOYMENT

School Leavers

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Employment what are the number of registered unemployed school leavers as of August and those on special schemes; and what were the relevant figures for 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. The table shows, for Great Britain, the numbers of unemployed claimants and non claimants aged under 18 years who have not entered employment since completing full-time education, together with all those aged under 18 on the youth opportunities programme and the youth training scheme. The figures are for August of each year from 1983.

August	*Unemployed claimants*	*Non claimants*	*YOP*[1]	*YTS*[1]
1983	108,990	206,058	100,000	107,400
1984	87,411	156,036	—	277,500
1985	98,132	123,336	—	247,000
1986	90,660	109,037	—	[2]275,100
1987	54,570	112,146	—	[2]398,700

[1] Figures rounded to nearest hundred. YTS is a training scheme, and not a special measure.

[2] These are the latest available figures and are subject to revision.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the total employed labour force in each quarter since January 1970; what has been the total working population in each quarter over the same period; what has the former been as a percentage of the latter throughout this period; and what has been the size of the change in both the employed labour force and the total working population each quarter since 1970.

Mr. Fowler: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Birth Certificates

Mrs. Ann Winterton asked the Attorney-General how the implementation of the Family Law Reform Act will affect the practice of recording the marital status of parents on the birth certificate.

The Attorney-General: The births register does not record the marital status of a child's parents. Implementation of the Family Law Reform Act 1987 will not alter this position.

"Spycatcher"

Mr. Parry asked the Attorney-General what is his latest estimate of the cost to public funds of the court actions designed to prevent publication of Mr. Peter Wright's book, "Spycatcher", and the various related actions, civil and criminal.

The Solicitor-General: The total amount of costs expended to date, including costs in proceedings against certain newspapers and others for criminal contempt of court, is about £314,500.

Mr. Winnick asked the Attorney-General if he will state the total cost to date involved by Her Majesty's Government in legal action in the United Kingdom and abroad in trying to stop the publication of the book "Spycatcher".

The Solicitor-General: The total amount of costs expended to date is about £314,000.

Marcus Garvey

Ms. Abbott asked the Attorney-General why some of the papers relating to Marcus Garvey have been withheld from inspection in the Public Record Office; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: Records may be retained by Departments under section 3(4) of the Public Records Act 1958, or may be closed under sections 5(1) and 5(2) of the Act, for longer than the statutory 30-year period. It is not possible to say which provision applies in this instance because it has not been possible to identify the papers from the information given.

Crown Prosecution Service

Ms. Gordon asked the Attorney-General when the report of the review of the Crown Prosecution Service will be made, and by what means it will be published.

The Solicitor-General: The annual report of the Director of Public Prosecutions on the Crown Prosecution

Service for the year 1986-87 was published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office on 13 August 1987. Copies of the report were placed in the Libraries of both Houses on the same date.

WALES

Anglesey Sea Zoo

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Wales what assistance was given by the Wales Tourist Board to the Anglesey sea zoo; who put up the rest of the money; why the assistance was in the form of a grant; and whether he will make provision for the repayment of grants in the case of successful projects on an equitable basis.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The Wales Tourist Board has given grant assistance of £22,350. In offering assistance the board must satisfy itself that a project is fully funded, but information on the detail of the package is treated as commercial in confidence. The board provides, in all cases, the minimum assistance it judges necessary if a project is to proceed, and in the form of grant or loan as appropriate to the individual project. Provision now exists for the Wales Tourist Board to offer grants that would be repayable if project returns exceed expectations.

Capitation Allowances

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the increase in capitation allowances by each local education authority in Wales, both primary and secondary, in each of the years 1980-81 to the current year.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: This information is not collected centrally.

Teachers

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list for each local education authority, in each of the years 1979-80 to the current year *(a)* the numbers of (i) primary and (ii) secondary school teachers on temporary contract, *(b)* the numbers of secondary teachers redeployed to primary schools, *(c)* the numbers of permanent staff taking early retirement and *(d)* the numbers of part-time teachers.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Figures on the numbers of teachers on temporary contract and secondary school teachers redeployed are not available. Data on full-time staff moving from secondary to primary schools are, however, given in table A. Table B shows the numbers of staff from maintained schools and colleges of higher and further education taking premature retirement. The numbers of part-time qualified teachers in maintained schools are shown in table C.

Table A

Full time staff movements from secondary schools to primary schools (years ending March)

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85
Clwyd	5	25	8	10	24	14
Dyfed	12	10	14	4	8	13
Gwent	5	4	9	19	2	14
Gwynedd	6	3	2	—	3	3
Mid Glamorgan	16	15	28	15	19	22
Powys	1	2	1	4	2	—
South Glamorgan	4	5	3	1	2	3
West Glamorgan	10	11	7	6	13	7

Table B

Staff from maintained schools and colleges of further and higher education taking premature retirement (years ending March)

	1980-81 and 1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86
Clwyd	197	103	107	98	114
Dyfed	180	125	101	111	148
Gwent	233	109	109	163	161
Gwynedd	86	105	57	62	59
Mid Glamorgan	158	84	85	179	84
Powys	42	25	21	20	24
South Glamorgan	164	109	89	104	75
West Glamorgan	253	130	65	125	97

[1] Separate figures are not available.

Table C

Part-time Qualified Teachers in service at Maintained Nursery, Primary and Secondary Schools (as at January each year)

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87
Clwyd	205	249	220	251	251	266	321	331
Dyfed	36	31	38	48	43	58	82	92
Gwent	52	42	33	30	48	53	63	69
Gwynedd	44	44	47	54	46	57	75	80
Mid Glamorgan	70	65	63	73	81	95	82	111
Powys	48	44	34	35	37	43	41	67
South Glamorgan	129	150	157	196	184	169	214	199
West Glamorgan	32	41	68	105	99	95	110	184

Wrexham-Chester Line

Dr. Marek asked the Secretary of State for Wales why the maps of railways in Wales in "Welsh Transport Statistics" No. 3 1987, No. 2 1986 and No. 1 1985 omit the line from Wrexham to Chester; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: I regret that one of the hon. Gentleman's local railway lines was omitted from the map in "Welsh Transport Statistics".

This will be corrected in the next issue.

Mixed Ability Classes

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many mixed ability classes of more than 30 pupils exist *(a)* in primary schools in Wales, and *(b)* in secondary schools in Wales.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Information in the form requested is not available. However, the number of registered ordinary classes, excluding nursery, special or remedial classes, in excess of 30 pupils totalled 1,552 in primary schools and 1,564 in years 1 to 5 in secondary schools, at September 1986.

Lambs and Sheep (Sale Restrictions)

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many lambs and sheep are under restriction for sale in Wales as a result of nuclear accidents in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Peter Walker: None.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Aid Statistics

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish as a table in the *Official Report* contributions made by the United Kingdom to the United Nations Children's Fund for each year since 1975 in £ sterling, in constant 1986 prices, and as an index showing 1980 as 100.

Mr. Chris Patten: The information is as follows:

Year	*Contributions at current prices (£ million)*			*1986 prices (£ million)*		*1986 prices index*	
	General Fund	*Special Appeals*	*Total*	*General Fund*	*Total*	*General Fund*	*Total*
1975	2·000	1·545	3·545	5·8	10·2	93	142
1976	2·300	—	2·300	5·8	5·8	93	80
1977	3·300	0·020	3·320	7·3	7·3	117	102
1978	4·500	2·032	6·532	8·9	12·9	144	180
1979	[1]5·800	1·582	7·382	10·0	12·8	162	177
1980	4·300	0·691	4·991	6·2	7·2	100	100
1981	5·900	1·456	7·356	7·6	9·5	123	132
1982	5·900	0·083	5·983	7·1	7·2	114	100
1983	6·000	0·069	6·069	6·9	6·9	111	96
1984	6·000	0·025	6·025	6·6	6·6	106	92
1985	6·300	2·100	8·400	6·5	8·7	105	121
1986	6·500	[2]1·808	8·308	6·5	8·3	105	116
1987	[3]7·000	[3]5·000	[3]12·000	[4]6·7	[4]11·5	[4]108	[4]160

[1] Special increase to mark International Year of the Child.
[2] Revised from previously published figure.
[3] Pledged.
[4] Estimates.

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish as a table in the *Official Report* contributions made annually since 1979 to the United Nations Children's Fund by each member country, in constant 1986 prices, showing the contribution per capita of each country as an index showing the United Kingdom as 100.

Mr. Chris Patten: The information, for member states of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's development assistance committee, is shown in the following tables. Details of all contributions since 1977 can be found in the United Nations Children's Fund document "Contributions from Governments and other Sources to General Resources and for specific purposes in 1986", which has been deposited in the Library of the House.

(a) Index of contributions per capita to general fund at constant prices

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Australia	58	91	84	116	126	67	70	65
Austria	40	65	68	78	73	76	88	84
Belgium	36	61	51	47	67	73	87	85
Canada	146	236	195	220	231	283	225	243
Denmark	453	751	630	710	737	812	800	878
Finland	127	247	276	320	545	941	881	1,367
France	17	30	20	22	56	61	53	53
Germany	36	65	49	54	55	70	63	70
Ireland	78	90	79	60	70	102	82	89
Italy	5	31	60	228	209	198	246	222

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Japan	23	41	38	58	71	88	98	75
Netherlands	291	344	343	375	373	371	360	461
New Zealand	95	134	95	92	85	95	78	90
Norway	1,348	2,024	1,607	2,010	2,450	2,500	2,621	3,099
Sweden	1,284	2,038	1,564	1,624	1,721	1,877	2,025	2,190
Switzerland	281	470	374	409	437	496	635	662
United Kingdom	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
United States	74	125	98	111	111	137	133	126
DAC Total	85	137	116	145	155	174	179	182

(b) Index of total contributions[1] per capita at constant prices

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Australia	64	129	76	276	156	122	73	78
Austria	33	119	54	115	165	75	87	81
Belgium	39	53	41	59	66	73	66	82
Canada	136	325	162	249	237	361	228	368
Denmark	430	683	529	799	728	852	627	877
Finland	117	218	220	366	539	1,124	801	1,414
France	13	36	16	21	55	64	40	51
Germany	45	126	43	55	54	70	47	71
Ireland	89	88	72	59	69	101	62	97
Italy	6	27	47	254	206	210	202	219
Japan	20	78	48	64	70	88	99	76
Netherlands	326	392	326	408	377	441	285	458
New Zealand	96	161	84	91	84	96	117	178
Norway	1,352	1,809	1,465	2,142	2,472	2,712	1,994	3,029
Sweden	1,063	1,826	1,257	1,729	1,716	1,935	1,574	2,232
Switzerland	592	488	320	429	432	509	489	650
United Kingdom	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
United States	79	135	92	144	109	140	118	130
DAC Total	90	154	105	168	156	186	153	189

[1] These include contributions to both the general fund and special appeals.

Mr. Terence Donegan

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he proposes to take regarding the pension and other rights of Mr. Terence Donegan, the former Attorney-General of the Turks and Caicos Islands, following his deportation from the islands.

Mr. Chris Patten: Mr. Terence Donegan was employed by the Government of the Turks and Caicos Islands on non-pensionable terms. He has no pension or other outstanding financial entitlements due from Her Majesty's Government as a result of this service.

RMS St. Helena

Dr. Marek asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he is now in a position to accept a tender for the replacement of the RMS St. Helena; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: Three bids have been shortlisted and are under consideration. An announcement about the award of the contract will be made as soon as possible.

ENERGY

Electricity Supply Industry

Mr. Lofthouse asked the Secretary of State for Energy what specific safety regulations he intends to include in the proposed legislation to privatise the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The electricity supply industry has an excellent safety record and one of our objectives is to ensure that this record is maintained when the industry is transferred to the private sector. The existing electricity supply regulations which cover public safety are currently being reviewed and updated and will form a sound basis for achieving that objective.

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Energy what plans he has for the future management and continued flexibility of the national grid, subsequent to his planned privatisation of electricity generation.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Government intend to preserve the existing benefits of the national grid and its flexibility of operation, while ensuring that competing generators have fair and equal access to the transmission system, on terms that are not subject to monopoly abuse.

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he expects his plans for privatisation of electricity generation to include private ownership of individual, or groups of nuclear power stations; and what plans he has for the future ownership and operation of British Nuclear Fuels plc.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Government intend to bring forward proposals for the privatisation of all the electricity supply industry in due course. There are no plans at present to sell shares in British Nuclear Fuels plc.

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Energy what study he has made and what sources of information he will publish, concerning the relative performance of the

Central Electricity Generating Board since 1957 and that which he expects from its division into competitive components following privatisation.

Mr. Michael Spicer: No decision has yet been taken about the future structure of the electricity industry. The CEGB has published annual reports and accounts, giving details of its performance, since it was established in 1957.

British Coal Property

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the progress of the negotiations between British Coal and the Consortium of Housing Associations led by CIPFA services, over the sale of British Coal houses in Nottinghamshire; and what information he has as to whether British Coal is prepared to accept an offer made by the Consortium which does not meet the market value put on the properties by British Coal.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I understand that these negotiations are still in progress. I am asking the chairman of British Coal to write to the hon. Member.

Plutonium

Mr. Flynn asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) whether he has any information subsequent to the statement by the then Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, on 2 April 1964, concerning the specific use to which the electricity board Magnox plutonium consigned to the United States has been put since this date; and whether there are any plans for future export of electricity board plutonium to the United States of America;

(2) whether all consignments of plutonium arising from British civil electricity board Magnox reactors and exported to the United States of America have been covered by bilateral peaceful end use restriction nuclear safeguards or International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards;

(3) whether all exports of plutonium arising from British Nuclear Fuels Limited, United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, Central Electricity Generating Board or South of Scotland Electricity Board reactors exported to the United States since May 1979 have been covered by peaceful end use safeguards.

Mr. Michael Spicer [*pursuant to his reply*, 24 July 1987, c. *516-17*]: I refer the hon. Member to the replies given by my hon. Friend the Member for Eddisbury (Mr. Goodlad) on 19 May 1986, at column 31, and by my right hon. Friend the Member for Worcester (Mr. Walker) on 2 July 1984, at column 36.

There are no current plans to export electricity board plutonium to the USA.

Mr. Mullin asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will publish all evidence or papers submitted by his Department to the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer [*pursuant to his reply*, 24 July 1987, c. *520*]: The Department has submitted no written evidence or papers to RWMAC in the last five years.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if he will publish a weekly input/output table from 1 January of spent Magnox fuel arising from civil Magnox reactors, together with the arisings of resulting depleted uranium and plutonium stocks for the throughput at the Windscale B205 reprocessing plant at British Nuclear Fuels plc, Sellafield;

(2) why he will not publish input/output details of spent Magnox reactor fuel and depleted uranium/plutonium stocks at Sellafield.

Mr. Michael Spicer [*pursuant to his reply*, 24 July 1987, c. *520*]: I refer the hon Member to the answer given on 24 July 1987 to the hon Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas) at columns 515-16. It would not be in the national interest to give this information on a more frequent basis.

Coal Industry

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many manshifts were worked by persons on British Coal Corporation colliery books in 1986-87.

Mr. Michael Spicer [*Pursuant to his reply*, 24 July 1987, c. *518*]: The total number of deep-mined revenue manshifts worked during 1986-87 was 26,407,000.

TRANSPORT

Orbital Rail Services

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport if, consequent to the traffic flows current on the M25 motorway, he will investigate the possibility of developing new orbital rail services in or adjacent to the Greater London area on existing or new lengths of track.

Mr. David Mitchell: It is for British Rail and London Regional Transport to assess potential demand for rail services, and to bring forward proposals.

London Air Traffic Control Centre

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what assessment he has made of the security of the London air traffic control centre at West Drayton;

(2) how many trained *(a)* engineers and *(b)* other professional staff have left the London air traffic control centre in each of the past five years;

(3) if he will make a statement on the Civil Aviation Authority's plans for the development of the new air traffic control facility at West Drayton;

(4) what reports he has received from the Civil Aviation Authority concerning *(a)* loss of radar pictures, *(b)* radio interference and *(c)* telephone failure at the London air traffic control centre; if he has received any proposals from the Civil Aviation Authority for new equipment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Responsibility for the operation and management of the London air traffic control centre rests with the National Air Traffic Services, which is controlled jointly by the Civil Aviation Authority and the Ministry of Defence. Security and staffing are not matters for which my right hon Friend is responsible.

The authority has been implementing a modernisation and re-equipment programme at the centre for some years and this will continue. Proposals for further re-equipment, new systems and for a new centre for which Government approval is required, will be submitted to my right hon Friend by the authority as and when the plans for them are sufficiently advanced.

Roads (Contractors)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will review the requirements he makes of contractors for road reconstruction or improvements in respect of minimum flows of traffic that can be accommodated at peak periods.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Our policy is to ensure that the maximum volume of traffic consistent with safety and operational constraints can pass through the site of reconstruction or improvement works. The traffic management arrangements necessary to secure this are agreed in consultation with the police and local highway authorities. Any special requirements, such as minimum number of lanes to be kept open during specified periods of the year, are written into contract documents. We keep arrangements under review.

Hovercraft

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received concerning the use of his discretion in respect of the powers of exemption contained in paragraph 32 of the Hovercraft Order 1972.

Mr. David Mitchell: Representations have been received for exemption using the powers in paragraph 32 of the Hovercraft Order 1972 by and on behalf of Commander Peter Corson, designer of the AIRMARAN, a prototype hovercraft.

Railways (Safety)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will request the Inspector General of Railways to make studies of *(a)* all safety and operational aspects of the first two months of operation of the Docklands light railway and *(b)* the introduction of one-person operation on the Piccadilly line of the London underground; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: The arrangements for one person operation on the Piccadilly line were examined and met the criteria jointly agreed between London Underground Limited and the Railway Inspectorate. The Chief Inspecting Officer of Railways receives reports of notifiable accidents on any railway, including the Docklands light railway, and investigates them as necessary, but the responsibility for the safe running and operation of all railways rests entirely with their managements. However, their safety of operation is kept under review and the Chief Inspecting Officer's latest annual report, for 1986, on the safety record of the railways in Great Britain is being published tomorrow. There is therefore no need for the special studies requested by the hon. Member.

Bus Services (Deregulation)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport what timetable he expects to follow concerning deregulation of bus services in the area served by London Regional Transport; and if he will state the evidence on which he bases his decision.

Mr. David Mitchell: As I told the annual conference of the Bus and Coach Council on 13 October, I expect to see bus users in London in the early 1990s enjoying the same benefits of deregulation as those outside. I have not finished considering the timetable.

British Rail

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will state the routes and services of the British Railways Board whose future has been the subject of recent consultation; if he will state for each the estimated savings calculated to accrue from closure of the route or withdrawal of the service, together with the basis of the calculations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: The objectives which the Government set the British Railways Board last October require it to review those cases where attractive bus services could meet the needs of travellers as conveniently and often at markedly less cost than the present rail services before investing in new rolling stock for them. We have yet to discuss with the board how it is following up that requirement.

Dr. Marek asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will direct the British Railways Board to adopt customer service standards that will include halving the present charge for left luggage lockers and a maximum wait of 10 minutes for the purchase of tickets or the deposit or withdrawal of left luggage.

Mr. David Mitchell: One of the quality of service targets which my right hon. Friend agreed for the British Railways Board last June was that passengers should have to queue at ticket offices for no longer than three minutes off peak and five minutes during peak periods. Arrangements for left-luggage facilities are entirely a matter for the board.

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will discuss with the chairman of British Rail the deteriorating state of the local trains used on the service from West Drayton to Paddington and the need for their replacement.

Mr. David Mitchell: I understand that British Rail will shortly submit a case for replacing the rolling stock on this service. I shall consider its case as quickly as practicable when I receive it.

East London River Crossing

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport what estimates are available to him concerning the cost of the proposed east London river crossing for each of the following specifications: *(a)* four-lane suspension bridge, *(b)* six-lane suspension bridge, *(c)* dual tunnels of two lanes each and *(d)* dual tunnels of three lanes each; and if he will make a statement concerning the respective merits of bridge and tunnels at this site.

Mr. Channon: The estimates as presented to the public inquiry, updated to June 1987 prices, are:

Cable stayed bridge, dual two-lane with wide hard margins (which could be marked out as three lanes)—£69·75 million including preparation and supervision.

Dual two-lane tunnel—£85·4 million including preparation and supervision. No estimates have been made of the cost of a full dual three-lane bridge or dual three-lane tunnel.

Until we have received the inspector's report, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the

Environment and I have considered the recommendations, it would not be proper for me to comment on the respective merits of a bridge or tunnel at this site.

Night Flying (Heathrow)

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is his policy with regard to the continuation of existing restrictions on night flying at London, Heathrow airport.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Night flights at Heathrow airport will continue to be restricted. We expect to publish a consultation document containing our proposals for future night restrictions policy for Heathrow early next month.

Gatwick Airport (Unscheduled Diversions)

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will bring forward proposals to avoid unscheduled diversions from Gatwick airport to Stansted or Luton.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No. Decisions to divert on operational grounds are a matter for aircraft commanders and airline operators.

Victoria Coach Station

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement concerning the future location and management of the main London coach station, currently at Victoria.

Mr. David Mitchell: In September 1985 London Regional Transport, at the then Secretary of State's request, commissioned consultants to examine current and future terminal requirements for express coach services in London. The consultant's report, which is available in the Library, recommended that a major new terminal should be developed at Paddington. I announced on 17 November last year that I was not persuaded by the consultants' report that a single hub terminal was necessarily the right solution, and that the arguments should be properly aired in public before a decision was taken. LRT is now working on its proposals for a new coach terminal at Paddington, and I expect these proposals to be considered at a wide-ranging public inquiry next year.

I regard it as important that the public inquiry should be able to consider all the various strategies for coach stations in London, including the possibility that the evidence presented to the inquiry will suggest there is a continuing long-term role for Victoria coach station. I have therefore concluded that the existing coach station should remain in the public sector for the time being. In order that it can continue to operate if necessary unaffected by the eventual dissolution of the National Bus Company, I have decided that this can be best achieved by transferring its ownership to London Regional Transport. LRT and NBC are now discussing the most appropriate means of achieving this objective.

Motorways (Roadworks)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish a weekly map or diagram showing the locations and extent of scheduled roadworks and diversions on all motorways.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: There are seldom planned diversions. The present arrangements for informing road users of roadworks include fortnightly announcements in the national press and continuous Teletext and Oracle information with diagrams. We are also conducting an experimental teletext service at four motorway service areas on the M1 using specially designed dedicated pages.

A595 (Egremont Bypass)

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will arrange for work on the A595 Egremont bypass to commence in the next financial year.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We shall build the new road as soon as possible.

Statutory orders for the line of the new road and alterations to side roads were published on 12 October. A compulsory purchase order will be advertised early next year. Progress will depend on the strength of objection to these orders and the necessity for a public inquiry.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Disabled People

Rev. Martin Smyth asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations have been received from the Northern Ireland Council on Disability and other organisations and individuals on improving the situation of disabled people in employment; what has been the response of his Department; and whether he will meet representatives of the Northern Ireland Council on Disability.

Mr. Viggers: The Department of Economic Development regularly meets the Northern Ireland Council on Disability and other organisations to discuss improvements in the situation of disabled people in employment. Recently the council responded to the Consultative Paper "Equality of Opportunity in Employment in Northern Ireland" and arrangements are being made to meet with the council to discuss its response. As my right hon. Friend told the House on 15 July 1987, at cols. 490-91, the promotion of equality of opportunity in relation to disability will continue to be addressed in Northern Ireland in the same way as in the rest of the United Kingdom.

Rev. Martin Smyth asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has as to the number of disabled peple employed by the largest private sector employer in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Viggers: The largest private sector employer in Northern Ireland employs 38 registered disabled people.

London Refurbishing Company Ltd.

Mr. McGrady asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement regarding the breakdown of negotiations between the Industrial Development Board for Northern Ireland and the London Refurbishing Company Ltd.; and what action he intends to take to retrieve this loss of employment opportunity in the Greater Belfast area.

Mr. Viggers: It is not the policy nor the usual practice of the Industrial Development Board to comment on

negotiations carried out in confidence with companies, whatever the outcome of those negotiations. However, in this case it is already a matter of public record that the Industrial Development Board has declined to provide selective assistance to the London Refurbishing Co. Ltd. to purchase the ex-DeLorean factory in Dunmurry and to establish a project involving the manufacture of furniture. It is also a matter of public record that several concerns, including the undischarged bankruptcy of the project's promoter and his convictions for a number of serious criminal offences, led the board to conclude that the project should not be offered selective assistance. The ex-DeLorean factory is now being offered for sale on the open market. The Industrial Development Board will continue its intensive efforts to promote new employment opportunities in the Greater Belfast area and indeed in all areas of Northern Ireland.

Clerical Officers

Mr. Maginnis asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many clerical officers (clerks) were, at 31 March, employed for duty on the wards at *(a)* Craigavon area hospital, *(b)* Daisy Hill hospital and *(c)* South Tyrone hospital;

(2) how many clerical officers (clerks) were, at 31 March, employed for duty in the accident and emergency department at *(a)* Craigavon area hospital, *(b)* Daisy Hill hospital and *(c)* South Tyrone hospital.

Mr. Needham: The information is as follows:

Clerks employed in accident and emergency departments and wards at 31 March 1987

Hospital	*Accident and emergency department*	*Wards*
Craigavon Area	8	14
Daisy Hill	1	13
South Tyrone	nil	nil

Cross-frontier Incursions

Mr. Maginnis asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many protests have been lodged by Her Majesty's Government with the Government of the Irish Republic since 15 November 1985 concerning cross-frontier incursions by the army of the Irish Republic or the Gardai; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: I understand how easy it is for members of the security forces operating near the border to make mistakes and accidentally stray outside their respective jurisdictions, as has happened in the case of the security forces of both countries. Since 15 November 1985 the Government have brought to the attention of the Government of the Republic of Ireland 16 occasions in which members of the Irish security forces have allegedly crossed the border into Northern Ireland. Of these, the Irish authorities have admitted two, 13 have been denied and one is under investigation.

Security Statistics

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the security statistics for the first half of 1987 are now available, together with details of persons charged with terrorist-type offences and convictions for scheduled offences for the year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: I regret that the statistics given to the hon. Member in my answer on 24 July at columns 631-36 were incomplete.

The statistics requested by the hon. Member are available, together with those since 1971, and are as follows:

STATISTICS ON SECURITY

Part I—Statistics of Terrorist Activity

Yearly totals for 1971-86

Six-monthly totals for: January-June 1987

Statistics for terrorist activity comprise the following:

(i) Number of shooting incidents
(ii) Number of explosions
(iii) Number of bombs and devices neutralised
(iv) Weight of explosives in bombs and devices neutralised
(v) Number of armed robberies and amount stolen
(vi) Number of malicious fires
(vii) Number of deaths and injuries of RUC-RUC'R', Army and civilians

Part II—Statistics of Security Forces' Activity

Yearly totals for 1971-86

Six-monthly totals for: January-June 1987

Statistics for security forces' activity comprise the following:

(i) Number of houses searched
(ii) Number of weapons, pounds of explosives and rounds of ammunition found
(iii) Number of people charged with terrorist type offences (murder, attempted murder, explosives offences, firearms offences, armed robbery and other offences relating to the security situation, eg: arson, membership of illegal organisation etc)

Part III — Statistics of Persons Convicted of Scheduled Offences

Six-monthly total for January-June 1987

Statistics on Security
Part I—Statistics of Terrorist Activity
Yearly Figures: 1971-1987

	1971	*1972*	*1973*	*1974*	*1975*	*1976*	*1977*	*1978*	*1979*
Shooting Incidents[a]	1,756	10,628	5,018	3,206	1,803	1,908	1,081	755	728
Explosions	1,022	1,382	978	685	399	766	366	455	422
Bombs Neutralised	493	471	542	428	236	426	169	178	142
Weight of explosives in lbs[1]									
Explosions	10,972	47,462	47,472	46,435	13,753	17,596	2,839	5,343	11,181
Neutralised	3,001	19,978	32,450	27,094	11,159	16,252	2,188	5,860·5	4,530

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Armed Robberies	437	1,931	1,215	1,231	1,201	813	591	442	434
Amount stolen	303,787	790,687	612,015	572,951	572,105	545,497	446,988	232,650	568,359
Malicious Fires[2] [3]	—	—	587	636	248	453	432	269	315
Deaths: Civilian	115	321	171	166	216	245	69	50	51
Army/UDR	48	129	66	35	20	29	29	21	48
RUC/RUC 'R'	11	17	13	15	11	23	14	10	14
Injuries: Civilian	1,838	3,813	1,812	1,680	2,044	2,162	1,027	548	557
Army/UDR	390	578	548	483	167	264	188	135	153
RUC/RUC 'R'	315	485	291	235	263	303	183	302	165

[1] Estimated weight only.
[2] Consolidated figures not available for earlier years.
[3] No figure for April-June 1981.
[4] Figures in ( ) refer to shots heard only and not included in the total.

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	January—June 1987
Shooting Incidents[4]	642	815	382	290	230	196	285	276
		(327)	(165)	(134)	(104)	(41)	(107)	(31)
Explosions	280	398	219	266	193	148	172	131
Bombs Neutralised	120	131	113	101	55	67	82	72
Weight of explosives in lbs[1]	9,059	9,261	11,199	6,923	8,545	11,711	11,309	3,777
Explosions Neutralised	6,405	9,168	7,300	7,503	6,114	7,715	9,463	3,493
Armed Robberies	412	587	580	622	627	459	724	436
Amount stolen	496,825	854,929	1,392,202	830,258	701,903	655,690	1,207,152	870,693
Malicious Fires[2] [3]	275	536	499	528	840	740	906	359
Deaths:								
Civilian	50	57	57	44	36	25	37	37
Army/UDR	16	23	28	15	19	6	12	8
RUC/RUC 'R'	9	21	12	18	9	23	12	11
Injuries:								
Civilian	530	878	328	280	513	468	773	324
Army/UDR	77	140	98	88	86	33	55	58
RUC/RUC 'R'	194	332	99	142	267	415	622	109

[1] Estimated weight only.
[2] Consolidated figures not available for earlier years.
[3] No figure for April—June 1981.
[4] Figures in ( ) refer to shots heard only and not included in the total.

Statistics on security
Part II—Statistics of security forces' activity
Yearly figures: 1971 to 1979

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Houses searched[1]	17,262	36,617	74,556	71,914	30,092	34,939	20,724	15,462	6,452
Finds									
Firearms	717	1,264	1,595	1,260	825	837	590	400	301
Ammunition (rounds)	157,944	183,410	187,399	147,202	73,604	70,306	52,091	43,512	46,280
Explosives	2,748	41,488	38,418	26,120	11,565	21,714	3,809	2,108	1,996
Persons charged with terrorist type offences[2]									
Murder		13	71	77	138	120	131	60	45
Attempted murder		16	85	76	88	121	135	79	39
Firearms offences		242	631	545	460	353	301	225	177
Explosives offences		86	236	161	100	215	146	79	40
Theft Act		111	186	239	314	188	203	151	159
Other		63	205	276	97	279	392	249	210
Total		531	1,414	1,374	1,197	1,276	1,308	843	670

[1] Includes occupied and unoccupied houses searched.
[2] These figures are not available in consolidated form for earlier years. 1972 figures cover 31 July to 31 December only.

Yearly figures 1980 to 1987

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	[2]1987
Houses searched[1]	4,106	4,104	4,045	1,497	1,282	812	1,273	724
Finds								
Firearms	203	409	317	200	197	238	215	158
Ammunition (rounds)	28,078	47,127	41,452	32,451	17,211	13,748	29,061	6,045

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	[2]1987
Explosives	1,810	7,536	5,066	3,762	8,534	7,373	5,386	6,087
Persons charged with terrorist type offences								
Murder	63	48	50	75	41	24	12	6
Attempted murder	59	72	96	60	68	52	28	6
Firearms offences	112	155	173	150	155	105	128	73
Explosives offences	39	39	41	48	21	37	31	11
Theft Act	128	158	130	119	94	65	70	47
Other	149	446	196	161	149	239	386	95
Total	550	918	686	613	528	522	655	238

[1] Includes occupied and unoccupied houses searched.
[2] January to June.

STATISTICS ON SECURITY (PART III)
January-June 1987
Notes on the tables

1. The offence classifications are based on those used by the Crown and Peace Office in its annual return.
2. The tables relate to persons convicted at the Belfast Crown court. This covers all scheduled offences tried on indictment.
3. Some jury trials are included in cases where the Attorney General certified out of the scheduled mode of trial, ie non-terrorist serious offences.
4. Where a person had been convicted of more than one offence only the most serious or that which received the longest sentence is recorded in the statistics.

Convictions for scheduled offences—January-June 1987

Offence	*Number convicted*	*Non-Custodial sentence*	*Young Offenders Centre Training Schools*	*Less than 5 years*	*5 years and less than 7 years*	*7 years and less than 10 years*	*10 years and less than 15 years*	*15 years and less than 20 years*	*20 years and over*	*Life*
Murder	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Attempted murder	6	0	0	0	0	1	4	1	0	0
Conspiracy to murder	12	1	1	1	1	1	5	2	0	0
Manslaughter	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm	3	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Causing grievous bodily harm	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assault occasioning grievous bodily harm	8	2	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Causing explosion	5	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0
Possessing explosives with intent	9	1	0	0	1	1	0	3	3	0
Other explosives offences	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Possessing a firearm with intent	53	20	7	9	9	3	2	2	1	0
Possessing a firearm	10	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carrying a firearm with intent	11	10	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Other major firearms offences	4	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Robbery	82	26	7	23	20	3	3	0	0	0
Membership of illegal organisations	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unlawful collection of information	3	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Contributing to resources of a proscribed organisation	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hijacking	36	29	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arson	52	40	3	5	3	0	1	0	0	0
Petrol bomb offences	43	36	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Criminal damage	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Intimidation	10	2	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Withholding information	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Possessing prohibited articles	7	4	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Common law riot	15	13	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	391	214	34	53	41	14	17	8	4	6

Note: Where a person has been convicted of more than one offence only the most serious or that which received the longest sentence is recorded in the statistics.

Insurance Claims (Legal Costs)

Mr. Beggs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will introduce legislation to require those pursuing, or proposing to pursue, insurance claims by legal action in Northern Ireland to contribute towards their legal costs in cases where out-of-court settlements are reached in their favour; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: There are no plans to interfere with the principle that where actions are settled out of court the terms of the settlement, including the question of costs, are a matter for agreement between the plaintiff and defendant to the action.

Terrorism

Mr. Maginnis asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) for how many of the 178 terrorist killings in

Fermanagh and South Tyrone between 9 February 1971 and 6 October 1986 anyone had been made amenable for murder by 27 October 1986; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if anyone has been made amenable since 27 October 1986 for each of the terrorist murders in Fermanagh and South Tyrone unsolved at that time; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: I shall reply shortly.

Mr. Magginis asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if anyone has been made amenable for the murder claimed to have been committed by the Irish e app Republican Army of Ivan Crawford in Fermanagh on 9 January;

(2) if anyone has been made amenable for the murder claimed to have been committed by the Irish Republican Army of George Shaw in South Tyrone on 26 January;

(3) if anyone has been made amenable for the murder claimed to have been committed by the Irish Republican Army of James Oldman in Fermanagh on 3 April;

(4) if anyone has been made amenable for the murder claimed to have been committed by the Irish Republican Army of Thomas Hewitt in Fermanagh on 19 July.

Mr. Stanley: There have been no charges brought nor convictions secured in the United Kingdom in relation to any of these murders, but one person has been charged in the Republic of Ireland in relation to the murder of Lance Corporal Thomas Hewitt on 19 July 1987.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Falkland Islands

16. **Mr. Frank Cook** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received from the Government of the Falkland Islands in the last three months.

Mr. Eggar: The Falkland Islands Government have made no representations over the past three months, although, of course, they have been in contact with us on a range of issues.

55. **Mr. Haynes** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he proposes to take on the United Nations General Assembly resolution on the Falklands.

Mr. Eggar: Last year's resolution, like previous resolutions since 1982, failed to take account of the Falkland Islanders' right to self-determination. In the event of a similar resolution being tabled this year, our position is unchanged. Sovereignty is not negotiable.

Spain

21. **Mr. Key** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about the United Kingdom's relations with Spain.

Mrs. Chalker: Following Spain's entry to the European Community in January 1986 and her decision later that year to remain in NATO, relations between the United Kingdom are closer than they have been for very many years. King Juan Carlos visited the United Kingdom last year and Her Majesty the Queen has accepted an invitation to go to Spain next year.

Saudi Arabia

22. **Mr. Quentin Davis** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make a statement about the United Kingdom's relations with the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Mellor: Our relations with Saudi Arabia are excellent. There have been a number of high-level visits this year. King Fahd paid a most welcome state visit to London in March and His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester paid a successful visit to Saudi Arabia this month. I hope to visit the kingdom later this year.

Middle East

23. **Mr. Andrew MacKay** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to visit the middle east.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. and learned Friend plans to visit Egypt from 29 October to 1 November and Jordan from 1 to 3 November.

31. **Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to meet his Israeli counterpart to discuss the implications for a possible settlement of the middle east conflict of the human rights position of the Palestinians on the west bank and the Gaza strip.

Mr. Mellor: The Arab-Israel dispute and the situation in the occupied territories were among the subjects my right hon. and learned Friend discussed with Mr. Peres in New York on 22 September. My right hon. and learned Friend does not know when he will next see him. But we shall continue to discuss these questions with the Israelis.

Government Communications Centre

25. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what reason it is proposed that staff working in the new Government communications centre in London should forfeit union membership; what financial and other inducements will be offered; if those who decline such inducements will incur disciplinary measures; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: As my right hon. Friend, the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker) told the House on 15 January 1987, at columns 262-63, it is not our intention to extend the measures introduced at the Government communications headquarters beyond those agencies whose primary functions are concerned with security and intelligence.

Chile

26. **Dr. Reid** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he has taken to monitor the situation in relation to exiles returning to Chile from the United Kingdom; and what has been the result.

Mr. Eggar: Her Majesty's embassy has approached the Chilean authorities, on humanitarian grounds, to make clear our concerns. Her Majesty's ambassador and his staff in Santiago have been instructed to maintain contact with former exiles and other Chileans who have returned

to Chile from the United Kingdom and to monitor their treatment. These arrangements have been welcomed by returning Chileans and by human rights organisations.

47 **Mr. Norman Hogg** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his European Economic Community counterparts about the current human rights situation in Chile.

Mr. Eggar: Human rights in Chile are the subject of regular and frequent review within the framework of European political co-operation. The Twelve last issued a statement on the subject on 9 October, the text of which has been deposited in the Library of the House.

Belize

28 **Mr. James Marshall** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Belize about the United Kingdom garrison there.

Mr. Eggar: We have regular discussions about the garrison with the Government of Belize. The situation is unchanged. The garrison will remain for an appropriate period.

Soviet Union

29 **Mr. Beith** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent meetings he has had with his Soviet counterpart; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Mellor: My right and learned Friend met Mr Shevardnadze in New York on 22 September. They discussed arms control, regional issues including the situation in the Gulf, and bilateral matters.

Contadora Peace Process

30 **Mr. Jessel** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the implications for the Contadora peace process of Soviet policy towards Nicaragua.

Mr. Eggar: The continuing supply of Soviet arms to Nicaragua is unhelpful to the peace process and is incompatible with the Contadora objective of reducing arms levels in the region—an objective which has been accepted by both the Soviet Union and Nicaragua.

KMS Ltd.

24. **Mr. Allan Roberts** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received about KMS Ltd. and its former contracts for the protection of British diplomats overseas.

Mr. Eggar: We have received a number of representations in the recent past including some from hon. Members, and Members of another place.

India

32. **Sir George Young** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to pay an official visit to India.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to visit India at present. Since his last visit to India in 1986, there have been regular opportunities for discussions with Indian Ministers, most recently at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Vancouver.

Argentina

33. **Mr. Heffer** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent communication he has had with the Government of Argentina regarding diplomatic relations beween the two countries.

Mr. Eggar: None.

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contacts have been made with the Argentine Government and what progress has been made towards an understanding on avoiding incidents in South Atlantic fishing waters; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Following my right hon. and learned Friend's statement to the House on 29 October 1986, we received some informal ideas from the Argentines, via the United States Government, which relate exclusively to the co-ordination of fisheries management in the interests of conservation and the avoidance of incidents. We have replied using the same channel. The exchange continues.

Gibraltar

34. **Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make a statement on his discussions with the Foreign Minister of Spain regarding issues relating to Gibraltar.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend meets the Spanish Foreign Minister at regular intervals, in the context of the Brussels agreement of 27 November 1984. The next meeting will take place on 30 November and 1 December.

40. **Mr. Steen** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make an official visit to Gibraltar.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to do so at present.

Nicaragua

35. **Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will seek to pay an official visit to Nicaragua.

59. **Mr. Boyes** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will seek to pay an official visit to Nicaragua.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to visit Nicaragua.

Kenya

36. **Mr. Couchman** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he intends to visit Kenya.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend has no current plans to visit Kenya.

Hungary

37. **Mr. Forman** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next expects to pay an official visit to Hungary.

Mr. Mellor: I visited Hungary in September and my right hon. and learned Friend did so in March. We hope that Mr. Varkonyi, the Hungarian Foreign Minister, will pay a return visit next year; and that visits by Ministers and senior officials from both countries will continue at regular intervals.

Arms Control

38. **Mr. Page** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the latest programme in arms control negotiations.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Prospects for a United States-Soviet agreement on intermediate nuclear force missiles are encouraging. A number of key issues, including verification, remain to be resolved

We are participating in talks in Vienna to agree the framework for negotiations on conventional stability covering the Atlantic to the Urals.

Negotiations on chemical weapons have made progress. But considerable complexities remain.

Honduras and Nicaragua

39. **Mr. Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what advice his Department issues to United Kingdom nationals wishing to travel to *(a)* Honduras and *(b)* Nicaragua.

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what advice Her Majesty's Government are currently giving to United Kingdom nationals intending to visit *(a)* Honduras and *(b)* Nicaragua.

Mr. Eggar: United Kingdom nationals intending to visit Nicaragua and Honduras are advised to avoid border areas and to register their presence with Her Majesty's embassy on arrival. They should also follow the advice of Her Majesty's embassy and of the local authorities about avoiding areas of particular danger.

Kuwaiti Tankers (Reflagging)

41. **Mr. Robertson** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about his consideration of the possibility of the British reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers in the Persian gulf.

Mr. Mellor: In present circumstances any developments in the Gulf are likely to have political implications and we have been carefully monitoring the registration of merchant shipping.

Under current British regulations the entering of a vessel on the United Kingdom register is a matter of meeting certain well-known criteria and does not require a decision by the Government. We have informed the Kuwaitis of the limitations to the operating area of the Armilla patrol and to the assistance which British flag vessels may expect from it.

INF Talks

42. **Mr. Soames** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress in the intermediate nuclear force weapons talks.

57. **Mr. Tim Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about progress towards concluding an intermediate nuclear force agreement.

Mr. Mellor: The eighth round of the United States-Soviet negotiations on intermediate nuclear missiles began on 23 April and is still in session. The negotiators have said they will continue their talks until they reach agreement. There are still some crucial issues to be resolved, including the question of verification and the phasing of reductions.

Arms Reductions

43. **Mr. Simon Coombs** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about talks on mutual and balanced force reductions.

Mr. Mellor: We continue to take a full and active part in the negotiations on mutual and balanced force reductions in Vienna. Progress has been disappointing owing to the unwillingness of the Warsaw pact to provide adequate data on force levels or to respond to Western proposals on verification. We shall continue to press the Warsaw pact to respond positively to the Western proposal of December 1985 in which we made a constructive attempt to break the long-standing deadlock by offering to accept reductions in United States and Soviet troops before agreement on force levels.

Latin America

44. **Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what official visits have been made by Ministers in his Department to Latin America in the past three months.

Mr. Eggar: My hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development visited Mexico and Belize between 19 and 26 September.

Single European Act

45. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the operation of the single European Act in European Economic Community decision making.

Mrs. Chalker: The Single European Act entered into force on 1 July. By extending the use of qualified majority voting it will make it easier to secure the adoption of measures needed to complete the single market in goods and services, a longstanding United Kingdom objective. Its main effect so far has been to enable a common position to be reached by the Council on standards for vehicle emissions, a measure supported by the United Kingdom, which was previously blocked by the unanimity requirement.

Persian Gulf

46. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about the current initiatives to prevent a further escalation of violence in the gulf.

Mr. Mellor: We played a leading role in the adoption of SCR 598 by the Security Council on 20 July. We have made it plain to Iran and Iraq that they have an obligation to accept this resolution, in particular, a ceasefire, and that recalcitrance will lay them open to enforcement measures. We support the efforts of the Secretary General to obtain implementation of SCR 598, and favour parallel work on an arms embargo, in case this should prove necessary.

Caribbean Dependent Territories

27. **Mr. Dunnachie** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of his review of the position of the Caribbean dependent territories.

Mr. Eggar: The review has just been completed and is currently being considered. We hope to make an announcement shortly.

South Africa

48. **Mr. David Martin** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what new initiatives he intends to take on South Africa.

62. **Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government propose to take any new intitiatives with regard to South Africa in the coming months.

Mrs. Chalker: In keeping with our goal of the total abolition of apartheid, we shall continue to promote dialogue between the parties leading to negotiations for fundamental change.

58. **Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations Her Majesty's Government have made to the South African Government about the situation in South Africa.

Mrs. Chalker: We have repeatedly made known to the South African Government our concern about aspects of the situation in South Africa. We have done so on several occasions recently, both in London and in Cape Town.

Afghanistan

49. **Mr. Ron Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about relations with Afghanistan.

52. **Mr. Sumberg** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the implications for East-West relations of the continuing Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

Mr. Eggar: The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan has caused tens of thousands of deaths and driven 5 million refugees to leave their country. We regard Soviet willingness to make the necessary decisions to end the occupation as an important test of their commitment to "new thinking" and better international relations.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs why the British chargé d'affaires in Kabul was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 12 July; what was said by the Afghanistan Government; what action was taken; and on how many occasions since the chargé d'affaires has been summoned.

Mr. Eggar: Diplomatic exchanges are normally confidential. However, *Pravda* and the *Kabul New Times* on 14 July published accounts of a note of 12 July from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kabul to the British chargé d'affaires, which he had declined to accept.

Terrorism

50. **Mr. Gale** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what new initiatives he intends to take with the United Kingdom's European Community partners against international terrorism.

Mr. Mellor: We are firmly committed to fight against international terrorism and are fully aware of the need for international co-operation to prevent and combat it. We shall, in co-operation with our partners, pursue any new initiatives which help strengthen and improve this co-operation while at the same time continuing to urge partners to fulfil commitments and undertakings already made. We shall continue to play an active part in relevant international organisations to secure and maintain a common, firm approach.

Arms Sales

51. **Mr. Barron** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received about the foreign policy implications of United Kingdom arms sales abroad.

Mr. Mellor: From time to time we receive representations on matters relating to British arms exports from right hon. and hon. Members and from the public; none, however, about the foreign policy implications of such sales.

Iraq-Iran War

53. **Mr. Patrick McNair-Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about the effects of the conflict between Iraq and Iran.

Mr. Mellor: We remain deeply concerned about the continuation of this appalling conflict, the associated danger to shipping in the Gulf and the destabilising effect it is having on the whole region. We are active within the United Nations and bilaterally to try to reduce the level of tension, and to obtain implementation of SCR 598 leading to a peaceful settlement.

Falklands Fishery Protection Service

54. **Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions his Department has had regarding the Falkland Islands Fishery Protection Service.

Mr. Eggar: This Department has regular discussions with the Falkland Islands Government over the fishery protection service. The service is working well; there have been no major incidents.

Hong Kong

17. **Mr. Yeo** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about the latest programme in implementing the transitional arrangements in Hong Kong.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Implementation of the Sino-British joint declaration on Hong Kong is proceeding well. Both sides are working closely together to implement its provisions fully and faithfully. The next meeting of the Sino-British joint liaison group will take place in Peking from 10 to 13 November.

Turks and Caicos Islands

56. **Mr. Allen McKay** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress towards the return of elected government in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Mr. Eggar: Useful talks were held in London from 1 to 3 September with political leaders and other representatives of the Turks and Caicos Islands. These reached broad agreement on modalities for a return to elected government which is now expected to be achieved in February-March 1988.

Refuseniks

60. **Mr. John Marshall** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the progress of applications for exit visas of those refuseniks whose names he raised with the Soviet Union Foreign Minister in April.

Mr. Mellor: Forty four of the 97 refuseniks whose cases my right hon. and learned Friend raised with Mr. Shevardnadze have now received exit visas.

South Korea

61. **Mr. Colvin** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about the United Kingdom's relations with the Republic of South Korea.

Mr. Eggar: Our relations with the Republic of Korea are good. In particular, we welcome the progress being made there towards a more representative system of government. We should also like to achieve further development in bilateral commercial relations and are pressing for greater liberalisation of trade and further protection for intellectual property.

Western Sahara

63. **Mr. Kilfedder** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will invite representatives of the Polisario Front to meet him in the autumn to discuss the future of the Western Sahara; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: No. We do not take sides in the Western Sahara dispute and fully support the efforts of the UN Secretary-General to bring about a peaceful solution.

Mr. Douglas Forsyth

64. **Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, in the light of the refusal of the Egyptian courts to recognise Mr. Douglas Forsyth's claim to possession of his villa in Cairo, sequestrated by the Egyptian Government following the Suez crisis in 1956, and the failure of Her Majesty's Government's efforts to protect his interests, Her Majesty's Government will now consider making an ex gratia payment to compensate him for his loss of possession and enjoyment of the villa; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: No. The question of an ex gratia payment has been considered in the past and was discussed when I met my hon. Friend the Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith) and Mr. Forsyth on 26 November 1986. The position remains that Her Majesty's Government do not accept that they have in any way failed to protect Mr. Forsyth's interests nor that there is a case for the payment of compensation.

Her Majesty's ambassador at Cairo and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have been very active on Mr. Forsyth's behalf in the past and will continue to afford him every assistance in the future. It is understood that the occupancy of the villa is still the subject of legal action before the Egyptian courts.

Aid Statistics

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the total value in constant prices of all contributions made by Her Majesty's Government to all United Nations agencies since 1979.

Mr. Eggar: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Klaus Barbie

Mr. Allason asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether, in the light of the recent conviction in the French courts of Klaus Barbie, he will reconsider his policy relating to the relevant files now retained by his Department and release them to the Public Record Office; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: No.

Rudolf Hess

Mr. Winnick asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the circumstances in which Rudolf Hess met his death; what inquiries were undertaken to establish what occurred during the time Hess was left on his own; and why it was decided that Hess's body should be disposed of differently from those of other Nazi war criminals who were never released from imprisonment or who were executed after the war.

Mrs. Chalker: The four powers responsible for Spandau prison carried out a thorough investigation into the circumstances of Rudolf Hess's death, including a full autopsy and inquiries by the special investigation branch of the Royal Military Police. As statements issued by the allied authorities in Berlin on 24 August and 17 September made clear, these investigations established beyond doubt that Rudolf Hess committed suicide by hanging himself with an electrical extension cord, and that the cause of death was asphyxiation.

There was no unified procedure after the war for the disposal of the remains of Nazi war criminals who were executed or died in custody. The decision that Hess's body should, as an act of humanity, be handed over to his family after his death was taken by the four powers some time after the war.

UNESCO

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if Her Majesty's Government will use the occasion of the election of a new director-general of UNESCO in November to rejoin that organisation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Our concern with the state of UNESCO has never been based on personalities. We made it clear when we withdrew from the organisation that we would require evidence of fundamental and far-reaching reforms before reconsidering our position. The appointment of a new director-general is no more than one element in the task of tackling the formidable problems that face the organisation. We shall continue to keep an open mind and monitor developments carefully.

Parking fines

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish up-to-date figures indicating the number of unpaid parking fines incurred by each diplomatic mission in the first six months of 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: The information requested by my hon. Friend is given in the table. The table also includes those international organisations which have incurred unpaid fines. The figures may be reduces by late payment.

The total for the first six months of 1987 indicates a 20 per cent. reduction over the same period of 1986. I have written personally to the heads of the 10 missions with the most unpaid fines during the period in question. They are France, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Egypt, Iraq, Quatar, United Arab Emirates, Soviet Union, Spain and Pakistan. These missions account for 38 per cent. of the total.

We welcome the further significant reduction in unpaid parking fines that has been achieved this year. We are looking for further reductions and hope for early results from the action I have taken with the top 10 offending missions.

Parking fixed penalty notices cancelled on the grounds of diplomatic immunity (metropolitan police district)

Diplomatic Mission	*January to June 1987*	*January to June 1986*
France	576	536
Saudi Arabia	542	522
Oman	436	160
Egypt	426	415
Iraq	401	400
Qatar	379	80
UAE	326	186
Soviet Union	271	356
Spain	271	262
Pakistan	251	221
China	245	426
Malaysia	201	420
Cote d'Ivoire	190	93
Italy	187	241
Morocco	186	236
Cameroon	184	313
Tunisia	177	105
Thailand	169	172
Iran	165	199
Sudan	165	418
Zimbabwe	156	68
Ghana	155	174
Jordan	155	254
Poland	150	249
Israel	134	99
Greece	132	135
Barbados	121	102
Portugal	119	148
India	104	139
Nigeria	103	627
Turkey	103	609
Kenya	99	0
Sierra Leone	99	58
Algeria	95	178
Brazil	94	68
Canada	94	79
German Democratic Republic	90	160
Korea	88	114
Japan	85	169
Peru	83	116
Brunei	79	76
Tanzania	79	42
Zaire	79	22
Federal Republic of Germany	74	74
Zambia	73	94
United States of America	62	42
Kuwait	61	104
Burma	59	52
Cyprus	55	48
Indonesia	55	124
Finland	52	106
Venezuela	52	154
Yugoslavia	51	41
Chile	50	60
Ethiopia	48	53
Gabon	47	57
Senegal	47	20
Uruguay	47	55
Ireland	46	131
Bangladesh	43	75
Liberia	42	14
Jamaica	41	36
Bulgaria	40	229
Hungary	38	66
Belgium	36	28
Uganda	36	144
Romania	35	70
Yemen AR	32	20
PDR Yemen	31	52
Lebanon	30	17
Mexico	30	100
Sweden	30	40
Philippines	29	77
Iceland	28	27
Norway	28	34
Paraguay	28	42
Fiji	23	10
Czechoslovakia	22	34
Somalia	21	42
Costa Rica	20	34
Guyana	17	17
Cuba	16	31
South Africa	16	8
Ecuador	15	28
Austria	13	15
Botswana	13	8
Colombia	13	11
Panama	13	10
Trinidad and Tobago	13	27
Mauritius	11	36
Togo	10	38
Afghanistan	6	3

Diplomatic Mission	*January to June 1987*	*January to June 1986*
Bahamas	6	3
Eastern Caribbean	6	11
Nepal	6	18
Sri Lanka	6	79
Antigua and Barbuda	5	0
Honduras	5	15
Nicaragua	5	12
Angola	4	—
Lesotho	4	33
Singapore	4	6
Switzerland	4	1
Bahrain	3	8
Bolivia	3	2
Malawi	3	5
Netherlands	3	5
Swaziland	3	11
Luxembourg	2	0
Seychelles	2	7
Vietnam	2	2
Dominica	1	1
Australia	0	0
Denmark	0	0
El Salvador	0	19
Gambia	0	76
Grenada	0	0
Guatemala	0	—
Malta	0	33
Mongolia	0	2
New Zealand	0	0
Papua New Guinea	0	4
Tonga	0	0
Syria	—	124
International Organisations		
Commonwealth Secretariat	65	69
WEU	6	4
IMO	5	5
Cocoa	1	1
Coffee	0	1
EEC	0	3
UN	0	1
TOTAL	10,096	12,646

SCOTLAND

Scottish Transport Group

Mr. Worthington asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has as to how many staff were employed by each of the constituent bus companies of the Scottish Transport Group on 30 June.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Scottish Transport Group has provided the following information as of 12 July, being the nearest available date:

Company	*Staff employed (12 July 1987)*
Central Scottish Omnibuses	1,346
Clydeside Scottish Omnibuses	1,334
Eastern Scottish Omnibuses	1,372
Fife Scottish Omnibuses	792
Highland Scottish Omnibuses	352
Kelvin Scottish Omnibuses	1,182
Lowland Scottish Omnibuses	256
Midland Scottish Omnibuses	775
Northern Scottish Omnibuses	687
Strathtay Scottish Omnibuses	480
Western Scottish Omnibuses	920
Scottish Citylink Coaches	223

Hypothermia

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the number of deaths in Scotland from hypothermia for each month since January 1981 broken down by age group.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Local Authority Services (Private Contractors)

Mr. John Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has as to how many Scottish local authorities have invited tenders for *(a)* street cleansing, *(b)* refuse collection and *(c)* the provision of school meals; and what information he has as to how the outside tenders compared with those of in-house direct labour organisations.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This information is not collected centrally.

Lambs and Sheep (Sale Restrictions)

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many lambs and sheep are under restriction for sale in Scotland as a result of nuclear accidents in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: None.

Nuclear Accidents (Monitoring)

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what proposals or representations he has received regarding a programme of systematic whole-body monitoring of people in the areas affected by the Chernobyl fallout to replace the voluntary programme presently undertaken by the Scottish universities research and reactor centre at East Kilbride; what his response has been; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Rating Reform

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will arrange for a copy of the report prepared for his Department, entitled "Preparation of a Specification of User Requirements for the System of Community Charge in Scotland," to be placed in the Library.

Mr. Rifkind: A copy of the report has been placed in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Deportees

Mr. Bernie Grant asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been deported under section 86 of the Mental Health Act since 1983; and to which countries.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Two patients have been removed under this section, one to Bangladesh and the other to the United States of America. Both removals took place earlier this year.

Citizenship

Mr. Bernie Grant asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people who have applied for naturalisation or registration as British citizens under the British Nationality Act 1981 have had their applications refused as being of unsound mind; and if he will provide a breakdown of those figures by *(a)* ethnicity and *(b)* sex.

Mr. Renton: Between July 1986 and September 1987 three applications for naturalisation as British citizens had been recorded as refused on the ground that the applicant was of unsound mind. Earlier figures for naturalisation and figures for registrations are not readily available and records are not kept relating refused applications to ethnicity or sex.

Prison Staff

Mr. Cox asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of prison officer staffing grades which were unfilled at Wandsworth prison on 7 July.

Mr. John Patten: On 7 July the number of officers in post was 80 below the staffing level authorised for a 39-hour week. Under present systems, most officers would work more hours on overtime.

Mr. Cox asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what extra staff are to be allocated to London prisons following the introduction of Fresh Start.

Mr. John Patten: Fresh Start was agreed with the unions on the basis that efficiency could be improved through better management structures and working methods. Work is still in hand on implementation. Some 1,800 officers are being recruited to the prison service this year, of whom about 750 are specifically to implement Fresh Start. The number allocated to each establishment will be based on the requirement to obtain an average of 10 per cent. efficiency gains this year across the prison service.

Wandsworth Prison

Mr. Cox asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times in the last three months the Governor of Wandsworth prison has declared a limited alert; for what reasons this was done; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: In the three months up to 13 October a limited alert was declared on the following occasions:

Saturday 18 July
Saturday 25 July
Sunday 26 July
Saturday 1 August

Each was due to the absence of staff during the summer leave period.

Offensive Weapons

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will hold consultations with chief constables to consider with them appropriate measures to restrict the increase in the carrying of knives by young people; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: During our recent study of how the law relating to the possession of knives might be reinforced we held consultations with chief officers of police. I now intend to bring forward in the Criminal Justice Bill, proposals which would make it an offence for a person to have a bladed or sharply pointed article in a public place without good reason or lawful authority. I also intend to bring forward proposals which will enable the sale of specified weapons for which there is no legitimate use to be banned.

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) in how many cases in each of the last 10 years involving grievous bodily harm, actual bodily harm, malicious wounding or assault, respectively, the victim was threatened or attacked with a knife;

(2) whether he will order a statistical analysis of crimes committed in the United Kingdom with use of knives; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Information on the use of weapons other than firearms is not collected centrally, except for offences of homicide. Statistics of homicides are published each year in "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales" (table 4.3 in the volume for 1985 (Cm. 10)). Statistics of offences of violence against the person and robberies involving weapons recorded by the Metropolitan police are published each year by the commissioner in his annual report (tables A2 and B3 in appendix 4iii of the issue for 1986, (Cm. 158)).

Television Licences

Mr. Maginnis asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many search warrants were granted in Northern Ireland in each year since 1957, up to 11 February, permitting the National Television Licence Records Office inquiry officers to gain access to private premises for the purpose of examining television receiving equipment;

(2) how many prosecutions for failure to hold a valid television licence were successfully brought in Northern Ireland using evidence provided by detector vans, in each year since 1957;

(3) what information he has as to how many television detector vans are presently stationed in Northern Ireland and as to the approximate value of *(a)* these vehicles and *(b)* the electronic equipment contained in them; what has been the cost of replacement and maintenance of these vehicles since 1 January 1980; how many permanent staff are employed to operate these vehicles; and what has been the cost of staffing them since 1 January 1980.

Mr. Renton: Prior to December 1986, when the reorganisation of the Television Licensing Organisation in Northern Ireland was completed, search warrants were not sought in Northern Ireland in connection with suspected television licence evasion. Between then and 11 February, three search warrants were sought and granted. Detector van equipment has not been used in Northern Ireland and no detector vans are presently stationed there. Two vans previously used for transporting inquiry officers were removed in June 1987.

Motorists (Blood Tests)

Mr. Lawrence asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to give motorists a statutory opportunity to give a blood sample as an alternative to an evidential breath test by intoximeter; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Under section 8(6) of the Road Traffic Act 1972 (as amended) any person whose result on an evidential breath testing device is no more than 50 microgrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath has the right to request a blood or urine test. Since April 1984 a similar option has been available on a non-statutory basis to persons with a breath test reading over 50 microgrammes and we will be reviewing this non-statutory option in the autumn of next year.

Grendon Prison

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many prisoners have been allocated to Her Majesty's prison Grendon since 1 July 1987; and how many of these prisoners are expected to benefit from the psychiatric regime of the prison;

(2) what affect he estimates the presence of a high proportion of rule 43 prisoners in the Grendon population will have on the maintenance of the present regime for those with psychiatric needs;

(3) if he will take steps to ensure that the Prison Department reverts to a policy of allocating prisoners to Her Majesty's prison Grendon only on psychiatric need; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Since July this year one wing at Grendon prison has been dedicated to the accommodation of rule 43 prisoners transferred from other establishments in the south-east region. This was one of a number of measures which we have taken recently to make the best use of available accommodation in the light of the current high levels of overcrowding in other prisons. This did not entail any reduction in the number of prisoners already at Grendon taking part in the therapeutic regime.

Since 1 July this year 128 prisoners have been allocated to Grendon prison. Of these, 70 rule 43 prisoners will not benefit directly from the therapeutic regime of the prison. The remaining 58 will. Rule 43 prisoners, currently comprising 22 per cent. of the Grendon population, are held separately from other prisoners and do not detract from the psychiatric regime which remains as the establishment's primary purpose. It is not the intention to end the accommodation of rule 43 prisoners at Grendon while other prisons suitable for them are as crowded as they are now.

Equal Opportunities Commission

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will list *(a)* the members of the Equal Opportunities Commission, *(b)* the criteria for selection of members, *(c)* the relevant qualifications of present members, *(d)* the number of Trades Union Congress-nominated places and *(e)* how many Trades Union Congress-nominated places are held by women.

Mr. John Patten: The following are members of the commission:

Baroness Platt of Writtle—Chairman
Mrs. June O'Dell—Deputy Chairman
Mr. Kenneth Boardman
Mrs. Rosemary Brown
Mr. James Dunlop
Mr. Dennis Guereca
Miss Margaret Monk
Professor Gillian Powell
Mrs. Margaret Prosser
Mr. Andrew Simpkin
Baroness Turner of Camden
Mrs. Pat Turner
Mrs. Esme Walker
Dame Anne Warburton

Members are appointed on the basis of the qualifications and experience they can bring to the work of the commission to enable it to carry out its duties under parts VI and VII of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. The present members have a wide experience in employment, education and the law. Three members were nominated by the Trades Union Congress, of whom all are women.

Winson Green Prison

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons have served prison sentences of less than one week at Winson Green prison, Birmingham, since November 1986.

Mr. John Patten: According to the records held centrally, about 70 persons were initially received into Birmingham prison in the period 1 December 1986 to 31 August 1987 to serve sentences of less than one week.

Electoral Register

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the estimated accuracy of the coverage of the electoral register as a percentage of those eligible to register.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The most recent estimate of the accuracy of the electoral register nationwide was produced by the Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys in its survey "Electoral Registration in 1981", which found that, in 1981, 6·5 per cent. of eligible people in Great Britain were not included in the electoral register for their qualifying address. The OPCS's survey of six inner city areas in 1983 to 1984, published last August, found that, in 1984, between 4 and 17 per cent. of eligible people were not included. The Home Office has taken a range of initiatives aimed at increasing the accuracy of the electoral register and we shall be continuing to work for improvements.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions were brought in the latest year for which figures are available in respect of failure to register as an elector.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information held centrally, which may be incomplete, indicates that there was one prosecution in 1985. No figures of prosecutions are yet available for 1986.

Prisoners (Citizenship)

Mr. Bermingham asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action has been taken to ensure that those in prisons, psychiatric and general hospitals and other institutions are made aware of their right to register under the Immigration Act 1981, and of the need to do so before December.

Mr. Renton: A circular instruction has been sent to governors of all prison service establishments with supplies of the free information leaflet "Your Right to British Citizenship", and posters to display to draw the attention of all inmates to the leaflet. An article about the ending this year of certain rights to register as a British citizen has appeared in the October issue of the NHS "Management Bulletin".

Disabled People (Elections)

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to take action on matters raised in the report of the Spastics Society, "Disabled People and the 1987 General Election", a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We welcome the Spastics Society's report, which we have studied with interest. The Representation of the People Act 1985 introduced a statutory requirement on local authorities, so far as is reasonable and practicable, to designate as polling places only those premises which are accessible to disabled electors. The Act also enabled physically incapacitated electors to vote by proxy, as an alternative to voting by post for an indefinite period. We are reviewing the law, procedures and forms relating to absent voting and we shall consider most carefully any proposals we receive for changes in electoral law as it affects disabled people.

USA (Visas)

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department why no reciprocal arrangements exist with the United States of America on the necessity for United Kingdom citizens to obtain a visa before entering that country; and what is his policy towards the establishment of such arrangements.

Mr. Renton: Because such arrangements are made only when both Governments conclude that the removal of visa controls is compatible with their immigration control policies.

George Blake

Mr. Allason asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis on his inquiries into CND's role in the escape of George Blake from Wormwood Scrubs.

Mr. Hurd: I understand that the Commissioner has instigated an investigation into recent allegations concerning the escape of George Blake. This investigation is now proceeding.

Prison Ships

Ms. Abbott asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make it his policy to refrain from making further use of prison ships since the lease on the Earl William has expired; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he has any plans to extend the leasing arrangement on the Earl William prison ship; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: The contract for the lease of the Earl William was for an initial period of three months, with the option of renewal for three further periods of three months. The first option of renewal was exercised and expires on 1 December. There are now no detainees on the ship. Its possible further use as an immigration detention centre is under review.

Ms. Abbott asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what degree of supervision his Department exercises over the Securicor guards employed on the Earl William; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what are the qualifications and training of the Securicor guards employed on board the Earl William; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: Care of persons detained on the Earl William rested under contract with Securicor. The company is very experienced in this field, having held the immigration detention contract since 1970. Orderlies were supervised by experienced shift leaders and chief immigration officers make frequent visits to the ship. Detailed operating instructions were issued by Securicor to its staff following close discussion with the immigration service and reflected the need for a high standard of care in every respect. Each recruit underwent five days' induction training on the job and a half day course from the immigration service.

Ms. Abbott asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether lay visitors have access to the Earl William prison ship on the same basis as that which they enjoy in Her Majesty's prisons; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: There are no formal arrangements for visits by lay visitors, but access to immigration detention centres, including the Earl William, is freely afforded, not only to relatives, friends and representatives of detainees but also to representatives of a wide variety of welfare, religious, cultural and political interests, including Members of both Houses. In the case of the Earl William, the vicar of Harwich, the Salvation Army and the Olive Tree Fellowship had unrestricted access.

Ms. Abbott asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether Her Majesty's Inspector of Prisons has access to the Earl William prison ship; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: In accordance with the Government reply to the sixth report from the Home Affairs Committee Session 1984-85 HC 277 (Cmnd. 9632) immigration detention centres, including the Earl William, are open to inspection by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Ms. Abbott asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether instructions in case of fire are available on board the Earl William in the main languages spoken by the detainees; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: Fire drills were held regularly on the Earl William, under the direction and advice of the Essex fire and rescue service. Internationally approved pictorial fire evacuation signs were prominently posted and a fire evacuation notice in nine languages was posted in each cabin.

Ms. Abbott asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if there are interpretation facilities available aboard the Earl William; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: There were no resident interpreters on the Earl William, but interpreters were provided when necessary.

Ms. Abbott asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total cost of holding detainees on the Earl William prison ship; and what is the average cost per detainee.

Mr. Renton: The total direct costs of operating the Earl William as an immigration detention centre for the period 15 May to the end of September were of the order of

£650,000. The direct average cost per detainee during that period was about £65 a night. It is not yet clear how far these costs will be borne by the carriers.

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements were made for those detained on board MV Earl William after the ship was reberthed following the storm on 15-16 October.

Mr. Hurd: The Earl William broke loose from her moorings during the early hours of 16 October and drifted some 200-300 yds away from the berth before running aground on a sandbank. The vessel was slightly holed but nobody on board was injured. Advice from the senior harbour master was that no attempt should be made to evacuate the ship until she had been reberthed. At the time there were 78 detainees on board, of whom 72 had sought asylum in the United Kingdom. A contact telephone number at Heathrow was provided for relatives and friends wishing to make inquiries about detainees. The vessel was berthed at Parkeston quay at high tide at 20.00 hours on 16 October.

In all the circumstances, I concluded on compassionate grounds that it would no longer be right to continue to detain those concerned on board the Earl William. As there was no other detention accommodation immediately available, 70 of the 78 detainees were granted temporary admission on 16 October until their cases are determined. I am grateful to the British Refugee Council and organisations representing those detained for their co-operation in finding suitable accommodation. Of the other detainees, one has been granted leave to enter, six have been removed from the United Kingdom and one other is detained in Harmondsworth awaiting removal. The future use of the Earl William as a detention centre is under review.

Firearms

Mr. A. Cecil Walker asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the cost of acquiring and renewing a firearms certificate on the mainland of Great Britain; and how that compares with the figure for Northern Ireland.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In Great Britain both the grant and renewal of a firearms certificate costs £33. In Northern Ireland the grant of a firearms certificate costs £33 and £21 on renewal.

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is in a position to introduce proposals for new firearms legislation.

Mr. Hurd: The broad package of proposals which I announced at Torquay and other related proposals designed to strengthen existing controls on firearms are being carefully and throughly examined, in consultation with interested parties. I have arranged for a copy of that statement to be placed in the Library. The tragedy at Hungerford and other recent disturbing incidents involving those in the lawful possession of a firearm or shotgun certificate add to the case for a substantial shift in the balance of firearms law to meet the needs of public safety. This cannot be done unreasonably at the expense of the legitimate shooting interest. A proper balance must be struck between the two. I hope to announce comprehensive proposals designed to meet this end next month with a view to introducing separate new firearms legislation early this Session.

Departmental Staff

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men employed within each grade in his Department in each year since 1979.

Mr. Hurd [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 July 1987, c. *338*]: The information is not available in the precise form requested. The following table gives the number of non-industrial staff in post (full-time equivalents) by sex from January 1979 to January 1987 by grade level equivalents based on a comparison of salary scales. Comparable figures for industrial staff are not available. The figures have been derived from personnel records and may differ from other published manpower totals.

	January 1979		*January 1980*		*January 1981*		*January 1982*		*January 1983*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Grade 1	1	—	1	—	1	—	1	—	1	—
Grade 2	8	—	8	—	8	—	8	—	7	—
Grade 3	25	2	24	2	26	2	27	2	24	2
Grade 4	16	—	16	—	12	—	14	—	12	1
Grade 5	145½	8	146½	10	144½	13	143	14	138	15
Grade 6	153	16	158	16	166	13	165	14	166	15
Grade 7	387	37	404	37	401	33	581½	63½	578½	69½
Senior Executive Office	821	67	850½	71	870½	75	863	69½	899½	63½
Higher Executive Officer	1,658½	180	1,657	187	1,692	184½	1,713	208½	1,810	255
Executive Officer	6,920	1,046½	7,042½	1,108½	7,231½	1,149	7,011½	1,089	7,294½	1,143½
Clerical Officer (and equivalents)	12,866	2,680½	12,984	2,751½	13,817½	2,908½	13,669	2,842	13,848½	2,950
Clerical Assistant (and equivalents)	376½	1,899½	358½	1,888	405½	2,291	393½	2,148½	454½	2,184½
Obsolete Grades	55	368½	25	364	18	17½	2	3	2	—

	January 1984		*January 1985*		*January 1986*		*January 1987*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Grade 1	1	—	1	—	1	—	1	—
Grade 2	6	—	7	—	7	—	7	—
Grade 3	25	2	25	2	24	2	29	2

	January 1984		January 1985		January 1986		January 1987	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Grade 4	11	2	10	2	12	2	12	2
Grade 5	128½	11	125½	12	127	12	126½	15
Grade 6	183	12	196	14	199	15	193	16½
Grade 7	452½	50	459½	58	476	59½	477½	56
Senior Executive Officer	840½	63½	834	79½	814	88	843	99
Higher Executive Officer	1,936½	276½	1,984½	291	2,038½	321½	2,014	342½
Executive Officer	7,457½	1,200½	7,551½	1,294½	7,698	1,395½	7,681	1,478
Clerical Officer (and equivalents)	14,275½	2,979	14,725	3,250	14,753½	3,304	15,143	3,317
Clerical Assistant (and equivalents)	416½	2,141	473	2,231½	502	2,099½	528	2,136
Obsolete Grades	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

THE ARTS

Leicestershire Museums

Mr. Vaz asked the Minister for the Arts what steps have been taken to ensure that the reduced level of grant to East Midlands Museums Services will continue to allow Leicestershire museums to cater for their public; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: The allocation of grants to the English area museum councils is a matter for the Museums and Galleries Commission. I understand that the commission's grant to the East Midlands area museum service was increased by 11·7 per cent. in 1986-87 and by a further 4·5 per cent. in 1987-88.

Arts Council

Ms. Richardson asked the Minister for the Arts whether he will *(a)* list the members of the Arts Council executive, *(b)* state the criteria for selection of members, *(c)* list the relevant qualifications of present members, *(d)* indicate the number of Trades Union Congress-nominated places, and *(e)* indicate how many Trades Union Congress-nominated places are held by women.

Mr. Luce: The information requested is as follows.

(a) the members of the Arts Council are:

Sir William Rees Mogg *(Chairman)*
James Cooke
Michael Clarke
John Cornwell
Ronald Grierson
Robin Guthrie
Pamela, The Lady Harlech
Denys Hodson, CBE
Gavin Jantjes
Philip Jones, CBE
James Logan
Clare Mulholland
Colin Nears
Sir Alan Peacock, DSC, FBA
Mathew Prichard
Sir Brian Rix, CBE
Sir Roy Strong
Elizabeth Thomas
Dr Robert Woof
Sir Brian Young

(b) and *(c)*: Members are appointed by the Minister, who takes into account the need for a balance of experience and regional representation, including knowledge of specialist art forms, a wide interest in the arts, and commitment to the council's aims and objectives.

(d) and *(e)*: Representation is not by group or sectional interest. There are no Trades Union Congress-nominated places.

"Spycatcher"

Mr. Cartwright asked the Minister for the Arts what advice he has given to public library authorities, in discharge of his duty under section 1 of the Public Library and Museums Act 1964, on the lending of copies of Mr. Peter Wright's book "Spycatcher".

Mr. Luce: I have suggested that public library authorities should await the outcome of Derbyshire county council's application to the High Court for a variation of the court injunction preventing certain newspapers from printing extracts from the book so as to allow its library service to stock the book. The council's application was refused in the High Court last week.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Corporation Tax

Mr. Holland asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the corporation tax paid as *(a)* a percentage of the normal rate of corporation tax and *(b)* in absolute terms at current prices by the aggregate of (i) the top hundred manufacturing and commercial companies, (ii) other such companies and (iii) all companies for each available year since 1979.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Amounts of corporation tax paid by all companies and public corporations are published in table 3.13 of "Financial Statistics". The further detail requested could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Excise Duties

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how the rates of duty proposed by the European Economic Commission for alcoholic beverages and tobacco compare with the rates of duty charged in the United Kingdom; and what is his estimate of the effect on consumption of reducing the United Kingdom rates to the rates proposed by the Commission.

Mr. Brooke: The European Commission's proposals for "approximation" of rates of excise duty on alcoholic beverages and tobacco products, would require reductions in existing United Kingdom duty rates as shown below as follows:

Product	*Commission proposal*	*Existing United Kingdom duty rate*	*Approximate percentage rate charges*
Spirits	12.71 ECU (£8·91) per litre of alcohol	£15·77 per litre of alcohol	−44
Beer	1·32 ECU (£0·92) per hectolitre/degree Plato of finished product at 15°c (8·89 for average beer)	£25·80 per hectolitre plus 86p for every degree of original gravity over 1030° (31.82 for average beer)	−72
Table wine	17 ECU (£11·92) per hectolitre	£98·00 per hectolitre	−88
Fortified wine			
15-18 per cent. volume	85 ECU (£59·42) per hectolitre	£169·00 per hectolitre	−65
18-22 per cent. volume	85 ECU (£59·42) per hectolitre	£194·90 per hectolitre	−70
Cigarettes	19·5 ECU (£13·70) per 1000 plus 52-54 per cent. of retail selling price	£30·61 per 1000 plus 21 per cent. of retail selling price	−10
Pipe tobacco	Excise duty + VAT to comprise 54-56 per cent. of retail selling price	£24·95 per kilogram	−17
Cigars	Excise duty + VAT to comprise 34-36 per cent. of retail selling price	£47·05 per kilogram	−52
Hand-rolling tobacco	Excise duty + VAT to comprise 54-56 per cent. of retail selling price	£49·64 per kilogram	−55

Note: 1ECU = £0·701159.

Because of the very large changes in duty levels involved, estimates of the effect on consumption are subject to wide margins of error. Applying the assumptions normally used to calculate the effect of small changes in duty rates suggests that consumption of spirits and wines could rise by as much as a third; beer by about 10 per cent; cigarettes and pipe tobacco by about 5 per cent; and cigars and hand-rolling tobacco by about a quarter.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the effect on consumption of the standstill on the excise duties on alcoholic beverages and tobacco in recent Budgets; what is the current value in cash terms of the 1978 rates of duty; and what is his estimate of the increase in revenue which would accrue from such rates in a full year.

Mr. Brooke: It is not possible to distinguish between changes in consumption which may have resulted from the standstill on excise duties in recent Budgets and changes which occurred as a result of other factors. However, an indication of the effect on consumption of the duty standstill can be provided by estimating what would happen to consumption in 1987 if the duties were restored to their real value at the time of the last duty change. (For example, beer duty was last increased in 1985. Revalorisation since then would require an increase in the duty of 9·6 per cent. If beer duty were increased by 9·6 per cent. in 1987, it is estimated that consumption would fall by about 1 per cent., all other things being equal). The estimates are shown in table 1.

The current value of the 1978 rates of duty and the estimated changes in revenue which would accrue if these duty rates were applied in 1987 are shown in table 2.

Table 1

	Budget in which duty last increased	*Increase required in 1987 to revalorise since the last increase* Per cent.	*Estimated change in consumption in 1987 if duty increased in 1987 by revalorisation since last increase* Per cent.
Alcoholic beverages:			
Beer	1985	9·6	−1
Cider	1985	9·6	Less than −1
Spirits	1985	9·6	−5
Wines	1985	9·6	−3
Tobacco:			
Cigarettes	1986	3·7	−1
Hand rolling	1986	3·7	−1
Cigars	1984	14·6	−4
Other	1982	27·3	−7

Table 2

	1987 duty rates £	*[1]1978 duty rates in 1987 terms* £	*[2]Estimated change in revenue if 1978 duty rates applied, full year, 1987-88* £ million
Alcoholic beverages:			
Beer	25·80	[3]22·05 per hectolitre	+120

	1987 duty rates £	[1] *1978 duty rates in 1987 terms* £	[2] *Estimated change in revenue if 1978 duty rates applied, full year, 1987-88* £ million
Cider	15·80	11·01 per hectolitre	
Spirits	15·77	[4] 21·61 per litre	
Wines of fresh grape:			
not exceeding 15 per cent.	98·00	147·98 per hectolitre	
15 per cent., not exceeding 18 per cent.	169·00	170·73 per hectolitre	
18 per cent., not exceeding 22 per cent.	194·90	201·02 per hectolitre	
sparkling, not exceeding 15 per cent.	168·00	180·55 per hectolitre	
			−1130
Tobacco:			
Cigarettes	30·61	[5] 18·63 per 1000	
Hand rolling	49·64	41·98 per kilo	
Cigars	47·05	43·35 per kilo	
Other tobacco	24·95	33·31 per kilo	

[1] Increased in line with the increase in the RPI from April 1987 to August 1987.
[2] Given the large changes in duty rates that would be required in some cases, these revenue estimates are subject to larger than normal margins of error.
[3] At 1030 degrees of original gravity. Each additional degree of original gravity is charged at one-thirtieth of this rate.
[4] Litre of alcohol.
[5] Specific duty only. Ad valorem duty is also charged.

Personal Allowances

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table comparing information available to him on the allowances and reliefs given to single persons and one and two-earner married couples in Germany with those given in the United Kingdom, together with the width of the income band at each rate of income tax chargeable.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will recalculate the figures given in the answer to the hon. Member for Kensington on 23 March 1987, *Official Report*, column *35*, about personal allowances on the basis of the existing income tax rate of 27 per cent., and assuming weekly basic incomes of *(a)* £10, *(b)* £11 and *(c)* £12.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall let the hon. Member and my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Personal Taxation

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing by range of income for single persons and for one-earner and two-earner married couples, the number of tax units and the amount of tax payable in a full year at present rates of income tax compared with the amount which would be payable where *(a)* men and women are taxed separately with the abolition of the married man's allowance and the wife's earnings allowance, *(b)* all allowances and reliefs are restricted to the standard rate, *(c)* a reduced rate band at 21p equal in real terms to half the reduced-rate applicable in 1978-79 and *(d)* an increase in the standard rate to 29p.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Estimates are given in the table. I regret that further detail could be provided only at disproportionate expense.

Number of tax units[1] liable to tax and income tax liability under the 1987-88 tax regime and the proposed regime

	1987-88 tax regime		*Proposed tax regime*	
	Tax units[1] '000s	*Tax liability £ million*	*Tax units[1] '000s*	*Tax liability £ million*
By range of income £ per year				
Under 5,000	3,200	900	3,800	1,000
5,000-10,000	7,400	7,400	7,700	8,600
10,000-15,000	5,200	9,400	5,200	11,100
15,000-20,000	2,700	7,300	2,700	8,500
20,000-30,000	1,600	7,400	1,600	8,500
30,000-50,000	600	5,400	600	6,300
Over 50,000	200	5,100	200	5,700
All	20,900	43,000	21,700	49,900
By type of taxpayer				
Single people	9,500	13,300	9,500	13,900
Married couple				
without wife's earnings	5,100	11,500	5,600	14,200
with wife's earnings	6,300	18,100	6,700	21,800
All	20,900	43,000	21,700	49,900

Totals may not be the sum of constituent parts due to rounding.
[1] Single people and married couples.

Small Businesses (Taxation)

Mr. Thurnham asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received from small businesses about his taxation policies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: My right hon. Friend receives a number of representations on this subject from time to time.

Income Tax

Mr. Harry Greenway asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the cost to the Exchequer of reducing *(a)* the top income tax rate payable to 50 per cent. and *(b)* the basic rate of tax by 1 penny in the pound; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The direct revenue costs, in a full year, at 1987-88 levels of income, of reducing the top rate of income tax to 50 per cent. and of reducing the basic rate of income tax by 1 penny in the pound would be about £450 million and £1·3 billion respectively. These estimates do not allow for any possible behavioural effects.

British Petroleum

Mr. Spearing asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the limits he is setting in the proportion of the different categories of British Petroleum shares of £6·5 billion and £1·5 billion, respectively, that can be made available to *(a)* citizens in the United Kingdom, *(b)* domestic financial institutions and *(c)* foreign citizens or financial institutions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Details of the combined BP share offer are set out in the prospectus, a copy of which has been placed in the Library. The offer has been fully underwritten.

The combined offer comprises:

(a) a fixed price offer, at an offer price of 330p per share payable in instalments, consisting of an initial allocation of 1,094 million ordinary shares for the general public and existing shareholders (except Her Majesty Treasury in the United Kingdom and certain overseas countries and separate offers to existing shareholders in the United States, Canada and Japan; and

(b) an international offer to United Kingdom institutional and overseas investors, at a price not less than the offer price (330p) also payable in inistalments, consisting of an intial allocation of 1,100 million ordinary shares.

National Economic Development Council

Ms. Richardson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will list *(a)* the members of the National Economic Development Council, *(b)* the criteria for selection of members, *(c)* the relevant qualifications of present members, *(d)* the number of Trades Union Congress-nominated places and *(e)* how many Trades Union Congress-nominated places are held by women.

Mr. Lawson: Apart from myself, the current members of the National Economic Development Council are:

The Secretary of State for Employment	
The Secretary of State for the Environment	
The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry	
The Secretary of State for Education and Science	
The Secretary of State for Energy	
Mr. J. M. M. Banham	Director General of the Confederation of British Industry
Mr. R. Biekerstaffe	General Secretary of the National Union of Public Employees
Mr. J. S. Cassels, CB	Director General of the National Economic Development Office
Mr. J. Edmonds	General Secretary of the General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union
Sir Robert Haslam	Chairman of British Coal
Mr. C. Jenkins	General Secretary of the Association of Scientific Technical and Managerial Staffs
Mr. W. Jordan	President of the Amalgamated Engineering Union
The Rt. Hon. Robin Leigh-Pemberton	Governor of the Bank of England
Dr. J. S. McFarlane CBE	Director General of the Engineering Employers' Federation
The Lord Marshall of Goring, CBE, FRS	Chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board
Mr. D. A. G. Monk	Chairman and Chief Executive, The Dee Corporation plc
Sir Bryan Nicholson	Chairman of the Manpower Services Commission
Sir David Nickson, KPE, DL	President of the Confederation of British Industry and Chairman of Scottish and Newcastle Breweries plc
Mr. T. J. O'Connor	Chairman and Managing Director, ELTA Plastics Ltd.
Sir Thomas Risk	Governor of the Bank of Scotland
Mr. R. Todd	General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union
Mrs. R. E. Waterhouse, CBE	Chairman of the Consumers Association
Mr. N. Willis	General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress

There are no specific qualifications for NEDC membership. I appoint members because they are likely to make valuable contributions to the council's discussions of industrial and economic matters, taking into account the views of the CBI and TUC.

Six of the present NEDC members were nominated by the TUC. None of these are women.

Taxation Statistics

Mr. John Marshall asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has as to how the top rate of tax in the United Kingdom compares with that in the other European Community countries, Japan and the United States of America.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The information requested is given in the table, which is supplemented by notes.

EC countries	*Top rate of income tax' Per cent.*
Belgium	72
Denmark	40
France	58
Germany	56
Greece	63
Ireland	58
Italy	62
Luxembourg	56
Netherlands	72
Portugal	60
Spain	66
United Kingdom	60
Others	
Japan	60
United States of America	38·5

Notes:

1. The rates shown are the latest enacted. For Belgium, France, Greece and Italy they relate to the income tax year 1986; for Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Japan and the United States of America to the income tax year 1987; and for the United Kingdom and Ireland to the income tax year 1987-88.

2. In Japan the top rate for employment income is 57 per cent. only.

3. The rates given in the table are central Government income tax rates. Local income taxes are levied on income of all types in Belgium, Denmark, Japan and the United States of America. Inclusion of local income taxes would increase the top rate significantly in Denmark, to 68 per cent., and in Japan, to 76 per cent. (employment income 77 per cent.), taking the maximum local income taxes rate in Denmark, and the usual rates in Japan.

4. In Portugal top rates vary with the type of income, and the taxpayer's marital status. The rate given is for a married man who has earned income only.

Management and Computer Consultancy

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated expenditure in the current year on management and computer consultancy by *(a)* the Inland Revenue, *(b)* Her Majesty's Customs and Excise and *(c)* the Department of National Savings.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated expenditure of all Government Departments in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

Mr. Brooke: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Revenue Costs

Mr. Rooker asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will list for each tax and excise duty the estimated cost

of collection as a proportion of the total revenue collected; and if he will make a statement showing how this information is used as a management tool by the Inland Revenue, and Her Majesty's Government's Customs and Excise;

(2) if the cost of collection of any tax or duty forms part of the management reporting systems of the Inland Revenue and Her Majesty's Customs and Excise; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The cost yield ratios for 1985-86 were as follows:

	per cent.
Inland Revenue	
Income tax	
—employment income	1·60
—other income	5·19
Corporation tax	0·58
Capital gains tax	1·70
Capital transfer tax and estate duty	2·32
Stamp duties	0·59
Petroleum revenue tax/supplementary petroleum duty	0·018
Customs and Excise	
VAT	1·04
Car tax	0·22
Hydrocarbon oil	0·13
Alcoholic drink	0·69
Tobacco products	0·08
Betting and gaming	0·87
Matches/mechanical lighters	1·12
Customs duties and associated work[1]	11·61

[1] Customs duties are not normally classified as taxes or excise duties but they are included here for completeness. The cost of their collection includes a substantial amount for non-revenue-raising work such as the prevention of drug smuggling and the enforcement of other prohibitions and restrictions.

Movements in the cost yield ratios of individual taxes and duties are monitored closely and are published in the annual public expenditure White Paper and in the report of the Board of Inland Revenue and the report of the Board of Customs and Excise. Cost yield ratios are only one of a number of factors that are taken into account by management both in advising Ministers about tax policy and in assessing administrative efficiency.

Britannia Coins

Mr. Alan Williams asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if any steps have been taken to ensure that no South African gold is used in the new Britannia coins.

Mr. Lawson: The Royal Mint will not use South African Rand refinery bar for the production of Britannia coins.

Child Benefit

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will publish figures showing for families with one to four children the income break-even levels, in pounds sterling per week and as percentages of average male manual earnings, at which child benefit entitlement is the same as income tax liability;

(2) if he will estimate how many and what proportion of families with children receive more in child benefit than they pay out in income tax.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Birds (Scare Guns)

Mr. Yeo asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received regarding the use of crop guns to scare birds.

Mr. Donald Thompson: During 1987 my Department has received several approaches from campaigners connected with the Birdscarers Anti Nuisance Group and has been sent 36 letters from members of the public about bird scaring, which supported tighter control, or a ban, on the use of audible bird scarers.

The National Farmers Union has written about its code of practice on the use of such devices. A United Kingdom manufacturer has written drawing attention to the scope for controlling his firm's audible devices and disputing the need for a ban to prevent nuisance.

Horses

Mr. Harry Greenway asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action he is taking to ensure the segregation of mares, geldings and stallions whilst they are in transit; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The Transit of Animals (Road and Rail) Order 1975 requires mares with foals at foot and stallions to be penned separately whilst in transit. The responsibilty for enforcement rests with local authorities.

Sea Defences

Mr. David Porter asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will clarify the new arrangements for local authorities funding of non emergency sea defence work; if he will make a statement about sea defences; and if he will make it his policy to treat sea defence as a national responsibility, rather than a coastal authority matter.

Mr. Gummer: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Food Additives

Mr. Lawrence asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he proposes to introduce stricter controls on the use of colour additives in food; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Following the publication of the Food Advisory Committee report on colouring matter in foods on 30 March, I circulated for comment proposals to implement three of the report's recommendations, namely those banning the use of colours in baby foods, removing yellow 2G from the permitted list, and preventing the use of methyl violet for marking citrus fruits. I expect to be laying those regulations before Parliament shortly.

I shall also be issuing a further statement as soon as representations on the remaining recommendations in the report have been fully considered.

National Food Survey Committee

Ms. Richardson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will list *(a)* the members

of the National Food Survey Committee, *(b)* the criteria for selection of members, *(c)* the relevant qualifications of present members, *(d)* the number of Trades Union Congress-nominated places and *(e)* how many Trades Union Congress-nominated places are held by women.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The answers to the questions are given below.

(a) and *(c)* The present membership of the committee and their relevant qualifications are as follows:

C. W. Capstick, CMG, BSc MS (Chairman), Director of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

J. A. Beaumont, BSc, PhD, Chief Executive of the Institute of Grocery Distribution

A. D. Chesher, BSocSc, Professor of Econometrics, University of Bristol

R. N. Crossett, BSc B Agric, DPhil Chief Scientist (Fisheries and Food), Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

G. I. Forbes, FRACMA, FACOM, MFCM, LRCS&P, DTM&H, DPH, DMSA, DIH Senior Medical Officer, Scottish Home and Health Department

C. Ritson, BA, MAgriSc Professor of Agricultural Marketing, University of Newcastle upon Tyne

J. M. Slater, BSc, MS PhD Head of Economics and Statistics (Food) Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

R. G. Whitehead, BSc PhD MA FIBiol Director of Dunn Nutrition Unit, Medical Research Council

P. Wilson, BA MA Chief Social Survey Officer, Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

M. J. Wiseman, MB, MRCP Head of Nutrition Unit, Department of Health and Social Security

Secretaries:

D. H. Buss, PhD, FIFST Principal Scientific Officer, Food Science Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

G. Croft, BSc,. MSc, FSS Statistician, Economics and Statistics (Food) Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

(b) The Committee includes officials responsible for administering the survey and other members are selected to reflect particular expertise necessary to ensure that the survey is run efficiently. For instance, advice on survey methods is sought from statisticians, on nutritional aspects from within the food science profession and on econometric analysis from University economists.

(d) none

(e) none

Sheep (Sale Restrictions)

Mr. Rooker asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many lambs and sheep are under restriction for sale in England as a result of nuclear accidents in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Donald Thompson: None.

Sugar

Mr. Spearing asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if, pursuant to the reply of 24 July, *Official Report*, column *615*, he will state the receipts from the sugar elimination levy from each relevant member of the European Community since its introduction.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested is as follows (million ECU):

	1986	[1]*1987*
Belgium	5·3	6·7
Denmark	2·9	3·6
Germany	21·1	26·7
Greece	0·6	0·9
Spain	0·0	0·0
France	24·6	30·7
Ireland	0·7	0·7
Italy	3·8	5·7
Luxembourg	0·0	0·0
Netherlands	6·0	7·6
Portugal	0·0	0·0
United Kingdom	3·5	4·3
Total EC	68·3	86·9

[1] Forecast.

Source: Preliminary draft general budget 1988.

Note: Figures may not sum exactly due to rounding.

Council of Agriculture Ministers

Miss Emma Nicholson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the outcome of the Council of Agriculture Ministers' meeting held in Luxembourg on 19-20 October 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: The Council considered further the Commission's proposals for the important and necessary changes in the support arrangements — the so-called "stabilisers"—to bring costs under much better control. After a discussion on general principles at the September Council, this Council meeting began the task of considering the proposals for individual commodities in specific terms. I made clear that, for the stabilisers to be effective, it was essential to take decisions on details and not just on framework mechanisms in advance of the December meeting of the European Council, and I emphasised to my agricultural colleagues the urgency of their reaching agreement on this.

The Council had a first debate on related Commission proposals for income aids to mitigate the effect of stricter price policy for farmers with relatively low incomes. Most member states, including ourselves, had substantial reservations on the present proposals.

Finally, the Council achieved a reconciliation with the European Parliament on the details of a regulation which will change the system whereby the Commission reimburses member states for EAGGF expenditure, from monthly advances to payments in arrears. This change will strengthen control over Community expenditure and help to contain 1987 expenditure within the budget provision.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Alcohol Consumption

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what effect the increase in the consumption of alcoholic beverages since 1960 has had on accidents and on the demand for health care; and what further increase is expected in the next 10 years at the present rate of consumption.

Mrs. Currie: Although alcohol is known to be a factor in accidents of all kinds, central information is available only in respect of alcohol-related road traffic accidents. The tables set out information on alcohol-related accident injuries and deaths since 1976 and 1978 respectively, the earliest years from which information in this form has been collected.

Drivers and riders in injury road accidents: breath tests and breath test failures: Great Britain: 1976-1986

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
(a) Total involved	396,733	411,565	414,579	397,595	391,870	390,736	401,460	377,289	396,735	389,473	397,671
(b) Total tested	36,143	37,178	39,461	40,983	41,632	41,027	43,341	42,265	43,461	44,702	61,218
(c) Total failed	12,131	11,852	12,965	14,085	13,421	12,303	13,494	12,432	12,557	12,557	11,946
	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.
b as percentage of a	9·1	9·0	9·5	10·3	10·6	10·5	10·8	11·2	11·0	11·5	15·4
c as percentage of b	33·6	31·9	32·9	34·4	32·2	30·0	31·1	29·4	28·9	28·1	19·5
c as percentage of a	3·1	2·9	3·1	3·5	3·4	3·1	3·4	3·3	3·2	3·2	3·0

Drivers and riders killed in Great Britain: percentage over the legal blood alcohol limit: 1978-1986

	Two-wheel motor vehicle riders							Cars and other motor vehicles						
Year	16-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50+	All ages	16-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50+	All ages
1978	22	44	32	31	25	7	29	41	52	44	36	20	16	33
1979	26	39	39	45	18	20	31	37	43	46	46	29	15	32
1980	23	38	39	35	29	24	29	35	45	40	38	35	17	32
1981	17	39	41	42	20	29	28	21	44	47	41	39	9	31
1982	17	43	47	31	14	19	29	32	48	54	52	30	15	36
1983	17	26	42	26	8	—	23	30	42	46	45	25	8	31
1984	25	30	30	29	31	16	27	20	41	36	30	22	12	26
1985	15	27	33	36	7	14	22	25	36	42	39	23	10	28
1986[1]	16	27	36	32	19	4	22	23	40	34	35	29	10	27

[1] Provisional.

Trends in the numbers of drink-drive accidents have been affected more by changes in legislation and police enforcement efforts than by changes in per capita alcohol consumption.

The demand for health care arising from alcohol-related accidents cannot be separately identified.

Recent research has estimated that alcohol misuse in England and Wales cost the National Health Service £112 million in 1985 in respect of in-patient treatment and GP services alone.

Government efforts are directed towards reducing accidents and other forms of alcohol-related harm. The new ministerial group on alcohol misuse will provide a single focus for developing and co-ordinating future Government strategy against alcohol misuse.

Cancer Screening

Mr. Chapman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what progress has been made in the introduction of a cervical cytology call and recall system in Barnet.

Mrs. Currie: The cervical cytology call and recall scheme operated by Barnet family practitioner committee was brought into operation in January 1986. The scheme, which is computerised, initially covered women between the ages of 35 and 65 who were registered with a GP: it was extended in July 1987 to cover women over the age of 20.

Social Security Appeals System

Mr. Pike asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he proposes to take any new steps to speed up the social security appeals system.

Mr. Portillo: In the last quarter of 1986 the average time taken to process a social security appeal from lodgement to hearing was estimated to be 15·4 weeks. Responsibility for the administrative handling of social security appeals rests partly with DHSS and partly with the President of Social Security Appeal Tribunals and Medical Appeal Tribunals. I know that the President, his Honour Judge Byrt, shares my concern at the length of time being taken for appeals to be heard.

In 1986 a central management survey team examined the procedures for handling appeals in DHSS offices. A final report is expected later this year and its recommendations will be closely studied. Next year the Government are introducing the social fund which will have its own system of reviews and will not be subject to appeal. This should considerably reduce the volume of appeals and should lead to a reduction in average clearance times. In the longer term, the departmental operational strategy, and in particular the computerisation of the assessment of entitlement to income support, should lead to improved standards of initial decision making and hence a reduced work load for tribunals.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is the number of Scottish pensioners who have lost *(a)* up to £1 per week, *(b)* between £1 and £4 per week and *(c)* over £4 per week as a result of changes introduced in April;

(2) if he will estimate the average loss to pensioners in Scotland of housing benefit changes introduced in April;

(3) if he will estimate the number of pensioners in Scotland who have lost housing benefit completely as a result of the changes introduced in April;

(4) what is the number of pensioners and percentage of pensioners who have lost *(a)* some housing benefit and *(b)* all housing benefit, breaking the figures down between local authority tenants and private tenants, in Scotland, as a result of the April changes.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that breakdowns of estimates of the effects of the changes to the housing benefit scheme in April 1987 are not available separately for Scottish households.

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his most recent estimate of the numbers of retirement pensioners who will be worse off by *(a)* up to £1 per week, *(b)* between £1 and £2 per week, *(c)* between £2 and £3 per week, *(d)* between £3 and £4 per week, *(e)* between £4 and £5 per week, and *(f)* £5 per week or over when housing benefit supplement is withdrawn in April 1988.

Mr. Portillo: The information is not available on which to base an estimate. However, claims for people receiving housing benefit supplement immediately before the introduction of the reformed social security schemes will automatically be assessed for entitlement to income support as well as for reformed housing benefit.

Mr. Andrew Bowden asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his most recent estimate of the number of pensioners who have capital in excess of £6,000 and who receive housing benefit.

Mr. Portillo: We do not collect specific information about amounts of capital held by households who receive housing benefit. The 1984 and 1985 family expenditure surveys included questions on income from capital and it is possible to use this information to make broad estimates, although these may not be very reliable. On this basis, it is estimated that currently somewhat over one third of a million pensioners in receipt of standard housing benefit have capital over £6,000.

Mr. Andrew Bowden asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether the transitional protection to be afforded to recipients of supplementary benefit in April 1988 will also be afforded to recipients of housing benefit supplement.

Mr. Portillo: No, transitional protection will not be afforded to recipients of housing benefit supplement—they will be treated in the same way as other claimants of standard housing benefit. However, all housing benefit supplement recipients will automatically be assessed for Income Support to ensure that those who are entitled to income support receive it without the need for a separate claim.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he proposes to alter the basis of housing benefit from household income to individual income on the introduction of the community charge; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: The provisions in housing benefit to assess the resources of couples jointly will continue. Non-dependant deductions, currently made in respect of a contribution by the non-dependant towards domestic rates, will not be needed when the community charge has replaced domestic rates.

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received on the need for housing benefit to cover emergency alarm systems for elderly, infirm and disabled people living in dispersed housing; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: We have received representations from the local authority associations and from organisations representing the elderly on the eligibility for housing benefit of the costs of charges for emergency alarm systems. The reformed housing benefit scheme carries forward our existing policy that housing benefit covers only those costs which are directly related to accommodation requirements. In response to comments on the reformed scheme, the final draft regulations recently issued to the local authority associations for consultation make it clear that charges for emergency alarm systems will be eligible for housing benefit where they are provided in any accommodation which is particularly suitable for elderly, sick or disabled people.

Interdepartmental Group for Under-fives

Mr. Rathbone asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) when last the interdepartmental group for under-fives met; and if he will make a statement about what was discussed;

(2) what future plans he has for the interdepartmental group for under fives.

Mrs. Currie: The interdepartmental consultative group on provision for under-fives met, under the Chairmanship of my hon. Friend the Minister for Health, with the Association of County Councils, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, the National Association of Health Authorities, and representatives of the voluntary sector on 12 October. The matters discussed were the White Paper on the Law on Child Care and Family Services, co-ordination of services for under fives, training, the involvement of the Manpower Services Commission with services for under fives and the Under Fives Initiative. It was agreed that the group would meet with the same bodies before Easter. We intend that there shall in future be annual meetings of the group.

Tardive Dyskinesia

Mr. Vaz asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps are being taken, in the light of research asserting a link between the phenothiazines, a class of major tranquillisers, and tardive dyskinesia in some recipients, to monitor the incidence of this complaint; and what steps are being taken to limit the use of these drugs by the psychiatric profession, and their promotion by drug companies.

Mrs. Currie: Research, which has clearly shown the value of phenothiazines in the treatment of certain serious psychiatric illnesses, has also shown that a proportion of patients taking them may suffer symptoms of tardive dyskinesia. The Committee on Safety of Medicines monitors all suspected adverse drug reactions through reports from doctors. Its publication "Current Problems Number 4" in April 1979 specifically covered tardive dyskinesia, and advised doctors treating psychiatric patients to give careful consideration to the risk-benefit ratio.

A number of studies have been published from which psychiatrists and other doctors can assess the degree of risk in different circumstances. The Licensing authority, with advice from the Committee, ensures that data sheets (sent by the manufacturer to all doctors) give appropriate information about adverse reactions and that advertisements are consistent with data sheets.

Electro-convulsive Therapy

Mr. Vaz asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what research has been conducted or commissioned into the efficacy of electro-convulsive therapy for psychiatric

conditions; what information he has as to the incidence of its use and its receptance as a valid method of treatment by the medical profession; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: There has been a considerable volume of research recently both regarding the efficacy of electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) for different patient groups and regarding the method of treatment. This research has confirmed that ECT is a very effective treatment for certain clinical conditions, and has made it clearer which conditions are best treated with ECT; it also confirmed that when properly administered its side effects are very slight.

The number of courses of treatment has tended to fall gradually in recent years. ECT is widely accepted as an effective treatment within the medical profession; the falling number of people being treated with ECT is likely to reflect the greater knowledge now available about the types of conditions most suitably treated with ECT and the availability of other treatments.

Royal Northern Hospital (Islington)

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representation he has received concerning the future of the Royal Northern hospital, Islington district health authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: None.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the current number of supplementary benefit claimants in *(a)* Finsbury Park and *(b)* Highgate offices of his Department; and what were the relevant figures for the three previous years.

Mr. Portillo: The number of people in receipt of supplementary benefit from the Finsbury Park and Highgate Local Offices, on 28 July 1987 (the latest date for which information is available) and for the years 1984 to 1986, are:

	Finsbury Park	*Highgate*
28 July 1987	21,303	18,844
13 August 1986	20,180	19,037
31 July 1985	18,023	18,331
31 July 1984	17,507	17,072

Source: 100 per cent. count of cases in action.

Ms. Abbott asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what assessment has been made of the financial losses sustained by lone parents who are currently affected by the requirement in the supplementary benefit regulations that they must register as available for work once their children reach the age of 16 years.

Mr. Portillo: A lone parent who has been in receipt of the long term rate of supplementary benefit and who becomes required to be available for employment when she no longer has a dependant child under 16 will move to the short term rate with a weekly loss of £8·25 if a householder, £6·60 if a non-householder or £1·15 if, unusually, a boarder. Under the proposed income support scheme there will be no distinctions between long and short term rates, or between householders and non-householders. The family and the lone parent premiums will continue to be payable so long as a child or young person is a member of the family whether or not the lone parent is required to be available for work.

Administration and Medical Secretaries

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what restrictions are placed on the part or full-time employment of qualified administration or medical secretaries on grounds of age.

Mr. Newton: None, beyond retirement age policies which are determined locally by employing health authorities and the law governing the employment of young people.

Invalid Care Allowance

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many married women who applied for the invalid care allowance following his announcement in June 1986 are still waiting for the benefit; what percentage that figure represents of the total number of applicants; how many of those applied before the original closing date of 31 December 1986; and when he estimates that all the applicants will have received the benefit.

Mr. Scott: At 9 October some 130,600 invalid care allowance claims had been received from married women of which about 18,700 (14.3 per cent.) were awaiting decision. These claims, including around 8,000 received up to 31 December 1986, will be cleared as quickly as possible. The question inadvertently implies a final date for claims; although claims received after 31 August 1987 do not attract extra-statutory arrears in excess of 12 months, the statutory entitlement to current benefit and up to 12 months arrears in appropriate circumstances, will continue indefinitely.

Telephone Exchange for the Deaf

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he proposes to have further discussions with representatives of British Telecom and the Royal National Institute for the Deaf on the future of funding and extension of the telephone exchange for the deaf (TED); and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: I understand that there has been a meeting between British Telecom and the Royal National Institute for the Deaf about the future of the RNID telephone exchange for the deaf. Discussions are now proceeding urgently between British Telecom and the Government Departments concerned.

Benefits

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many of the staff on his Department are engaged in publicising the existence of welfare benefits to potential beneficiaries; what percentage of his staff this represents; what is the cost of this service; and what proportion of the expenditure of his Department this represents.

Mr. Portillo: Advising potential beneficiaries of the existence of welfare benefits forms a part of the work of all staff in the local office network. Information on the proportion of staff time spent in this way is not collected

centrally. It is not therefore possible to provide the cost of this service. The Department's planned expenditure on promotional literature and advertising of Social Security benefits in the 1987-88 financial year is £11 million.

AIDS

Sir David Price asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the latest figures for the number of *(a)* cases of and *(b)* deaths from AIDS.

Mr. Newton: The Department announced on 5 October that a United Kingdom total of 1,067 cases of AIDS, including 605 deaths, had been reported to the communicable diseases surveillance centre and the communicable diseases (Scotland) unit by the end of September.

Maternity Payments

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will be sending a leaflet about the new maternity payments to family income supplement claimants who have notified the Department that a child has been born; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: No. I refer the hon. Member to the answer which I have given today to her other question about maternity payments in which I have outlined the measures which we have taken to inform family income supplement recipients about social fund maternity payments.

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how he intends to inform people who claim family income supplement that they are now entitled to claim the new maternity payment.

Mr. Portillo: The new arrangements for making maternity payments under the social fund were introduced on 6 April 1987. A leaflet setting out the various social security benefits available to expectant and new mothers and a related poster are available for display in all DHSS local offices, main Post Offices and ante-natal clinics. The leaflet is also available through family practitioners. Copies of an integrated leaflet and application form used for claiming the social fund maternity payment are available in DHSS local offices and ante-natal clinics. Additionally both the family income supplement leaflet and the related letter which is sent to notify claimants of the amount of benefit awarded draw attention to the fact that help from the social fund may be available. Similar arrangements will be made in the leaflets relating to the new family credit scheme commencing in April 1988 and in the information sent to successful claimants.

Funeral Payments

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services where the leaflets and application forms for the new funeral payments will be displayed.

Mr. Portillo: The new arrangements for payment for funeral expenses under the social fund were introduced on 6 April 1987. Copies of an integrated leaflet and application form are available in DHSS local offices and offices of Registrars of Births, Marriages and Deaths. A leaflet which draws attention to social fund funeral payments and other social security benefits which are available, in appropriate circumstances, to bereaved people, is displayed in DHSS local offices and main Post Offices.

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how he intends to inform housing benefit and family income supplement claimants that they can now claim the new funeral payments.

Mr. Portillo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer which I have given today to her other question about funeral payments. Additionally, the family income supplement leaflet and the letter which is sent to notify the amount of benefit awarded draw attention to the fact that help from the social fund may be available. Leaflets for the reformed housing benefit and the new family credit schemes will carry a similar message from next April.

Funeral and Maternity Payments

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has made any provision for extra staff in his Department's local supplementary benefit offices to administer the new funeral and maternity payments; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: A total of 224 staff have been allocated to local social security offices this year for the administration of funeral and maternity payments.

Hospitals (Birmingham)

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will make extra resources available to hospitals in Birmingham to update kitchens as a result of the loss of Crown immunity.

Mrs. Currie: We have no plans to do so. Central guidance has, for a number of years, indicated that health authorities are expected to establish working practices as if they were not immune from legal penalty. Last July the chairman of West Midlands regional health authority announced that an additional £3 million was being spent on hospital kitchens in Birmingham following discussions with the city's environmental health officers on hygiene issues.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many hospitals in Birmingham have lost training status in the past one, two, and three years; and in each case for what reasons.

Mrs. Currie: The Department does not collect routinely detailed information about training recognition. The hon. Member may, therefore, wish to approach the chairman of the West Midlands regional health authority.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many beds and wards are currently closed in Birmingham hospitals; and how this compares with the situation one, five and 10 years ago;

(2) how many health authorities in Birmingham have discontinued a home laundry service;

(3) in which Birmingham hospitals the asbestos removal programme has been abandoned; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what is his best estimate of the numbers of patients of Birmingham hospitals with treatable conditions who have become incurable in the past 12 months.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that this information is not held centrally. The hon. Member may therefore wish to write to the chairman of the West Midlands regional health authority who may be able to help him.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the new policy initiatives from his Department in the past two years insofar as they affect hospitals in Birmingham; and if he will give details of the extra resources made available to carry out each initiative.

Mrs. Currie: In general, the Department does not allocate funds for specific purposes. It is for each health authority to determine how the funds available to it should be spent bearing in mind the Government's policy aims and objectives.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on current policy regarding transfers of patients from Rampton hospital to St. Margaret's hospital, Great Barr, Birmingham.

Mrs. Currie: There is no specific policy with regard to the transfer of Rampton hospital patients to St. Margaret's hospital, Great Barr, Birmingham.

Once it is considered that a patient no longer needs treatment in conditions of special security, the possibility of transfer from special hospital to another hospital or, if appropriate, discharge into the community is explored by the patient's responsible medical officer. Transfer to a National Health Service hospital must first be agreed between the patient's responsible medical officer and the appropriate NHS consultant. Where the transfer of a special hospital patient proves to be difficult there are arrangements for this Department to take up the case with the appropriate regional health authority. Permanent transfer is often preceded by a period of trial leave. In the case of a restricted patient the prior approval of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department is required before any move outside the special hospital can take place.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy not to restrict the use of hospitals in Birmingham to residents of Birmingham.

Mrs. Currie: District general hospitals are expected to provide services for their local population as are teaching hospitals in addition to their wider responsibilities. General practitioners may however refer a patient to the consultant whom they consider will be of the greatest benefit to their patient.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the future of regional specialities of hospitals in Birmingham.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Social Service[illegible] representations he has received about the curre[illegible]unding of hospitals in Birmingham; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: We have received a number of letters from hon. Members and members of the public about the funding of health services in Birmingham. Since 1979 the number of inpatients treated in Birmingham has increased by 12 per cent. and the number of patients waiting for treatment has fallen by 22 per cent. By any measure this is a success story made possible by increased resources and the dedication of the staff. Having discussed the current situation in Birmingham with the chairman of the West Midlands regional health authority, I am confident that the best possible service will continue to be provided to patients within the available resources.

As the hon. Member is aware however, financial allocations to districts are a matter for the regional health authority.

Orthopaedic Surgery (Birmingham)

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proposals he has for shortening waiting lists for orthopaedic surgery in Birmingham.

Mrs. Currie: The five Birmingham health districts are between them receiving £828,000 from the waiting list fund which will enable their hospitals to carry out 1,500-2,000 extra orthopaedic operations and take over 400 additional out-patient cases from the waiting list in 1987-88. The precise number of procedures performed will depend on case-mix. The projects being supported include the provision of an additional operating theatre at the Royal Orthopaedic hospital (Woodlands) which will have a continuing impact on the number of patients treated. In addition the Bromsgrove and Redditch District Health Authority is receiving £120,000 to treat 150 orthopaedic in-patients from the South Birmingham waiting lists, the people living within the East Birmingham District will benefit from a project to carry out over 130 extra orthopaedic operations for £75,000 in the Solihull DHA.

Birmingham Health Authorities

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will set out figures for revenue spending for the Birmingham health authorities in 1982-83 at 1985-86 values together with the figure for 1985-86; and what account these figures take of demographic changes in addition to inflation.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Mortality Statistics

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many men aged 65 years and over, and women aged 60 years and over, have died in each month since July 1985.

Mrs. Currie: The information is shown in the table. The latest available data are for December 1986.

Deaths occurring to men aged 65+ and women 60+. England and Wales: July 1985 to December 1986

Month of occurrence	*Males 65+*	*Women 60+*
1985		
July	15,383	19,213
August	15,422	18,970
September	15,334	18,686
October	16,169	20,110
November	18,389	22,630
December	19,232	24,050
1986		
January	22,041	29,334

Month of occurrence	Males 65+	Women 60+
February	21,219	26,822
March	21,371	27,726
April	17,293	21,449
May	16,410	19,212
June	15,750	19,373
July	15,242	18,829
August	15,761	19,147
September	15,901	19,666
October	16,248	19,782
November	16,516	20,321
December	18,608	22,815

Pension Books

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his policy on the abolition of retirement pension books in favour of bank cash cards; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: We have no plans for either the abolition of order books or the introduction of bank cash cards as a method of paying social security benefits.

London Boroughs (Fostering Schemes)

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list those London boroughs which have adult fostering schemes for people with learning difficulties.

Mrs. Currie: Comprehensive information is not available centrally. However, it is known that a number of London boroughs operate or are planning to operate "adult fostering" schemes for mentally handicapped people.

Family Credit

Ms. Abbott asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information the new family credit form requires claimants to give about their current savings and capital.

Mr. Portillo: For family income supplement, claimants are required only to declare the amount of any interest they receive from savings and capital; but for family credit it is necessary to know the value of the savings and capital. In preparation for the conversion of existing family income supplement recipients to family credit from next April the form asks them to declare whether they have any savings worth more than £2,000 and if any of their children have savings worth more than £2,000, and if so to give details. It also asks whether they own any property or land.

Ms. Abbott asked the Secretary of State for Social Services why, in the light of the current savings and capital limit of £3,000 for supplementary benefit, he has decided to ask family income supplement claimants to declare savings below the present capital limit when completing the family credit claim form.

Mr. Portillo: Information about savings and capital is being sought on the same basis as on supplementary benefit claim forms. Claimants are asked to provide details where savings are above £2,000. This is appropriate since some assets have to be valued at more than the nominal amount (for example shares or National Savings Certificates).

Income Support

Ms. Abbott asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will amend the draft income support regulations so as to exempt lone parents from the requirement to register as available for full-time work while they are in receipt of a dependant allowance; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: The present policy of exempting a lone parent only while there is a dependant child under 16 has applied since 1948 and it recognises that a parent in this position is no longer prevented from seeking work by the need to care for a young child and that it is generally in the person's own interests to seek work when in this situation. The requirement does not, of course, apply if the person is in one of the other exempted groups which are listed in Schedule 1 of the draft Income Support (General) Regulations — for example because she is over 50, has not worked for 10 years, has not been required to be available for work during that period and has no prospect of future employment.

Kidney Stones (Treatment)

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Social Services why there are no shock wave machines for the treatment of patients with kidney stones in the west midlands region.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Kidney Patients (Birmingham)

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many kidney patients with a treatable condition have been rejected by National Health Service hospitals in Birmingham in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that this information is not available centrally. The Government are fully committed to the expansion of services for patients with end stage renal failure. In 1986 the West Midlands regional health authority reached the required national target for accepting new patients on to its renal programme and is investing additional resources of some £640,000 this year in support of its programme.

Child Raising (Costs)

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what deduction can be drawn from the family expenditure survey as to the proportion of the average costs of raising one child, taking medium income in 1985 for a couple with one child as the reference point, which is covered by child benefit at the current rate.

Mr. Portillo: Relevant information could not be extracted from the Family Expenditure Survey without disproportionate expense. But in any event, child benefit helps towards the extra costs faced by families with children, and is not intended to meet those costs in full nor to bear a specific relationship to the costs individual families may incur.

Family Taxation

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish figures showing for

1975, 1980 and 1985 the numbers of lower paid single people with and without children, and of lower paid families with and without children, whose marginal tax rates including benefit withdrawal were *(a)* over 100 per cent. *(b)* 90-100 per cent., *(c)* 80-90 per cent., *(d)* 70-80 per cent., *(e)* 60-70 per cent., *(f)* 50-60 per cent., and *(g)* 40-50 per cent; and if he will compare these figures with the numbers likely to be similarly affected after implementation of the Social Security Act 1986 in April 1988.

Mr. Portillo: Information for 1975 and 1980 is not readily available and results for April 1988 will depend on rates of benefit, income tax and national insurance which have yet to be announced. The available information for November 1985, which cannot readily be disaggregated into single people and married couples, is as follows:

Working families with children

Marginal tax rate (per cent.)	*Numbers (000)*
Over 50 below 60	140
Over 60 below 70	100
Over 70 below 80	—
Over 80 below 90	110
Over 90 below 100	60
100 and over	70
Total over 50 per cent.	480

Working families without children

Marginal tax rate (per cent.)	*Numbers (000)*
Over 50 below 60	90
Over 60 below 70	60
Over 70 below 80	—
Over 80 below 90	50
Over 90 below 100	—
100 and over	—
Total 50 per cent. and over	200

Notes:
1. *Sources:*
   (a) Working families with children: 1983, 1984, 1985 Family Expenditure Surveys.
   (b) Working families without children: 1985 Family Expenditure Survey.
2. November 1985 benefit rates have been assumed throughout.

Rating Reform

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether two separate systems of rebates will be required during the phasing in of community charge; one system for domestic rates and one for community charge.

Mr. Portillo: Phasing in of community charge will only occur in England. During the transitional period in England, rebates will be available both for domestic rates and for the community charge. The operational details of the rebate scheme are still being considered in consultation with local authorities.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether there will be facilities for community charge rebates to be paid daily to those liable for collective community charge and eligible for community charge rebates.

Mr. Portillo: The operational details of the community charge rebate scheme are still being considered in consultation with local authorities.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Shoe Industry

Mr. Michael Morris asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what financial support has been give to the British shoe industry through the British Overseas Trade Board since 1974-75, both in absolute and real terms, including the budget for the current financial year.

Mr. Alan Clark: The BOTB does not allocate funds or generally keep records of financial assistance to industry sectors. However, some information on overseas trade fairs sponsored by BFMF (British Footwear Manufactures Federation) and SATRA Footwear Technology Centre is available as follows:

Year	*Support* £	*At 1987-8 prices* £
1983-84	46,688	55,643
1984-85	25,929	29,599
1985-86	79,629	85,723
1986-87	33,490	34,997

This year support for trade fairs is estimated at £17,798.

EC (Steel Industry)

Mr. Win Griffiths asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, since March 1987, when and where talks have taken place between Government and Commission officials on the issue of European Economic Community steel industry production capacity and job cuts; and what views were put forward by each side at these meetings.

Mr. Atkins: Three Councils of Ministers — on 19 March, 1 June and 21 September—have considered the future of the European steel regime. In preparation for these there have been a number of bilateral and multilateral meetings involving United Kingdom Ministers and officials and the Commission and frequent contacts between the United Kingdom permanent representation in Brussels and the Commission. Following unanimous agreement at the most recent Council of Ministers on the need for restrictions to ensure the future viability of the Community steel industry the Commission has appointed "Three Wise Men" to advise on how adequate commitments to reduction of production capacity can be obtained.

Post Office

Mr. Favell asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will introduce legislation to privatise the Post Office; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: No. It is the Government's view that there are significant benefits to be gained in transferring activities from the public to the private sector. Nevertheless, we have made it clear that because of its special character we have no intention of privatising the Royal Mail; but we do not rule out other parts of the Post Office as possible candidates where privatisation is practicable and makes commercial sense, though we have not yet come to any conclusions.

Film Distribution Scheme

Mr. Favell asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what action he proposes to take on the report of the Director General of Fair Trading on the experimental film distribution scheme in Greater Manchester and Glasgow; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: I am considering what action might be appropriate in the light of the Director General of Fair Trading's assessment of the results of the Manchester and Glasgow film releasing experiment, and intend to consult the industry as soon as is practicable about such action.

Mr. Ben Banerjee

Mr. Dalyell asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on his Department's examination of the case of Mr. Ben Banerjee in relation to the export of arms to Iran.

Mr. Alan Clark: I am not aware there has been any breach of United Kingdom Government export control regulations by Mr. Banerjee and therefore no examination is taking place.

Mail (Russia)

Mr. John Marshall asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many representations have been made to the Russian authorities during the past four years about their violations of international postal conventions.

Mr. Butcher: As I said in reply to a question from my hon. Friend on 20 July, at columns *85-86*, the Post Office and my officials take every opportunity to express concern to Soviet postal authorities in international postal forums about the non-delivery of mail addressed to Soviet citizens. Since the UPU Congress in July 1984, United Kingdom delegates at international postal meetings have made such representations at least once a year. Moreover, the United Kingdom delegation to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe review in Vienna raised this issue three times between November last year and May 1987, and my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs referred to it in his speech in the same forum last December.

Individual cases concerning particular items are dealt with by the Post Office by means of standard international inquiry forms, followed, if necessary, by a letter raising a specific point.

Mr. John Marshall asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many complaints the Post Office has received in the past year about the non-delivery of mail in Russia; and in how many cases the Post Office has paid compensation to the complainants.

Mr. Butcher: This is a matter for the Post Office. However, I understand that in the year from October 1986 to September 1987 the Post Office received 1,026 inquiries about mail to the Soviet Union and paid compensation in 207 cases.

Monopolies and Mergers Commission

Ms. Richardson asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will list *(a)* the members of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, *(b)* the criteria for selection of members, *(c)* the relevant qualifications of present members, *(d)* the number of Trades Union Congress-nominated places and *(e)* how many Trades Union Congress-nominated places are held by women.

Mr. Maude: Members of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission are drawn from a variety of professional backgrounds relevant to the work of the commission. In selecting candidates for appointment the particular expertise and experience currently required by the commission are important considerations. Places are reserved neither for any particular specialism nor for the nominees of particular organisations. At present four members have a background in trade union affairs; all are men.

Members of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission as at 16 October 1987 and relevant qualifications

Name	*Position*	*Relevant Qualifications*
Sir Godfray Le Quesne, QC	Chairman	Lawyer
Mr. H. H. Hunt	Deputy Chairman	Management Consultant
Mr. D. G. Richards	Deputy Chairman	Chartered Accountant
Mr. R. G. Smethurst	Deputy Chairman	Economist
Sir James Ackers	Member	Industrialist (management)
Mr. C. C. Baillieu	Member	Industrialist (management)
Mr. F. E. Bonner, CBE	Member	Nationalised industry (management)
Mr. L. Britz	Member	Trade unionist
Mr. M. B. Bunting	Member	Industrialist (management)
Mr. K. S. Carmichael, CBE	Member	Chartered Accountant
Sir Robert Clayton, CBE	Member	Industrialist (management)
Mr. P. H. Dean	Member	Industrialist (management)
Mr. A. Ferry, MBE	Member	Trade unionist
Mr. P. S. G. Flint	Member	Lawyer in industry
Mr. D. G. Goyder	Member	Solicitor
Miss A. M. Head	Member	Unit trusts (management)
Mr. J. D. Keir, QC	Member	Lawyer in industry
Mr. L. Kelly	Member	Industrialist (management)
Mr. M. S. Lipworth	Member	Barrister and Insurance services
Prof. S. C. Littlechild	Member	Economist
Miss P. K. R. Mann	Member	Senior manager (advertising)
Mr. S. McDowell, CBE	Member	Economist
Mr. L. A. Mills	Member	Trade unionist
Mr. B. C. Owens	Member	Industrialist (management)

Name	*Position*	*Relevant Qualifications*
Mr. N. L. Salmon	Member	Industrialist (management)
Mr. D. P. Thomson	Member	Banker
Mr. C. A. Unwin, MBE	Member	Trade unionist
Mr. S. Wainwright, CBE	Member	Banker and Nationalised Industry (management)
Mr. R. Young	Member	Industrialist (management)

Note:
1. Under the provisions of the Fair Trading Act 1973 the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is responsible for maintaining a panel from which additional members may be appointed to take part in any investigation into a newspaper merger.
2. Similarly, under section 13(10) of the Telecommunications Act 1984 the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is required to appoint not less than three additional members to the commission to assist in any investigation under the Act.

Consumer Protection

Mr. Fraser asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what arrangements he has made for consulting the National Consumer Council, the Retail Consortium and others about regulations and the code of practice to be drawn up under part III of the Consumer Protection Act 1987.

Mr. Maude: Informal consultations with major interested parties, including the National Consumer Council and the Retail Consortium, are taking place at present. Wider public consultation will commence as soon as informal consultations are complete.

Advisory Committee on Telecommunications for Small Businesses

Ms. Richardson asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will *(a)* list the members of the Advisory Committee on Telecommunications for Small Businesses, *(b)* state the criteria for selection of members, *(c)* list the relevant qualifications of present members, *(d)* indicate the number of Trades Union Congress-nominated places and *(e)* indicate how many Trades Union Congress-nominated members are women.

Mr. Butcher: Members of this committee are appointed by the Director General of Telecommunications, to whom questions on its composition should be addressed. A list of the current members is as follows:

Mr. H. Kleeman, CBE *(Chairman)*
Mr. P. Agnew
Mr. I. Bell
Mr. R. Blaxland
Mr. R. Frenzel
Mr. P. Fryman
Mr. R. Furey
Mrs. J. Harris
Mr. F. Hawman
Mr. E. Roberts
Mr. M. Taylor
Mr. G. Thorpe
Mr. J. White

Rover Group

Mr. Rooker asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what plans he has to sell all or part of the Rover Group to the private sector.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The long-term aim of both the Rover Group board and the Government is to return the company to full private ownership, but we have no specific plans at present.

South Africa

Mr. John Morris asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what assessment has been made by Her Majesty's Government of the effect on jobs of imposing full sanctions against South Africa.

Mr. Alan Clark: No current assessment has been made, but when an exercise was undertaken last year our best estimate was that about 90,000 full-time job equivalents may be involved in the export of goods and services to South Africa. United Kingdom jobs are also involved in trade with neighbouring southern African countries which transit South Africa and in those United Kingdom industries which depend on imports from South Africa.

Post Office Counters Ltd.

Mr. Spearing asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the future of Post Office Counters Limited.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: We set long-term strategic objectives for the Post Office in July last year. The Government's policy is that Post Office Counters Ltd. should operate commercially, providing profitable cost-effective services of a quality which satisfies the reasonable requirements of its agency clients and its customers.

Fireworks

Mr. Rooker asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will bring forward legislation to limit the sale of fireworks to the general public to one week prior to 5 November; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: No. The present voluntary arrangements under which the sale of fireworks is restricted to a three-week period around 5 November is working well. I do not consider that a shorter period would be generally welcomed.

Ship Radio Licences

Mr. Steen asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he will set out in tabular form in the *Official Report* all the different types of ship radio licences, the cost of each and whether he intends to reduce the numbers and rationalise the fees;

(2) how many officials have been employed in each of the last three years in administering the different types of ship radio licences; what has been the cost of this in each of the last three years; and if he will review the procedures and rationalise the administration.

Mr. Butcher: The different ship radio licences and the appropriate fees collected are:

Licence	Fee
	£
Ship Radio	50·00 pa
Ship Radio (VHF)	17·50 pa
Ship Radio (emergency only)	20·00 every 5 years
Ship Radio (transportable)	25·00 pa
Ship Radio (receive only)	No charge (valid until revoked)

The number of officials employed directly on the issue of ship radio licences and their costs for each of the last three years, were:

Year	Number of Staff Licensing	Others	Costs
			£K
1984-5	11	3·65	197
1985-6	10	3·65	226
1986-7	7	3·45	186

My Department has a commitment to review licence types, procedures and fees on a regular basis. This has resulted in a reduction, in the last few years, in the number of different licences issued and the simplification of the administrative procedures necessary to issue such licences. The procedures involved in issuing ship radio licences were revised at the end of 1986 and have resulted in a considerable reduction in the time taken to issue a licence (five to six weeks down to one to two weeks), and a doubling of the number of licences dealt with per officer over the three-year period. Despite this significant improvement my Department is currently exploring the possibilities of further reducing licensing administration, by merging licences, or exempting particular uses of radio.

Handsworth Task Force

Mr. Rooker asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many jobs have been created by the Handsworth task force since it was set up; and how much of the allocated budget has been *(a)* spent and *(b)* committed.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Since the Government's Handsworth Task Force was set up in 1986 it has committed some £2·4 million from its own top-up funds to projects and, of this, £1·2 million has so far been spent. However their task force supported projects are also expected to lever over £4 million from private sector and other public sector sources bringing the total expenditure upon them to around £6·5 million. The task force also assists in the targeting of main Government programmes into Handsworth and since the task force was set up total Government expenditure in the area has been around £25 million.

It is not, however, possible to measure total net jobs created in the task force area with any accuracy. Any estimate would not only have to take into account new jobs specifically associated with task force projects, but also jobs in firms helped by task force development funds, jobs created in agencies funded by the inner cities initiative and jobs gained by residents as a result of training courses facilitated by the initiative. We have not, therefore attempted such an overall estimate.

ENVIRONMENT

Steel-framed Houses

Mr. Bright asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what guidance the Building Research Establishment is able to offer on the inspection and assessment of steel-framed and steel-clad houses.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Building Research Establishment's fifth report on steel framed and steel clad houses which deals with inspection and assessment techniques, is published today. It provides detailed guidance on methods of inspection and assessment needed for a structural survey, identifies locations where steel may be vulnerable to corrosion, and gives advice on the likely durability of protective coatings. It also contains a comprehensive list of steel framed, steel clad and cast iron house types, with their known locations.

The report is based on the BRE's detailed examination of a large number of dwellings built in 24 different systems in a wide variety of locations. It confirms that the vast majority of steel houses have demonstrated levels of performance not very different from many traditionally built dwellings of the same age, and can be expected to give good performance into the foreseeable future, with a life on a par with rehabilitated dwellings of conventional construction.

I hope that this report, read in conjunction with those on individual house types which the BRE is now producing, will be of particular value to building societies and their surveyors when considering lending on properties of this type. I believe that local authorities and other owners will find the report equally helpful when approaching the repair and maintenance of these houses.

Also published today is a summary of the report as a BRE Information paper, and a Companion Information paper on repair and improvement techniques. Copies of the report and the Information papers are being sent to local authorities in England which own steel and cast iron houses, and to the professional institutions whose members have a practical interest in the subject. My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales are taking similar action.

Rating Reform

Mr. Andrew Bowden asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will calculate at 1987-88 prices the relationship of gross net community charge to net household income in each band of equivalent net income set out in the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" at figure F5 *(a)* on the basis used in the Green Paper, *(b)* on the basis of incorporating in income support and housing benefit an additional payment of 20 per cent. of domestic rates and *(c)* on the basis of present social security arrangements;

(2) if he will calculate at 1987-88 prices the numbers of households gaining and losing from the replacement of domestic rates by the community charge as set out in figure 17 of the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" *(a)* on the basis used in the Green Paper, *(b)* on the basis of incorporating in income support and housing benefit an additional payment of 20 per cent. of average domestic rates and *(c)* on the basis of present social security arrangements.

Mr. Howard: The figures set out in the Green Paper were derived from a tax benefit model calibrated to 1984-85 prices. The model is currently being updated to 1986-87 prices, the latest date for which appropriate income information is available. When that work is complete we shall publish updated tables corresponding to those in the Green Paper.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if foreigners will be identified on the community charge register so as to avoid their prosecution for not being on the electoral register; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: The community charges register and the electoral register will be separate documents. The two will not have the same coverage. The community charges register will contain the names of those adults who are solely or mainly resident in an area. Whether they are United Kingdom citizens will be immaterial. There is no question of someone who is not entitled to vote being prosecuted for not being on the electoral register.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of the initial cost of the setting up the community charge collection system will be met by Her Majesty's Government.

Mr. Howard: The cost of setting up the community charge registration and collection system will be taken into account in rate support grant settlements.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if joint and several liability for the poll tax will extend to married couples who are separated, but living in the same dwelling; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: A husband and wife who are members of the same household will be jointly liable for each other's community charge. Exceptionally, a husband and wife may have so organised their living arrangements that, though they live under the same roof, they are not members of the same household. In such circumstances it will be open to either member of the couple to make a case to the local authority that they should not be treated as jointly and severally liable for the purposes of recovery of the community charge.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if the initial canvass for the poll tax register will require names, ages and relationship details of occupants of residential accommodation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: Community charge registration officers will decide what information they require when sending out the initial canvass. In order to compile the register they will need to know the name and address of each adult liable for the personal community charge, but not the reltionship of one adult with another.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish his latest estimate of the total number of people who will pay the full community charge; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave to the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) on 15 July at column *527*.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the number of couples where one partner will pay both community charges.

Mr. Howard: It is quite impossible for me to speculate on the private financial arrangements which will be made by individual couples.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is his latest estimate of the numbers of people who will be required to pay 20 per cent. of the community charge;

(2) if he will list for each local authority the number of dwellings where the rates paid are equal to the community charge per person, using the figures from the exemplifications placed in the Library since 11 June;

(3) if he will produce figure J7 of Cmnd. 9714 "Paying for Local Government", showing households gaining and losing with full replacement of domestic rates by the community charge by *(a)* region, *(b)* local authority, and *(c)* parliamentary constituency;

(4) if he will construct a table in the same form as figure J7 on page 125 of "Paying for Local Government" (Cmnd. 9714) showing the numbers of adults living in each of the households gaining and losing with full replacement of domestic rates by the community charge.

Mr. Howard: I shall answer these questions shortly.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give examples of the extreme cases in which individuals failing to register for the community charge may be liable to prosecution under the Theft Acts, referred to in paragraph 22 of the "Paying for Local Government" deposited paper, NS. 2643.

Mr. Howard: We have proposed a number of civil penalties under the new system. These will be applied if a person fails, without reasonable excuse, to register for the community charge or to respond to a canvass. Where a person, by deception, dishonestly avoids paying all or part of the community charge by consistently supplying false information there will also be the possibility of recourse to the existing criminal law. In this respect the community charge will be no different from any other legally enforceable liability.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether, in cases where the ownership or tenancy of a dwelling is in the wife's name, this will prevent her husband being designated the responsible person for community charge registration purposes; and if he will make a statement;

(2) whether, in cases where the ownership or tenancy of a dwelling is in the husband's name, this will prevent his wife being designated the responsible person for community charge registration purposes; and if he will make a statement.

(3) if the practice of married and unmarried couples alternating as head of household on electoral registration forms will be allowed on the community charge register;

(4) how the responsible person will be designated at each address for community charge registration purposes.

Mr. Howard: The responsible person at each address will be designated by the community charge registration office (CCRO) and will receive a notice of designation. This notice will be incorporated into the canvass form sent out by the CCRO.

The person designated will generally be the owner or tenant living at the address, but may be another person who has a connection with the property or who wishes to act as responsible person. The registration officer's objective will be to obtain timely and accurate information from each address. There will be nothing to prevent a husband and wife from alternating in responding to canvasses if they wish to do so.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how the existing benefits of rate relief for disabled persons will be maintained under the community charge proposals.

Mr. Howard: Under the domestic rating system rateable values are increased to take account of extensions and alterations to property. Rate relief is granted to disabled people to ensure that they do not have to pay higher bills as a result of modifications needed to their homes as a result of their disability.

This problem will not arise with the community charge, because improvements to people's homes will not affect the level of the charge.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what arrangements will be made for diplomatic staff resident in Britain to pay the community charge.

Mr. Howard: Foreign diplomats are not liable to pay United Kingdom taxes, including rates, and they will not be liable to pay the community charge. They do, however, make a contribution at present towards the cost of local authority services. We intend to establish arrangements for a similar contribution to be made when the community charge is introduced.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will set out for each local authority the estimated percentage change in community charge for a one percentage increase in spending, using the figures from the exemplifications deposited in the Library since 11 June; and if he will make a statement explaining why there are differences in the gearing effect.

Mr. Howard: The intention is that there should be a pound for pound relationship between increases in expenditure per adult and the increase in the community charge as a result of the proposals we published on 23 September for the simplification of grant payments. It is also the case that for each local authority there should be a 1 per cent. increase in its gross charge for each 1 per cent. increase in its expenditure. The relationship, in percentage terms, between the aggregate change in expenditure and the change in the community charge for each local authority area will vary from area to area reflecting the relative importance of central grant and non-domestic rates in financing aggregate expenditure in that area. A £1 per adult increase in expenditure should still lead to a £1 increase in the community charge, however. I have placed figures in the Library demonstrating these relationships.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list in the *Official Report* those authorities budgeting to make contributions from their housing revenue account to the general rate fund in 1987-88, and express those contributions as a percentage of total expenditure and in terms of their effect on the published 1987-88 community charge calculations;

(2) what discussions his officials have had with the Audit Commission about any increase in external audit effort as a result of the introduction of the community charge;

(3) what discussion he has had with, or what representations he has received from the Audit Commission about the likely effect of his reform of local government finance on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of local authorities;

(4) whether he will provide England-only versions of figures F1 to F5 and J4 to J8 of Cmnd. 9714, "Paying For Local Government" to take account of *(a)* 1987-88 community charge figures, *(b)* the most recent tax-benefit model and *(c)* most recent other data;

(5) whether he will provide versions of figures F1 to F5 and J4 to J8 of Cmnd. 9714, "Paying For Local Government", showing separately figures for London, metropolitan areas, and shire areas, to take account of *(a)* 1987-88 community charge figures, *(b)* the most recent tax-benefit model and *(c)* most recent other data;

(6) whether he will provide versions of figures J4, J5, J7 and J8 of Cmnd. 9714, "Paying For Local Government", showing separately figures for pensioner couples, to take account of *(a)* 1987-88 community charge figures, *(b)* the most recent tax-benefit model and *(c)* most recent other data;

(7) whether he will provide versions of figures J4 to J8 of Cmnd. 9714, "Paying For Local Government", showing figures for households with net incomes of under £200 per week, to take account of *(a)* 1987-88 community charge figures, *(b)* the most recent tax-benefit model and *(c)* most recent other data;

(8) whether he will update annexes F and J of Cmnd. 9714, "Paying For Local Government", particularly to take account of *(a)* 1987-88 community charge figures, *(b)* the most recent tax-benefit model and *(c)* most recent other data such as the Family Expenditure Survey;

(9) whether he proposes to make earlier rate support grant settlements in order to allow local authorities to take earlier decisions on levels of community charge;

(10) whether he proposes to amend section 79 of the Local Government Act 1972 so that, following his proposed introduction of a national non-domestic rate, ownership or tenancy of property or place of work cease to be qualifications for election and holding office as a member of a local authority;

(11) if squash clubs and other sports facilities will be exempt from the proposals contained in Cmnd. 9714 "Paying for Local Government", and in the subsequent consultation documents issued by his Department.

Mr. Ridley: I shall answer these questions shortly.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussion he has had with the Salvation Army about the impact of community charge on its activities.

Mr. Ridley: My officials have had two meetings with representatives of the Salvation Army to discuss the community charge.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what opinion polls or market research he has commissioned into attitudes to his proposed reform of local government finance; and whether he will publish the findings.

Mr. Ridley: None.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions he has had with the local authority associations about the requirements of a community charge rebate scheme.

Mr. Ridley: An initial discussion of the community charge rebate scheme took place at the Housing Benefit Standing Committee on 3 September. We shall be deciding, with the local authority associations, the most appropriate forum for detailed discussions of the rebate scheme.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to protect the privacy of occupants of women's refuges following the compilation of community charge registers.

Mr. Ridley: My officials have arranged to meet representatives of the Women's Aid Federation early next month to discuss the concerns that have been expressed about this issue.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will review the proposed community charge liability of members of religious orders who have taken vows of poverty.

Mr. Ridley: We are considering the impact of the community charge on people in such religious communities.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions his officials have had with the local government training board on training programmes for canvassers for the community charge register in law, in interview techniques, in interpersonal skills for dealing with hostility and resentment, and in self-defence.

Mr. Ridley: None.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether, for the purposes of his proposed exemption from full payment of community charge, he will define *(a)* full-time student and *(b)* term time address.

Mr. Ridley: The meaning of the term "full-time students" will be defined in regulations. They will be treated as having their sole or main residence in the places where they are resident for the purpose of undertaking their courses.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what discussions officials from his Department have had with suppliers of computer software about the computing requirements in local government of his proposals for a community charge;

(2) what discussions officials from his Department have had with computer manufacturers about the increased computing capacity local authorities will require to cope with his proposals for a community charge.

Mr. Ridley: My officials have frequent contact with computer manufacturers and software suppliers about the computer systems requirements of the community charge.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what extra capital resouces he plans to make available to local government in 1988-89 and 1989-90 to enable the purchase of computers and buildings necessary to implement community charge.

Mr. Ridley: It is for local authorities to decide what, if any, capital investment they need to enable them to introduce the community charge efficiently. Estimates of the capital expenditure needed for this purpose will be considered, together with other requirements, in setting the overall provisions for spending in 1988-89 and subsquent years for the other services capital block.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will give his estimates of the costs local authorities need to incur on current account in 1988-89 to set up the necessary systems for community charge registration and collection;

(2) what provision in local authorities' 1988-89 current expenditure he has made to take account of setting up the necessary systems for community charge registration and collection.

Mr. Ridley: It is doubtful whether local authorities will need to incur significant current expenditure in preparing for the community charge as early as 1988-89. To the extent that additional costs do arise, we believe that these can be accommodated within the proposed RSG settlement.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from the National Council for Civil Liberties about his proposals for a community charge.

Mr. Ridley: I have received no representations from the National Council for Civil Liberties about the community charge. However, I have seen the NCCL's recent report which contains a number of exaggerations and distortions.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish any advice he has received from the Data Protection Registrar on record-keeping aspects of the community charge.

Mr. Ridley: The registrar has confirmed that our proposals do not create any formal conflict with the Data Protection Act. He has, however, pointed to the importance of ensuring that the principles established by the Act are observed in the operation of the community charge system and has expressed concern about the sale of the register.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what research work he has commissioned into the feasibility of local authorities privatising the arrangements for collecting the community charge on the basis of the proposals set out in "Paying for Local Government"; and if he will publish this.

Mr. Ridley: No such research has been commissioned.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he plans for the following types of hereditament to remain within rating if domestic rates are abolished: *(a)* time-share properties, *(b)* moorings, *(c)* houseboats, *(d)* caravans, and *(e)* lock-up garages.

Mr. Ridley: We intend to remove all domestic property from rating, once the community charge has been fully introduced. We propose that time-share properties, houseboat moorings, houseboats and residential caravans should come within the definition of domestic property. Lock-up garages used for residential purposes or in conjunction with residential property will also be treated as domestic property and will not, therefore, be liable to rates.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he proposes to prescribe the form in which the community charge register will be kept.

Mr. Ridley: No.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the proposed joint and several liability for community charge will be restricted to couples of different sex living together as husband and wife.

Mr. Ridley: Yes.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what recovery procedures he envisages will be necessary in order to secure payment of community charge from persons jointly and severally liable; and whether a demand notice will be required to be issued to one partner in respect of the other's community charge liability.

Mr. Ridley: The recovery procedures will be the same as for individual liability. We envisage that a local authority will be able to take enforcement action against an individual in respect of their partner's failure to pay only when the individual has been sent a demand notice and reminder in respect of the partner's community charge.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he plans to offer owners of property a discount for collecting community charge; and in what other areas of taxation there is similar recognition of costs of collection.

Mr. Ridley: We propose that landlords of properties designated for the collective community charge should retain 5 per cent. of the collective charge contributions payable to them, as an allowance to cover their administrative costs and notional bad debts. Sections 55 and 56 of the General Rate Act 1967 permit similar recognition of costs of collection in respect of rates.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he proposes that new town development corporations will be able to act as agents for district authorities in the collection of community charge with rents.

Mr. Ridley: Some local authorities currently use new town development corporations as agents to collect rates. I do not propose anything to prevent similar arrangements for the community charge, provided that the statutory requirements we envisage are met—in particular, that tenants should receive separate rent and community charge bills.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether it will be possible to collect community charge from council tenants with rent *(a)* for couples to whom joint and several liability applies or *(b)* all members of a household.

Mr. Ridley: Local authorities will be able to collect amounts of community charge at the same time as rent, but not to issue inclusive bills.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what criteria he proposes to adopt to define those classes of property to which collective community charge will apply.

Mr. Ridley: We propose that the community charges registration officer may designate a property for the collective community charge (i) if in his opinion the property is used wholly or mainly as the sole or main residence of individuals, most or all of whom reside in the property for short periods, and are not solely or mainly resident elsewhere; and (ii) if in his opinion it is likely to be difficult to register the individuals for the personal community charge and to collect the personal charge from each of them.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how he proposes to ensure individual authorities are assisted in the cost of implementation of community charge in order to aviod the cost to ratepayers of such increases in spending being increased by the effect of negative marginal rates of grant.

Mr. Ridley: I shall take into account the estimated cost of implementating the community charge when I consider the level of relevant expenditure for the purposes of the remaining rate support grant settlements under existing arrangements. After 1990, under the new grant system, grant entitlements will not vary with expenditure and there will be no negative marginal rates of grant.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what provisions of the Data Protection Act he proposes will apply *(a)* to the ability of community charge registration officers to seek information to ensure accuracy of the community charge register and *(b)* to the community charge register.

Mr. Ridley: We do not propose to disapply any of the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will prohibit local authorities from carrying out canvasses for the community charge register at the same time as canvasses to compile the electoral register.

Mr. Ridley: The timing of community charge canvasses will be a matter for individual community charge registration officers.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether local authorities will be empowered to offer for sale copies of the community charge register.

Mr. Ridley: I propose to take a regulation-making power which would enable me to authorise the sale of the register. I shall consider carefully whether and how the power is to be used.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he proposes that the community charge registration officer will be empowered to demand information *(a)* from other persons within his employing authority, *(b)* from other local authorities, and *(c)* from other bodies; and if he will list the information and bodies concerned.

Mr. Ridley: We propose that the community charge registration officer should be empowered to require the supply of information needed for the carrying out of his functions from his own local authority, from other local authorities and their community charge registration officers.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether the following records will be required to be made available to community charge registration officers *(a)* housing benefit records, *(b)*

educational records held by local education authorities' institutions and by local education authorities' *(c)* educational records held by universities, *(d)* educational records held by independent schools, *(e)* planning and building control records, *(f)* local authority rent rolls, *(g)* housing association rent rolls, *(h)* new town rent rolls, *(i)* housing waiting lists, *(j)* register of births, deaths and marriages, *(k)* environmental health records, *(l)* social services records, *(m)* local authorities' payroll record, *(n)* other employers' payroll records, *(o)* library records, *(p)* concessionary fare records, *(q)* insurance claims made upon authorities, and *(r)* public utilities records;

(2) if he will list any categories of information he proposes to exclude from the communtity charge register.

Mr. Ridley: We propose that, for the purposes of compiling their registers, community charges registration officers should have access to all information held by local authorities, with the exception of material of great personal sensitivity, which will be prescribed by the Secterary of State. They will not have access to national sources of data.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he proposes to extend the Data Protection Act safeguards on computerised information to non-computerised information held for the purposes of community charge registration and collection.

Mr. Ridley: No.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether other departments of a local authority will have access to records held by the community charge registration officer for the purposes of registration for community charge, and to records held by the appropriate officer for the purposes of collection of community charge.

Mr. Ridley: We propose that the electoral registration officer should be given a right of access to the community charges register. We do not propose to give local authorities a right of access to the register or to collection records, other than for the purposes of billing, payment and enforcement of the community charge.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether individuals will have the right to inspect all information held about them for community charge purposes.

Mr. Ridley: We propose that individuals should have the right to inspect all information held about them on the community charge register. Individuals also have rights to inspect data held about them under the Data Protection Act 1984.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he proposes to change the dates by which *(a)* precepts, and *(b)* rates, and possibly community charge, have to be made in order to allow local authorities to accommodate the receipt of community charge in 12 monthly instalments.

Mr. Ridley: We propose that everyone should have the right to pay the community charge by a minimum of 10 instalments, as they do at present with rates. It will not therefore be necessary to bring forward the dates by which precepts and community charges have to be set.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the average daily rate per capita of any collective community charge to be paid by occupants of vagrants' hostels in inner London based on his 1987-88 figures; and whether this will be required to be paid net or gross of rebates.

Mr. Ridley: On the basis of the exemplifications placed in the Library on 29 June, column *44*, the average daily collective community charge payment in inner London would be £1·52. This figure is illustrative only, for the reasons I set out on 29 June. Nor does it take account of rebates. The arrangements for paying rebates will be announced in due course.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether occupants of hostels for vagrants, such as those run by the Salvation Army, will be exempt from community charge by virtue of their being in institutions providing care.

Mr. Ridley: We have not yet finalised our definition of "hostel" for these purposes. But we envisage that exemptions would be limited to hostels providing a planned programme of care.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether community charge rebates will be available in respect of standard community charge paid on second homes.

Mr. Ridley: No.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how sole or main residence will be defined for the purposes of establishing liability for personal community charge.

Mr. Ridley: We do not propose to define sole or main residence. Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the booklet entitled "Paying for Local Government. The Community Charge", which was placed in the Library on 15 December 1986, described how sole or main residence will be determined.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what powers of enforcement and recovery of community charge he expects to be able to be deployed against non-householders.

Mr. Ridley: Local authorities will be able to apply to magistrates' courts for warrants authorising distress and attachment of earnings. In each case, they will be able to choose either, or both, methods of recovery.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the right to pay community charge by instalments will be limited by virtue of his prescribing a minimum instalment.

Mr. Ridley: We propose to prescribe the minimum community charge instalment which local authorities will be obliged to accept. They will, however, be free to accept smaller instalments if they wish.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether arrears of community charge will be deducted at source from income support paid by the Department of Health and Social Security.

Mr. Ridley: I have no present plans to do so.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he proposes to allow the community charge bills in respect of couples whom authorities think are jointly and severally liable to be sent to an address in one envelope.

Mr. Ridley: We propose that each individual should receive a separate bill for his or her community charge. If the bill is sent by post, it should be addressed to the person liable to pay it.

Glass (Recycling)

Mr. Haselhurst asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will list the district councils in England, Scotland and Wales that do not have glass recycling programmes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: Records of glass recycling schemes are not maintained centrally. Schemes may be run by a variety of bodies—district or borough councils, waste disposal authorities, town councils or voluntary groups. However, the Glass Manufacturers' Federation has provided the following list of district or borough councils showing those authorities which do not themselves operate bottle bank schemes. Some of the councils listed hope to start schemes in the next few months. The viability of a recycling scheme depends to a large extent on the ease of transport to the processing plant which is why it has been difficult to establish schemes in some of the more remote areas.

I have been pleased to see an encouraging increase in both the number of bottle banks in use and the amount of glass collected. The glass industry and local authorities are committed to doubling the number of bottle banks in the country in the five years from 1986 to give an average of one for every 10,000 people. This is an important element in the United Kingdom's programme for implementing the EEC directive on containers of liquids for human consumption.

ENGLAND—*County and District*

Avon
- Wansdyke

Cambridgeshire
- South Cambridgeshire

Cheshire
- Vale Royal (Northwich Town Council operates scheme)
- Halton

Cleveland
- Langbaugh

Derbyshire
- Bolsover
- North East Derbyshire
- South Derbyshire

Durham
- Derwentside
- Easington
- Sedgefield
- Wear Valley
- Teesdale

Hampshire
- Gosport

Hereford and Worcester
- South Herefordshire

Leicestershire
- Blaby
- Melton Mowbray

London
- Bexley
- Bromley
- Kensington and Chelsea
- Wandsworth

Merseyside
- Knowsley

Norfolk
- Broadland

Northamptonshire
- Corby

Nottinghamshire
- Ashfield

Oxfordshire
- South Oxfordshire (Henley Town Council operates scheme)

Surrey
- Epsom and Ewell

Tyne and Wear
- Newcastle-upon-Tyne
- South Tyneside
- Gateshead
- Sunderland

Wiltshire
- North Wiltshire (Wootton Bassett own Council operates scheme)

SCOTLAND—*County and District*

Highlands
- Badenoch and Strathspey
- Inverness
- Lochaber
- Nairn
- Ross and Cromarty
- Skye and Lochalsh
- Sutherland

Orkney
- Islands Council

Shetland
- Islands Council

Strathclyde
- Argyll and Bute

WALES—*County and District*

Clwyd
- Alyn and Deeside
- Delyn
- Glyndwr
- Rhuddlan
- Wrexham Maelor

Dyfed
- Dinefwr
- Llanelli
- Preseli Pembrokeshire
- South Pembrokeshire

Mid Glamorgan
- Cynon Valley

South Glamorgan
- Vale of Glamorgan

West Glamorgan
- Lliw Valley
- Neath
- Port Talbot

Gwynedd
- Aberconwy
- Arfon
- Dwyfor
- Meirionnydd
- Ynys Mon/Isle of Angelesey

Powys
- Montgomery

British Coal (Houses)

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the progress of the negotiations between British Coal and the Consortium of Housing Associations led by CIPFA Services over the sale of British Coal houses in Nottinghamshire; and whether his Department is prepared to make resources available to make up any difference between British Coal's asking price and the consortium's offer.

Mrs. Roe: We understand that these negotiations are still in progress, and hope that it will prove possible for the parties to reach agreement. My right hon. Friend, however, does not consider that it would be appropriate for public resources to be used to enable a purchase to proceed on terms more favourable to British Coal than the consortium felt able to offer.

Mr. Meale asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will introduce legislation to confer upon the tenants of British Coal houses the right to buy their homes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Housing Act 1985 confers the right to buy on secure tenants of local authorities, certain housing associations, new town corporations and some other public bodies with similar functions, but there are no plans to extend it to tenants of nationalised industries. Tenants of British Coal housing have, however, had the opportunity to buy their homes at discounted prices since 1976.

Mayall Road, SE24 (Envelope Scheme)

Mr. Fraser asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to approve phase 2 of the envelope scheme for Mayall road, London S.E.24.

Mrs. Roe: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment approved phase II of the Mayall road enveloping scheme on 18 September 1987.

Land Use (Departmental Bulletin)

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* a synopsis of his Department's statistical bulletin (87/7) regarding land use change in England, with specific reference to the amount of housing development which took place on land which was previously developed or was vacant land in urban areas.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Department's statistical bulletin (87)7 gives summary results from the analysis of land use changes as recorded by Ordnance Survey in 1986. These are the second set of results from an experimental project started in 1985. In all, some 23,000 hectares of land in England were recorded in 1986 as having a change of use. About 46 per cent. of land developed for residential use had been previously developed, including land already used for housing purposes, or was vacant land in built-up areas.

This proportion varies across the regions from 31 per cent. in the east midlands to 59 per cent. in the north-west.

CoSIRA (Membership)

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will list *(a)* the members of the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas, *(b)* the criteria for selection of members, *(c)* the relevant qualifications of present members, *(d)* the number of Trades Union Congress-nominated places and *(e)* how many Trades Union Congress-nominated places are held by women.

Mr. Moynihan: The information is as follows:

(a) The present members of the board of directors of the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas (CoSIRA) are:
D. Davenport (chairman), Lord Vinson (chairman, Development Commission), A. M. J. Galsworthy, G. P. Gray, J. L. Thompson, M. B. Ferris, Mrs. P. Batty Shaw, Professor M. D. I. Chisholm, A. Leavett, R. Thompson, Lord Gisborough, M. Schreiber, A. D. Scott (chief executive, CoSIRA), J. V. Williams (chief executive, Development Commission).

(b) As CoSIRA is a company limited by guarantee, directors are appointed by the board with the approval of the Development Commission, CoSIRA's parent body. There are no set criteria, and directors are usually chosen for their knowledge of small businesses, finance, commerce, trade unions, public or voluntary service, or a more general involvement in rural affairs.

(c) The present directors of CoSIRA have a wide range of knowledge about the rural economy but were not selected individually because of any particular interest or expertise.

(d) and *(e)* No directors are nominated by outside bodies.

Commission for New Towns (Membership)

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will list *(a)* the members of the Commission for New Towns, *(b)* the criteria for selection of members, *(c)* the relevant qualifications of present members, *(d)* the number of Trades Union Congress-nominated places and *(e)* how many Trades Union Congress-nominated places are held by women.

Mrs. Roe: The members of the Commission for the New Towns are:

Sir Neil Shields MC (chairman)
Mr. A. Jones FSVA (deputy chairman)
Mr. E. G. Barratt MA, FCA
Lord Bellwin LL.B, JP
Mr. R. B. Caws CBE, FRICS
Mr. R. G. Luff FRICS
Mr. W. J. Mackenzie OBE
Mr. M. H. Mallinson FRICS
Sir Gordon Roberts CBE, JP, DL
Mr. P M. Vine CBE, MA, LL.M, M. Phil DL

Members are selected for the contributions they can make to the work of the commission which relates primarily to property management and the disposal of assets. Neither the Trades Union Congress nor any other organisation has any places in its gift.

Listed Buildings

Mr. Michael Morris asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is preventing the publication of the revised listed buildings arising out of the resurvey of listed buildings in the south Northamptonshire district.

Mr. Moynihan: The resurvey of listed buildings in south Northamptonshire forms part of a national exercise. Four of the nine lists for the district have now been published, and the remainder will be issued by early next year.

Engineers Direct Labour Department (Northampton)

Mr. Michael Morris asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether, in the light of three year losses, he will now call for a formal report on the Northampton borough council engineers direct labour department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: Northampton borough council has not sent the Department a copy of its 1986-87 direct labour organisation report yet. Previous reports show that the DLO made a loss on highways work in only one of the three preceding years. Therefore, there is at present no case for requiring the council to prepare a special report.

No-Fines Dwellings (Walsall)

Mr. Winnick asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what report was received from his

officials who saw the deputation on 22 July from the residents of the Wimpey No-Fines dwellings in the Walsall area; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if an official from his Department has visited the Wimpey No-Fines dwellings in the Blakenall area of Walsall; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what is the estimated total cost of carrying out work to the Wimpey No-Fines dwellings in the Blakenall area of Walsall that would bring them up to satisfactory conditions;

(4) when his Department was first notified of the conditions of the Wimpey No-Fines dwellings in the Blakenall area of Walsall; and whether those conditions exist in such properties in other boroughs;

(5) if discussions have taken place between his officials and the Walsall metropolitan borough council over the state of the Wimpey No-Fines dwellings in the Blakenall area of Walsall; and if he will make a statement;

(6) if he will publish in the *Official Report* the lists of defects in the Wimpey No-Fines dwellings in the Blakenall area of Walsall notified to him by the deputation of tenants of those dwellings.

Mr. Waldegrave: On 22 July my officials met a deputation of residents of Wimpey No-Fines houses on the Blakenall estate, Walsall, led by the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick). I received from my officials a detailed note of the meeting, a summary of the points raised, and a copy of the report, prepared by the Blakenall Estate Residents' Association, which described the problems affecting their houses. The deputation complained that these houses were damp, cold, draughty and poorly maintained. I have arranged for a copy of their report to be placed in the Library.

An official from my Department visited the Wimpey No-Fines houses on the Blakenall and Bentley estates in Walsall on 9 September, in company with the hon. Member for Walsall, North, and members and officers of Walsall metropolitan borough council. The visit provided a useful opportunity to assess conditions on the two estates, and to hear the council's proposals for repair and improvement of the houses. The council estimated the basic cost of repairing each Wimpey No-Fines house (excluding new windows) to be £3,500. If heating and insulation were to be improved at the same time, a further £1,500 would be required. On this basis, the total estimated cost of repair and improvement for the 74 council-owned Wimpey No-Fines houses on the Blakenall estate is £370,000.

Officials from my Department subsequently met the council's officers on 16 September to discuss the council's housing investment programme for 1988-89. All aspects of housing need in the borough, including the improvement of Wimpey No-Fines dwellings, were discussed. This will be taken into account when the Department comes to make the housing investment programme allocations for 1988-89, but it will remain a matter for Walsall MBC to decide its own priorities within the resources available to it.

Mr. Winnick asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration has been given to designating the Wimpey No-Fines dwellings as defective; and what representations have been received over this matter.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Secretary of State has received no specific requests for designation of Wimpey No-Fines houses as defective under the housing defects legislation; nor has he any plans to make such a designation.

Housing Deputations

Mr. Winnick asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many deputations led by hon. Members from residents complaining over the state of their properties have been received by Ministers in the last four years; and what are the criteria by which it is decided whether a Minister will meet such a deputation.

Mr. Waldegrave: There are no meaningful figures available on the number of such deputations received by Ministers over the last four years. Any request for a meeting is considered on its merits.

Common Land

Mr. Favell asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes to introduce legislation to remedy the problems arising from the misregistration of property as common land.

Mr. Moynihan I shall answer this question shortly.

Bed-and-Breakfast Accommodation

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many families, per London borough, are currently in bed-and-breakfast accommodation; and what were the relevant figures for 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986.

Mr. Waldegrave: Local authorities report the numbers of households living, at the end of each quarter, in bed-and-breakfast accommodation provided by the authorities during inquiries under the homelessness provisions of the Housing Act 1985 or awaiting permanent accommodation. The figures reported by the London boroughs are as follows:

Number of households at end of June

	1983	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
City of London	0	0	1	0	0
Barking and Dagenham	0	0	0	0	0
Barnet	0	2	3	3	2
Bexley	3	9	22	11	2
Brent	442	583	722	689	1,000
Bromley	0	0	0	0	1
Camden	260	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	[1]n.a.
Croydon	0	0	0	0	1
Ealing	116	127	134	117	938
Enfield	5	21	8	75	195
Greenwich	0	0	0	0	0
Hackney	n.a.	197	n.a.	450	831
Hammersmith	60	77	n.a.	143	509
Haringey	53	69	118	307	609
Harrow	33	37	51	42	56
Havering	0	0	0	0	0
Hillingdon	n.a.	54	66	169	148
Hounslow	61	61	48	55	99
Islington	1	0	47	80	175
Kensington & Chelsea	8	15	14	37	40
Kingston upon Thames	19	68	81	85	80
Lambeth	144	88	172	n.a.	438
Lewisham	n.a.	39	32	n.a.	[1]n.a.

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Merton	10	0	2	4	23
Newham	6	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	420
Redbridge	0	0	0	0	[1]n.a.
Richmond upon Thames	0	1	5	20	37
Southwark	0	13	42	133	104
Sutton	39	19	44	30	85
Tower Hamlets	n.a.	209	n.a.	n.a.	664
Waltham Forest	0	n.a.	0	0	0
Wandsworth	23	79	103	185	258
Westminster	101	77	115	331	312

Notes: n.a. = not available.
[1] = latest information available:
Camden March 1987 1,258
Lewisham March 1987 132
Redbridge September 1986 0

Housing Programme (Islington)

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the level of housing capital programme for Islington at 1987 prices for each year since 1979.

Mr. Waldegrave: Following are estimates in 1986-87 prices of the gross expenditure in cash prices reported in the borough's housing investment programme returns.

Islington LB
Gross housing capital expenditure
1986-87 prices

	£ million
1979-80	90·6
1980-81	65·5
1981-82	50·0
1982-83	70·6
1983-84	46·3
1984-85	54·4
1985-86	33·1
1986-87	64·3

In addition, Housing Corporation expenditure on housing association schemes of provision for fair rent within the borough is estimated, at 1986-87 prices, to have been £11·9 million in 1984-85, £10·9 million in 1985-86 and £15 million in 1986-87.

Teddington Weir (Minimum Flow)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement concerning his decision on the application by the Thames water authority to reduce the statutory minimum flow of water over Teddington weir, stating the old and new limits; and what effects he expects this will have on the quality of water in the upper tidal Thames.

Mr. Moynihan: I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's decision letter of 31 July and the inspector's report, copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House. I am sending the hon. Member a copy.

National Rivers Authority

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish the principal responses he has received to his consultative paper on the proposed national rivers authority.

Mr. Moynihan: In the policy and consultation paper on the national rivers authority, we asked respondents to indicate whether they agreed that a copy of their response could be placed in the Library of the House. Responses are still being received. Where agreement has been given, we shall be publishing responses in this way in due course.

Beaches (EC Standards)

Mr. Speller asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make available resources to bring beaches along the north Devon coastline up to European Community standards; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The responsibility for ensuring that the bathing waters in north Devon meet the standards set in directive 76/160/EEC rests with the South-West water authority. It is for the authority in the first instance to submit details of its spending needs to the Government in its annual corporate plan. Decisions on plans will be made in the light of each authority's overall spending needs. My right hon. Friend expects to be able to make allocations of external finance to each authority for 1988-89 later this year. Allocations are not made for specific projects or policies.

Landlord and Tenant Act 1987

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes to bring into force the remaining provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1987.

Mr. Waldegrave: We aim to make in December the commencement order for part I (right of first refusal), part VI (information to be supplied to tenants) and some other minor provisions. We hope to bring the remainder of the Act into force as early as possible next year.

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when the Landlord and Tenant Act will be brought into operation.

Mrs. Roe: We aim to make in December the commencement order for part I (right of first refusal), part VI (information to be supplied to tenants) and some other minor provisions. We hope to bring the remainder of the Act into force as early as possible next year.

Right to Buy (Camden)

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he has now taken to ensure that the London borough of Camden complies with its statutory obligations in connection with right-to-buy applications from its tenants.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Secretary of State has been considering whether to use his power to intervene and take over sales in view of the council's failure to comply with the statutory deadlines for the handling of applications. I understand that the council has now decided to create new posts to deal with this work, that instructions have been given for the staff to be recruited as soon as possible, and that recruitment is in hand. When all the posts are filled, the council expects to be able to issue 120 to 140 offer notices each month. The Department will continue to monitor progress closely.

Newham (Strategic Plans)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment which estimates he and the London Docklands Development Corporation have made following the adoption of the strategic plans he announced in March of the likely maximum and minimum increase in the population of southern Newham in the course of the next decade.

Mr. Trippier: None, but in the strategy agreed for the royals it was estimated that about 6,850 new homes would be built in south Newham on LDDC land. At an average occupancy rate of 2·5 persons per unit, these homes might accommodate about 17,000 people.

New River Water Company (Assets)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received any applications concerning the transfer of ownership of the reservoirs, land, equipment, water channels, and the other assets of the former New River Water Company to the *(a)* Lea valley regional park, and *(b)* any other public authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: No.

Royal Docks (Development)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what communication he has received from the London Docklands Development Corporation concerning plans for the development of the north-eastern sector of the Royal docks; if he will indicate the extent to which these plans are a departure from the statutory development plan and the main features of the application; and if he will make it his policy to call in this application for public inquiry, stating the criteria on which he expects to make his decision.

Mr. Trippier: The London Docklands Development Corporation has referred to my Department an outline planning application submitted by Rosehaugh Stanhope Developments plc for a business park, residential, marine development, shopping centre and associated leisure facilities on the Royal Albert dock and Harland and Wolff site, London E16, and land south of Winsor terrace and east of East Ham Manor way, E6. In the opinion of the corporation's planning committee

"the proposal is in conflict with or prejudicial to the implementation of a number of fundamental provisions of the initial development for Greater London, the Greater London development plans and the Beckton district plan."

The proposed development also includes gross shopping floor space in excess of 250,000 sq ft.

In considering whether or not to call in the application for public inquiry, my right hon. Friend will take into account all relevant matters. Applications are, in general, called in only if planning issues of more than local importance are involved. The full criteria were spelt out by my right hon. Friend on 5 May 1987.

Rental Purchase Tenure

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about the increase in rental purchase tenure in the north-west of England; and what are his plans for dealing with this matter.

Mrs. Roe: I have received representations from Shelter and from the Association of Metropolitan Authorities about the increase in rental purchase tenure in the north-west of England and am considering whether any action is needed.

Local Authorities (Companies Information)

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many local authorities have been requested to supply information relating to companies controlled by the relevant authority.

Mr. Howard: A total of 405; that is, all county, metropolitan district and district councils in England, all London boroughs, the City of London and the Council of the Isles of Scilly.

Textiles

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to support the submission to the European Commission from local authorities in the Manchester area for a separate national programme of community interest relating to textile areas in order to consolidate the work begun by the textile non quota programme.

Mr. Trippier: In submitting national programmes of community interest to the European Commission, the Government are mindful of the needs and available resources of all local authorities within a particular region. My officials will be happy to consider and discuss the proposals made by the six Greater Manchester metropolitan district councils which currently benefit from the special textile measure, in the light of other proposals for ERDF programmes in the north-west.

Home Improvements

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will expedite the implementation of the provisions of section 15 of and schedule 3 to the Housing and Planning Act 1986 with a view to assisting home owners to obtain improvement grants where title to the whole of the roof of a property is not proved.

Mrs. Roe: I anticipate that the statutory instruments required to implement the provisions of section 15 of, and schedule 3 to, the Housing and Planning Act 1986, which provide for a new discretionary home improvement grant to be made available to both landlords and long leaseholders or tenants for works to the common parts of blocks of flats, will be laid before Parliament before the Christmas recess.

Gipsies (Planning Applications)

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will amend paragraphs 40 and 41 of his circular 28/77 so as to exclude those local authorities which have a designation order under the Caravan Sites Act and which have provided the required number of pitches from the requirement to adopt a sympathetic and flexible approach to planning applications from gipsies.

Mrs. Roe: No. In planning cases where the need for gipsy sites is a material consideration my right hon. Friend and his inspectors will have regard to the existence of any

designation order and to all other relevant matters when deciding what weight to attach to the paragraphs of the circular to which my hon. Friend refers.

Mapesbury Conservation Area

Mr. Livingstone asked the Secretary of State for the Environment why he has taken 18 months to confirm the direction under article 4 of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1977 to protect the character of the Mapesbury conservation area which was submitted by the London borough of Brent.

Mrs. Roe: The specific powers under which the article 4 direction was made by Brent council in February 1986 meant that, unless approved by my right hon. Friend within six months, it would lapse. The direction was an extensive one covering over 700 properties and raised a number of problems which prevented its approval. The Department wrote to the council in September 1986 explaining the position, and the council responded with a number of further queries and an outline of a new direction for comment. I regret that the case has not been dealt with more expeditiously since then. However, officials have recently met council officers and are writing to the council setting out clearly the steps it should take in submitting a revised article 4 direction dealing with the points raised.

Defective Housing

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will consider ways and means of assisting Liverpool city council to meet the needs of tenants of Truscon RD27 type houses where the local ombudsman has called for action to eradicate structural faults and carry out essential repairs.

Mrs. Roe: It is for Liverpool city council to consider how it should respond to the local ombudsman's findings concerning council-owned Truscon RD27 houses, including how any expenditure needs might be met from within the council's resources. The council discussed its overall resource position with my Department's officers on 12 October and this will be taken into account in our decisions on HIP allocations for 1988-89.

Urban Regeneration Grants

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the total cost of projects for which urban regeneration grants have been made; and what percentage of the projects was formed by the grants.

Mr. Trippier: One offer of urban regeneration grant has been made towards a scheme costing £17·5 million in all to reclaim and develop the former Round Oak steelworks site in Dudley. The grant offered is £3·25 million representing 18·5 per cent. of the total cost.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much money has been spent on urban regeneration grants to the latest convenient date; and how many projects were involved in the expenditure.

Mr. Trippier: There has been no expenditure.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many current applications are being considered for urban regeneration grants; and if he can give the information by region.

Mr. Trippier: Over 30 possible schemes seeking urban regeneration grant have been or are being discussed with the Department. Twelve schemes have reached the stage where they are being appraised. The regional breakdown of these is as follows:

	Number
North-West	6
Yorkshire and Humberside	4
West Midlands	2

Four of these schemes involve a number of sub-projects (21 in one case) each of which will be appraised and decided separately.

Estates Action

Mr. Livingstone asked the Secretary of State for the Environment by when he estimates that the estates action programme will have spent all the £75 million allocated to it in the current financial year; whether sufficient bids have been received from local authorities to make this possible; and if he will itemise the bids received and their current status with the estates action programme.

Mrs. Roe: I will write to the hon. Member.

Housing Associations (Tenants)

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statememt on the progress of the home ownership scheme for tenants of charitable housing associations; how many tenants have availed themselves of the scheme to date; what restrictions there are on the numbers of persons who may do so; how many persons are waiting; and over what period of time.

Mrs. Roe: The home ownership scheme for tenants of charitable housing associations was introduced in September 1984 to help tenants who would have had the right to buy but for the charitable status of their landlords. It has proved very popular and approximately 4,600 properties have been purchased on the open market. However, demand outstrips the resources available for discounts under the scheme, the cost of which has to be accommodated within the Housing Corporation's cash limited approved development programme. As a result, a waiting list has been in force since 1 October 1986; at the end of September some 1,900 applications were being held. I am currently reviewing the funding position.

Corrigendum

Official Report, 15 May 1987, Written Answers, c. 440: At line 27, before "Employment" insert the following:

Surrogacy Agencies

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what recent information he has collected on the operation of surrogacy arrangement agencies in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Newton: The operation of commercial surrogacy agencies is prohibited under the Surrogacy Arrangements Act 1985. We have received no information indicating there have been any possible breaches of the Act since the reply I gave to my hon. Friend on 15 January at column *300*.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 22 October 1987

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

"Spycatcher"

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Attorney-General if he will provide details of each legal action commenced by the Government in respect of the book "Spycatcher", what has been the outcome in each case; and what has been the total cost in each case to date.

The Solicitor-General: The High Court of Australia will hear in about March 1988 the Government's appeal against the judgment of the New South Wales Court of Appeal in the action brought against Heinemann (Australia) and Mr. Peter Wright to restrain publication of material attributed to Mr. Wright and to seek an account of profits. The total amount of costs expended to date by the Government in the Australian proceedings is about £299,750.

In this country, the House of Lords in July upheld the interim injunction obtained last year restraining the publication of material attributed to Mr. Wright. The trial of the Government's action against *The Guardian* and *The Observer* newspapers, in which the High Court has agreed that *The Sunday Times* should be joined, is due to start in November. The total amount of costs expended to date by the Government in these proceedings is about £120.

In New Zealand an interim injunction was obtained in August against *The Dominion* newspaper restraining the publication of material attributed to Mr. Wright. The trial is due to start next month. Earlier this month an interim injunction was obtained against London Books to restrain them from importing, selling or distributing "Spycatcher"; and, after proceedings had been instituted against them, Heinemann (New Zealand) gave an undertaking to the same effect. The total amount of costs expended to date by the Government in the New Zealand proceedings is about £13,400.

In Hong Kong an interim injunction was obtained in August against the *South China Morning Post* newspaper. No date for the hearing of the substantive action has yet been set. The total amount of costs expended to date by the Government in the Hong Kong proceedings is about £730.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Caribbean Development Bank

Mr. Chapman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonweath Affairs what contribution the Government are proposing to make to the recently announced second replenishment of the Caribbean development bank's special development fund; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: Subject to Parliament's approval, the Government propose to contribute US $15 million (£9,252,510) to the fund. This will be 50 per cent. more than our contribution to the first replenishment. The replenishment will facilitate a lending programme of $132 million mainly to the poorer Caribbean countries during the years 1988 to 1991.

Bilateral Aid

Mr. Soames asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the Government will present their observations on the second report of the Foreign Affairs Committee on bilateral aid; H.C. 32 of Session 1986-87.

Mr. Chris Patten: The Government's observations on the Foreign Affairs Committee report on bilateral aid are being laid before Parliament today.

ENERGY

UKAEA

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will list *(a)* the members of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, *(b)* the criteria for selection of members, *(c)* the relevant qualifications of present members, *(d)* the number of Trades Union Congress-nominated places and *(e)* how many Trades Union Congress-nominated places are held by women.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Atomic Energy Authority Act 1954 provides for the Secretary of State for Energy to appoint the chairman and not less than seven nor more than 15 other members of the UKAEA. Clause 1(3) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to appoint at least three members with experience and capacity in dealing with problems associated with atomic energy, one member with experience and capacity in administration and finance, and one member with experience and capacity in the organisation of workers.

The members of the authority and their relevant qualifications are as follows:

Chairman
Mr. J. G. Collier—Expertise in nuclear science.

Full-time Members
Dr. B. L. Eyre—Expertise in nuclear science.
Dr. G. G. E. Low—Expertise in nuclear science.
Mr. R. N. Simeone, CBE—Expertise in Finance and Administration

Part-time Members
Mr. J. Bullock—Accounting expertise.
Professor Sir Peter Hirsch, FRS—Expertise in nuclear science.
Mr. M. J. B. Parker—Industrial expertise.
Mr. R. E. J. Roberts, CBE—Industrial expertise.
Mr. R. Sanderson, OBE—Expertise in organisation of workers. (National Officer of the EETPU).

There are no Trades Union Congress-nominated places.

Domestic Gas Disconnections

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has about the number of domestic gas disconnections in each of the past three years.

Mr. Peter Morrison: This is a matter for British Gas plc. I have asked the chairman of British Gas to write to the hon. Member.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Political Party Conferences

Mr. Grocott asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for reports from the appropriate chief constables as to the estimated cost of policing *(a)* the Labour party conference and *(b)* the Conservative party conference; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the chief constables of Sussex and Lancashire that the estimated additional costs of policing the Labour party conference and the Conservative party conference were £23,000 and £829,000, respectively.

"Spycatcher"

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his Department has obtained a copy of the book "Spycatcher".

Mr. Hurd: The Government were provided with a copy of Mr. Wright's book by his legal advisers in 1986 in connection with the legal proceedings taking place in Australia.

Mr. Michael Dobbs

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department why was Mr. V. N. Minas, a consultant psychiatrist refused permission on 21 August to examine Mr. Michael Dobbs at the Ashford remand centre.

Mr. John Patten: The refusal resulted from a regrettable misunderstanding. A letter of apology is to be sent to Mr. Minas.

Metropolitan Police (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many officers from the Metropolitan Police have been seconded to duties in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No formal secondments have been made, but under normal co-operation arrangements some officers may have been temporarily attached to the RUC over this period.

Political Asylum

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications have been received for political asylum in each year since 1979; which countries were involved; how many were granted; and how many are still outstanding.

Mr. Hurd: Information on applications, grants and cases outstanding by nationality for 1979 to 1984 was published in tables 5A-5F of Home Office statistical bulletin "Refugee Statistics, United Kingdom, 1985" (issue 12/86). The corresponding figures for 1985 (which have been revised since the issue of that bulletin) and 1986 were published in tables 6 and 7 of the corresponding bulletin for 1986 (issue 13/87).

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applicants for political asylum have died in the United Kingdom since 1979 whilst their applications were being considered.

Mr. Renton: This information is not available. There were over 28,000 asylum applications between 1979 and 1986 and the overwhelming majority of applicants were either already here, having been admitted in another category, or were granted temporary admission on arrival. Since in these circumstances the death of an applicant might well not come to the attention of the Home Office at all, or only sometime after it had taken place, it would be impracticable to keep records.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what efforts are made to monitor the subsequent fate of applicants for political refugee status refused by his Department.

Mr. Hurd: There is no obligation under the UN convention on refugees to monitor unsuccessful applicants for refugee status returned abroad. However, such decisions would be taken only after the most careful consideration of the facts in each case together with information and views available from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, British posts abroad and international agencies—especially the office of the UN High Commission for Refugees—specialising in refugee matters. Refusal of refugee status does not automatically result in removal: many applicants in practice qualify to remain under some other head.

Football Clubs (Police Services)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to how much was *(a)* charged and *(b)* paid by each football club in London for police services in the 1986-87 season and 1987-88 season to date.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the information requested is as follows:

	Season 1986-87		*Season 1987-88*	
Club	*Charged* £	*Paid* £	*Charged* £	*Paid* £
Arsenal	160,581·23	160,581·23	22,375·62	22,375·62
Brentford	31,095·05	31,095·05	7,603·89	4,393·86
Charlton	74,500·35	74,500·35	16,063·84	16,063·84
Chelsea	142,615·45	142,615·45	41,861·16	24,081·93
Crystal Palace	44,755·58	44,755·58	9,777·52	5,827·72
Fulham	34,814·48	34,814·48	10,024·90	5,932·01
Leyton Orient	14,225·96	14,225·96	5,079·42	3,481·45
Millwall	43,658·14	43,658·14	13,133·97	10,496·07

Club	Season 1986-87 Charged £	Paid £	Season 1987-88 Charged £	Paid £
Queens Park Rangers	95,717·26	95,717·26	29,958·57	29,958·57
Tottenham Hotspur	171,440·49	171,440·49	37,292·07	22,440·24
West Ham United	146,478·51	146,478·51	46,899·54	28,221·42
Wimbledon	57,469·45	57,469·45	20,714·40	12,420·34
Total	1,017,351·95	1,017,351·95	260,784·90	185,693·07

Storm Damage

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the criteria for proclaiming a state of civil emergency; and if consideration was given to such a declaration arising from the consequences of the storm which hit London on the morning of 16 October.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Emergency Powers Act 1920 allows for a state of emergency to be declared if there is a threat to the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the life of the community. Although conditions in the south-east of England were bad, the emergency services, local and other authorities were able to cope with the demand on them, and there was no reason to think that the declaration of a state of emergency would have substantially improved their efforts.

PRIME MINISTER

Public Bodies (TUC Membership)

Ms. Richardson asked the Prime Minister what is *(a)* the number of Trades Union Congress-nominated members of public bodies and *(b)* the number of women Trades Union Congress-nominated members of public bodies.

The Prime Minister: This information is not held centrally by the Government and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Ms. Richardson asked the Prime Minister if she will *(a)* list the members of the Advisory Committee for Applied Research and Development, *(b)* the qualifications which led to their appointment, *(c)* the selection criteria for membership, *(d)* the number of Trades Union Congress-nominated places and *(e)* how many Trades Union Congress-nominated members are women.

The Prime Minister: On 20 July, in the White Paper on civil research and development, Cm. 185, the Government announced that the Advisory Council for Applied Research and Development (ACARD) was to be absorbed within a new body, the Advisory Council on Science and Technology (ACOST).

The members of ACOST are:

Sir Francis Tombs, FEng, (Chairman), Chairman, Rolls-Royce plc
Mr. Andrew Bain, FRSE, Group Economic Adviser, Midland Bank plc
Sir John Collyear, FEng, Chairman, Technology Requirements Board
Professor Gordon Edge, Chief Executive, Scientific Generics Ltd.
Mr. Anthony Gill, BSc, FEng, Chairman, Lucas Industries plc
Mr. Eric Hammond, OBE, General Secretary, Electrical, Electronic Telecommunications and Plumbing Union
Mr. Terry Harrison, Chairman, Northern Engineering Industries plc
Dr. Graham Hills, FRSC, FRSE, Principal and Vice Chancellor, University of Strathclyde
Professor Leonard Maunder, OBE, FEng, Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Mr. David McMurty, Chairman, Renishaw plc
Professor Stan Metcalfe, Department of Economics, Manchester University
Dr. Dennis Oliver, CBE, FEng, Business Consultancy
Professor Sir David Phillips, FRS, Chairman of the Advisory Board for the Research Councils
Professor Keith Peters, FRCP, Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Hammersmith
Sir George Porter, FRS, President of the Royal Society
Dr. Charles Reece, FRSC, Director of Research and Technology, Imperial Chemical Industries plc
Dr. Alan Rudge, OBE, FEng, FRSA, Director of Research and Technology, British Telecom plc
Dr. David Smith, Consultant
Professor Desmond Smith, FRS, FRSE, Department of Physics, Heriot Watt University
Professor Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer, FRS, Chairman, University Grants Committee

ACOST is composed of eminent industrialists and distinguished scientists with widely varying backgrounds to cover all areas of science and technology. All of the members are selected for their personal eminence in their fields, and none is appointed on the nomination of the Trades Union Congress or of any other organisation.

Peter Wright

Q27. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Prime Minister if she will now make a statement in relation to Her Majesty's Government's proceedings in relation to Peter Wright's memoirs.

The Prime Minister: In these proceedings the Government continue to seek to uphold the principle that present and former members of the security and intelligence services, like other public servants, owe a lifelong duty of confidentiality to the Crown.

Rugby

Q64. **Mr. Pawsey** asked the Prime Minister if she has any plans to make an official visit to Rugby.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Southend-on-Sea

Q79. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Prime Minister if she will pay an official visit to Southend-on-Sea.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

DHSS (Local Office Staff)

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Prime Minister what is the current level of absenteeism in local offices of the Department of Health and Social Security; and what are the comparable rates in other Departments.

The Prime Minister: Civil servants are allowed leave of absence from work for sickness, maternity leave, special leave and annual leave. Unauthorised absence is not recorded centrally.

VAT

Mr. Wray asked the Prime Minister if she will make it her policy to resist any proposal by the European Community to tax books, magazines or newspapers.

The Prime Minister: I have nothing to add to my answer to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) on 24 July at columns *543-44*.

Security

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister what has been the total cost of security provision for the Prime Minister each year since 1979.

The Prime Minister: It has been the practice of successive Governments not to give details of such security costs..

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister how many non-departmental public bodies have *(a)* been set up and *(b)* abolished since 1979.

The Prime Minister: Between May 1979 and April 1987, 372 new non-departmental public bodies were set up. During the same period, 896 bodies were abolished, rationalised or substantially reduced resulting in a net reduction of 524.

National School for Public Administration

Mr. Wray asked the Prime Minister if she will urgently undertake to create a national school for public administration such as the French and other Governments have for their public and civil servants.

The Prime Minister: We have devised a range of training provisions for civil servants in the United Kingdom to meet the needs of Government. I do not think a national school for public administration is necessary in these circumstances.

No. 10 Downing Street

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister how many Conservative hon. and right hon. Members have received hospitality in 10 Downing street in each of the past five years.

The Prime Minister: A number of Members of Parliament, of various parties, come to official functions at 10 Downing street during the course of the year. Detailed records are available only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister what paintings, engravings and photographs have been *(a)* removed and *(b)* hung in 10 Downing street since 1979.

The Prime Minister: Information in the form requested is available only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister what has been the total annual cost of *(a)* decoration and *(b)* furnishing for 10 Downing street in each year since 1979.

The Prime Minister: The total expected costs in 1987-88 of *(a)* decoration and other maintenance and repair work and *(b)* furniture and fittings for 10 Downing street are £60,000 and £15,000, respectively. Information for previous years is not available in the form requested and cannot be provided except at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister if she will provide the final figures for 1985-86 and 1986-87 for *(a)* the cost of maintaining and running 10 Downing street and additional costs at Chequers, *(b)* the grant-in-aid to the Chequers trust, *(c)* the costs on a consistent basis and *(d)* expressed at constant 1984-85 prices.

The Prime Minister: The figures requested are as follows:

	£
(a) Cost of maintaining and running 10 Downing street and additional costs at Chequers[1]	
1985-86	4,405,852
1986-87[2]	4,962,950
(b) Grant-in-aid to the Chequers Trust:	
1985-86	208,000
1986-87	224,000
(c) Costs at *(a)* on a consistent basis[3]	
1985-86	4,405,852
1986-87	4,526,729
(d) Costs at *(c)* expressed in 1984-85 price terms[4]	
1985-86	4,154,895
1986-87	4,143,785

Notes:

[1] The figures include costs at both 10 Downing street and Chequers; the information is not available by location.

[2] Costs for 1986-87 include, for the first time, the costs of office services attributed to 10 Downing street. Salaries and wages, notional pension liability and administration costs and the grant-in-aid to the Chequers Trust are included for both years. The salary of the Prime Minister is excluded.

[3] To produce consistent figures, office service costs for 1986-87 have been excluded.

[4] Constant costs have been calculated using the Treasury's GDP deflator for 1985-86 rebased to 1984-85.

Space and Maritime Research

Mr. Wray asked the Prime Minister if she will detail Government policy towards joint ventures with other European countries in matters of space research, maritime experiments.

The Prime Minister: Subject to overall funding constraints, the Government will continue to collaborate on cost-effective space ventures both within the programmes of the European Space Agency and, where appropriate, under separate bilateral and multilateral initiatives with European countries.

The United Kingdom has taken an active part in supporting co-operative research in maritime navigation aids through the European cost programme. We also co-operate with the signatories to the Bonn agreement on pollution control in the North sea, as well as supporting EEC efforts in the community research centre at Ispra.

South Africa (Atrocities)

Mr. Wray asked the Prime Minister what information the British Embassy in Pretoria has passed to her regarding alleged atrocities committed against children by the South African regime.

The Prime Minister: Her Majesty's embassy at Pretoria has provided regular reports on abuses of human rights in South Africa including the alleged mistreatment of children held in detention.

Official Duties (Costs)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister what was the total cost to public funds of the Prime Minister in all her offices, duties, accommodation and expenses in the year 1986-87.

The Prime Minister: The cost of all my offices in 1986-87 was £4,995,392[1].

Note:

[1] Salaries and wages, notional pension liability and administration costs and the grant-in-aid to the Chequers Trust are included. My salary as a Cabinet Minister is included. My pay and allowances as a Member of this House are excluded.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister what was the total cost to public funds of her visit to Canada and the United States of America in October, broken down by category of expenditure.

The Prime Minister: I have only just returned from visiting Canada and the United States of America and it is too soon to give detailed information of the cost to public funds of the visit. A provisional estimate of the total cost of the visit is £160,000. It is not yet possible to break this down by category of expenditure.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister what was the cost of official entertainment associated with the office of Prime Minister in 1986-87.

The Prime Minister: The cost of official entertainment associated with my office in 1986-87 was £20,278.

Conservative Party Conference (Policing)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister what was the total cost for policing the 1987 Conservative party conference in Blackpool; and how many arrests were made in connection with the policing operation there.

The Prime Minister: I understand from the chief constable of Lancashire that the estimated additional costs of policing the Conservative party conference were £829,500. The Lancashire police made three arrests in connection with their operation at the conference between 5 and 9 October 1987.

Engagements

Mr. Rooker asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 22 October.

Mr. Greenway asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 22 October.

Mr. Pike asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 22 October.

Mr. Latham asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 22 October.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House I shall be having further meetings later today.

TRANSPORT

BA/B-Cal Merger

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from the British independent airlines concerning the proposed British Airways/British Caledonian merger.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The proposed merger has been referred by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Several airlines made representations to my right hon. Friend before the referral and all subsequent representations have been made to the commission. The commission's business is conducted in private and I cannot therefore disclose details of evidence which has been copied to my right hon. Friend.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what would be the combined market share of British Airways and British Caledonian in terms of their percentage of the British share of scheduled traffic to Amsterdam, Brussels, Copenhagen, Frankfurt, Geneva, Munich, Paris and Zurich;

(2) what would be the combined market share of British Airways and British Caledonian in terms of their percentage of the British share of scheduled traffic to Amsterdam;

(3) what would be the combined market share of British Airways and British Caledonian in terms of their percentage of the British share of scheduled traffic to Brussels;

(4) what would be the combined market share of British Airways and British Caledonian in terms of their percentage of the British share of scheduled traffic to Copenhagen;

(5) what would be the combined market share of British Airways and British Caledonian in terms of their percentage of the British share of scheduled traffic to Frankfurt;

(6) what would be the combined market share of British Airways and British Caledonian in terms of their percentage of the British share of scheduled traffic to Geneva;

(7) what would be the combined market share of British Airways and British Caledonian in terms of their percentage of the British share of scheduled traffic to Munich;

(8) what would be the combined market share of British Airways and British Caledonian in terms of their percentage of the British share of scheduled traffic to Paris;

(9) what would be the combined market share of British Airways and British Caledonian in terms of their percentage of the British share of scheduled traffic to Zurich.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The most recently available published information is for traffic from London airports in 1985. It is as follows:

	United Kingdom airlines' share of traffic	*BA/BCal share of traffic carried by United Kingdom airlines*
	Per cent.	*Per cent.*
Amsterdam	49	94
Brussels	55	97
Copenhagen	42	100
Frankfurt	29	100
Geneva	57	100
Munich	58	95
Paris	52	98
Zurich	42	84
Total (for all eight routes)	48	96

Source: The International Civil Aviation Organisation's report "Traffic by Flight Stage". Routes from London to the destinations shown comprise services from Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and Luton airports.

Launches and Hovercraft

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he is satisfied with the adequacy and equitability of existing primary legislation and statutory instruments relating to the design and operation of fast launches and hovercraft in providing a framework for accommodating recent technical advance and innovation in this field; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: Existing primary legislation and statutory instruments provide a suitable framework for accommodating recent technical advance and innovation relating to design and operation of fast launches and hovercraft. Hovercraft are covered under special hovercraft legislation and other high speed dynamically supported craft carrying passengers are covered by merchant shipping legislation supplemented by the International Maritime Organisation code of safety for dynamically supported craft.

LRT (Board Salaries and Expenses)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the salaries and expenses of the board members of London Regional Transport; and if he will state when the next review is due.

Mr. David Mitchell: Current annual salaries of the board members of London Regional Transport are as follows:

Member	*Salary*	*Time commitment*
Chairman		
Sir Keith Bright	59,500	Full time
Full-time members		
Dr. Tony Ridley	47,500	Full time
Mr. John Telford Beasley	46,500	
Mr. Barry Dall	46,500	
Part-time members		
Sir Neil Shields	17,250	Two days per week
Mr. Keith Brown	5,250	Half day per week
Miss Eileen Cole	5,250	
Dr. Stephen Galister	5,250	
Miss Helen Robinson	5,250	
Miss Patricia Steel	5,250	

These salaries are currently under review. Members' expenses are a matter for London Regional Transport.

Traffic Control (London)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport if his Department has settled the invoice for £827,100 issued by the London residuary body in respect of value added tax on traffic control work undertaken by the road assessment unit.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No. Traffic control work carried out by the London residuary body for the Department of Transport under the provisions of paragraph 10 of schedule 5 to the Local Government Act 1985 does not attract value added tax.

WALES

Craig-y-Nos

Mr. Alan Williams asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement about the future of Craig-y-Nos.

Mr. Grist: The building is a grade II* listed building and I am considering proposals that the theatre part of it should be listed grade I. Decisions concerning the sale will be taken after the decision on the listing of the theatre.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Postal Deliveries

Mr. John Marshall asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has as to how often postal deliveries in central London have been interfered with by industrial action during the past year.

Mr. Butcher: Industrial action by postal workers is primarily a matter for the Post Office board. I therefore do not have comprehensive details of such action. However, I am aware that postal deliveries in central London have been affected by industrial action on a number of occasions over the last year, including 45 disputes which led to the sealing of letter boxes.

BA/B-Cal Merger

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he will have regard to the potential impact on airline competition in the European internal market when considering the conditions under which the British Airways/British Caledonian merger might be allowed to proceed; and if he will make a statement;

(2) whether he has any plans to meet the chairmen of the British independent airlines before making his decision on the proposed British Airways/British Caledonian merger; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if, in his consideration of the British Airways/British Caledonian merger, he will examine the alternative offer put forward by Air Europe for the British Caledonian short haul operations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The proposed acquisition of British Caledonian by British Airways is currently being investigated by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. My right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State has power to take action to prevent a merger or to impose conditions only if the commission finds that it might be

expected to operate against the public interest. Until the commission's report is published, I cannot comment on the outcome of the investigation.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received from the British independent airlines concerning the proposed British Airways/British Caledonian merger.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I and my right hon. and noble Friend have received a number of representations from British independent airlines expressing a range of views. This proposed merger is currently being investigated by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Since the reference was made, those wishing to make representations have been directed to the commission.

Whale Products

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster which fully manufactured goods currently imported into the United Kingdom contain whale products.

Mr. Alan Clark: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

"Spycatcher"

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has regarding the number of copies of the book "Spycatcher" imported into the United Kingdom to date.

Mr. Alan Clark: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Research Council

Mr. John Marshall asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what progress was made at the meeting of the Research Council of European Community Ministers on 28 September; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The Community's Council of Ministers (Research) met on 28 September 1987 in Brussels. I represented Her Majesty's Government.

Following the waiving of the conciliation procedure by the European Parliament, the Council approved the formal adoption of the European Community's framework programme for research and development for the period 1987 to 1991. The programme provides the basis for Community research activities in a wide range of fields. The main effort is focused on the priority of improving Europe's industrial competitiveness through programmes in information and telecommunications technologies, industrial technologies and new materials, but work is also included on health, the environment, energy (fusion, fission and non-nuclear) and agriculture.

The agreement was based on a total financial provision of 6·480 becu (£4·49 billion) of which 863 mecu (598 million) of new expenditure will not be committed until after 1991. In line with my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's agreement at the European Council in June that expenditure on Community research and development should continue at current levels, the sum of 417 mecu (£289 million) has been withheld from the programme. The question of its release will be decided in the light of wider budgetary developments at the European Council in December. The Council noted my statement re-emphasising these conditions as the basis of our agreement to this package.

The Council also agreed a common position on three new or continuation programmes within the framework: RACE (telecommunications); medical and public health and science and technology for development.

Vice-President Narjes outlined the Commission's proposals for the Community's joint research centre (JRC). In the ensuing preliminary informal exchange of views the Council stressed that radical reforms were necessary to make the JRC more relevant to European industrial needs.

The Council also held a short first discussion of the proposals for ESPRIT II. (Information Technologies.)

SCOTLAND

Special Grants Environmental Programme

Mr. Nigel Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list those organisations which applied for support under his Department's special grants environmental programme, together with details of the corresponding projects and the level of funding sought, indicating those projects which have been, or are to be, approved for support.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The organisations listed applied for grant under the special grants (environmental) programme which is administered by the Scottish Development Department. The scheme is designed to assist the central management and administrative costs of voluntary bodies in the environmental field which are engaged in environmental conservation or improvement work, co-ordination, or environmental education or training. To be eligible for grant, organisations are required to operate in more than one local authority district. Assistance for project costs is given only in exceptional cases. Details of the level of funding sought in 1987-88, the purpose for which it was sought and the grant offered (where applicable) are shown for each organisation which applied for grant.

	Grant applied for	*Purpose for which sought*	*Grant offered 1987/88*
Land use/rural co-ordination			
Rural forum Scotland	17,500	Development Officer and Clerical Assistant	7,500
Scottish Wildlife and Countryside Link	9,250	Organising Secretary	7,500
Country/wildlife conservation and improvement work			
Scottish Wild life Trust	up to 75,000	Management and Administrative Staff Costs	15,000
Scottish Conservation Projects Trust	75,000	Management and Administrative Staff Costs	15,000
Buchan Countryside Group	5,729	Development Officer	5,000

	Grant applied for	*Purpose for which sought*	*Grant offered 1987/88*
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (1)	10,000	Nature Reserve Management	—
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (2)	15,000	Investigations Work	5,000
Central Scotland Countryside Trust	9,560	Development Officer	5,000
Woodland Trust	32,447	Development Officer and other Costs	5,000
The Environment Centre	16,519	Manager and Administrator	5,000
Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland	up to 10,000	Administrative Staff Costs	5,000
Scottish Rights of Way Society	not specified	Secretary	5,000
Historic Buildings and Archaeology			
Strathclyde Building Preservation Trust	30,000	Administrative and Clerical Staff Costs	7,000
Scottish Historic Building Trust	12,500	Administrative Staff Costs	7,000
Council for British Archaeology (Scotland)	22,500	Administrative Staff Costs	9,000
Scottish Field School of Archaeology	6,000	Excavation Programme Costs	6,000
Training for conservation management			
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations	6,895	Training Programme for Voluntary Organisations Management	6,000
Technical Aid			
Association of Community Technical Aid Centres	16,709	Development Officer and Administrative Officer	10,000
Scottish Environmental Education Council	15,325	Director and Secretary	15,000
Royal Zoological Society	20,000	Education Staff and Vehicles	—
Scottish Field Studies Association	12,250	Development Officer and Secretary	10,000
Friends of the Earth (Scotland) Environmental Education Trust	9,625	Education/Information Officer	—
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (3)	7,500	Education Officer	—

The following bodies submitted applications which did not meet the scheme's eligibility criteria:

Scottish Scenic Trust
Friends of the Earth (Scotland)
North East Mountain Trust
Iona Community
Victoria Youth Gardens
Scottish Council on Disability
Scottish Countryside Activities Council
Royal Town Planning Institute
Scottish Educational Trust
Sustrans
Scottish Ornithologists Club

Hospital for Sick Children, Yorkhill

Mr. Allan Stewart asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if any tender or offer of settlement has been made in connection with current arbitration between the Greater Glasgow health board and Costain Construction Ltd arising from work carried out on the hospital for sick children at Yorkhill, Glasgow.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Following negotiations between representatives of the health board and Costain Construction Limited, the firm made an offer of a payment of £3·75 million in settlement of the health board's claim on the basis that each side should meet its own costs, which include half of the costs of administering the arbitration. This offer has been accepted by the health board. I am satisfied that this settlement represents a reasonable and acceptable conclusion to this dispute, taking all considerations into account including the possible outcome and the substantial costs involved in continuing the formal arbitration process.

NATIONAL FINANCE

EC (Payments)

Mr. William Powell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the early payments made by the United Kingdom in August, September and October to the European Commission, as a result of its financial difficulties.

Mr. Brooke: In each of these three months the European Commission estimated that its spending obligations would exceed the revenue available under the 1987 budget. It therefore requested member states, in accordance with article 10(2) of Council regulation 2891/77, to advance by one month the payment of own resources other than VAT. The Government were satisfied that these requests were within the vires of article 10(2) and accordingly made advance payments from the Consolidated Fund on 20 August, 21 September and 20 October, under section 2(3) of the European Communities Act 1972. Payments of levies and duties in the following month have been, or will be, reduced in each case by the amount of the advance.

The Commission also overdrew its accounts with member states, in accordance with article 12(2) of Council regulation 2891/77, in August and September. It expects to do so again in October. The Government have met (or propose to meet) these obligations from the Consolidated Fund, in accordance with section 2(3) of the European Communities Act 1972. Repayments are made via deductions from subsequent own resources payments.

The amounts involved in these drawings are set out in the following table:

	Early payment of non-VAT own resources under Article 10(2) (reimbursed in following month) £ million	*End of month overdraft under Article 12(2)* £ million
August	158·0	151·7
September	148·0	109·6
October	145·5	[1]94·0

[1] Estimated

The total amount which the Community is authorised to spend during 1987 remains as set out in the 1987 budget and supplementary budget. There is therefore no net addition to public expenditure arising from the Commission's use of these facilities.

The Community's cash difficulties in 1987 should be resolved before the end of the year as the new system of delayed payment of EAGGF advances, adopted at the Agriculture Council at its meeting on 19-20 October, comes into effect.

Government Departments (Union Representatives)

Mr. Sims asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the latest details of the numbers of elected union representatives in each of the main Government Departments and of the cost of providing paid time off.

Mr. Brooke: The details for 1986-87 are shown in the following tables. Compared with the position on 1 June 1986, the total amount of paid time off for union business shows a reduction of 77 man years (5 per cent.), with a consequential saving of £0·67 million. This reflects, for the fifth successive year, the tighter control and accountability measures introduced by the revised national facilities agreement in 1982.

Table 1

Civil Service Non-industrial elected Union Representatives
Estimates of numbers with paid time off for Industrial Relations Duties and Trade Union Activities (as at 31 March 1987)

Departments	*5 per cent. and less*	*6-10 per cent.*	*11-20 per cent.*	*21-30 per cent.*	*31-40 per cent.*	*41-50 per cent.*	*51-60 per cent.*	*61-70 per cent.*	*71-80 per cent.*	*81-90 per cent.*	*91-99 per cent.*	*100 per cent.*	*Total*	*Full-time Equivalent*
1. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	575	29	16	6	3	0	1	2	0	0	1	5	638	22·0
2. Customs and Excise	585	76	60	12	18	12	6	12	5	8	7	1	802	81·0
3. Ministry of Defence	971	159	96	33	14	7	3	5	6	0	1	23	1,318	106·0
4. Department of Employment Group	1,447	321	120	44	16	4	6	2	4	2	1	10	1,977	98·0
5. Department of Environment/ Transport ExcPSA	417	84	29	4	7	4	3	2	0	1	0	16	567	44·0
6. Foreign and Commonwealth Office Including Overseas Development Administration	90	9	4	3	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	4	116	11·0
7. Department of Health and Social Security	1,489	619	198	72	32	39	14	25	39	54	16	28	2,625	331·0
8. Home Office Including Prison Department	921	169	127	29	11	4	3	1	0	6	11	10	1,292	91·0
9. Department of Trade and Industry	416	28	24	10	3	7	1	1	4	1	3	9	507	34·0
10. Inland Revenue	1,723	374	130	39	34	14	14	4	9	3	3	6	2,353	130·0
11. Lord Chancellor's Department	66	15	28	7	5	5	2	2	2	0	0	9	141	20·0
12. Department for National Savings	88	29	16	3	1	2	3	1	1	0	0	13	157	24·0
13. PSA—Including Crown Suppliers	397	47	14	2	0	6	1	1	0	0	0	4	472	23·0
14. Scottish Office Including Scottish Prisons, Scottish Record Office, and General Register (Scotland)	221	48	18	5	2	1	1	1	2	0	0	7	303	20·0
15. Other Government Departments	819	75	89	18	11	14	3	2	3	1	1	20	1,058	84·0
Total	10,225	2,082	969	287	160	120	62	62	75	76	44	168	14,326	1,119·0

Table 2

Costs of non-industrial union elected representatives

Department	*Total number expressed as whole time equivalent*	*Cost in salaries wages and direct benefit (£ million)*	*Cost as percentage of wage bill*	*Total number of non-industrial staff at 31 March 1987*
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	22	0·28	0·20	9,894
Customs and Excise	81	0·99	0·30	26,090
Ministry of Defence	106	1·19	0·10	93,289
Department of Employment Group	98	1·19	0·17	64,045
Department of Environment/Transport (excluding PSA)	44	0·53	0·20	20,489
Foreign and Commonwealth Office (including Overseas Development Administration)	11	0·17	0·10	9,453
DHSS	331	3·15	0·33	95,408
Home Office (including Prison Department	91	1·18	0·25	34,567
Department of Trade and Industry	34	0·47	0·27	12,597
Inland Revenue	130	1·56	0·20	67,768
Lord Chancellor's Department	20	0·27	0·28	10,211
Department for National Savings	24	0·22	0·33	7,606
PSA (including Crown Suppliers)	23	0·33	0·18	16,022
Scottish Office (including General Register Office Scotland, Scottish Record Office and Scottish Prison Service)	20	0·26	0·21	9,482

Department	Total number expressed as whole time equivalent	Cost in salaries wages and direct benefit (£ million)	Cost as percentage of wage bill	Total number of non-industrial staff at 31 March 1987
Other Government Departments	84	1·07	0·23	36,858
Total	1,119	12·86	0·21	513,779

Budget Council

Mr. Boswell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the outcome of the Budget Councils held on 17 and 18 September and 1 October.

Mr. Brooke: Further to my answer of 24 July, the Budget Council met on 17-18 September in Brussels and again on 1 October in Luxembourg to resume its discussions on the Commission's preliminary draft budget proposals for 1988. I represented the United Kingdom. I continued to make clear that any draft budget established must respect the Community's own resources ceiling. The Council failed to reach agreement on a draft 1988 budget.

European Monetary System

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether any changes have been made to the agreement of 13 March 1979, as amended by the instrument of 10 June 1985, between the central banks of the European Community which lays down the operating procedures for the European monetary system.

Mr. Lilley: At their monthly meeting on 8 September 1987, the governors of the central banks of the member states of the European Community agreed on a number of measures to strengthen the operating mechanisms of the European monetary system. These relate to the duration of the very short-term financing on which central banks can draw through the European monetary co-operation fund (EMCF), the availability in certain circumstances of very short-term financing for intra-marginal interventions, and the acceptance of the official ecu in settlement of outstanding claims resulting from very short-term financing. The governors also agreed to strengthen the procedure for joint monitoring of economic and monetary developments and policies. The details are set out in a comminqué from the committee of central bank governors dated 18 September, a copy of which is in the House of Commons Library.

Fraud Officers

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many fraud officers were employed in the Inland Revenue *(a)* in May 1980 and *(b)* in the most recent month for which figures are available.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Inland Revenue employs some 2,400 staff on investigation work in local tax offices and specialist units. The equivalent figure for May 1980 was about 1,500.

Business Expansion Scheme

Mr. John Marshall asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate of the amount of money raised under the business expansion scheme; how many companies have succeeded in raising finance under the scheme; and what estimates there are of the number of jobs these companies will create.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The available information is as follows:

	Number of companies	Amount invested £ million
1983-84	715	105
1984-85	807	148
1985-86[1]	670	157

[1] Returns received so far.

Final results for 1985-86 are expected to show a slight increase on those quoted above. Data for 1986-87 are not yet to hand. Information on the number of new jobs created as a result of investment under the scheme is not available.

Personal Allowances

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table comparing information available to him on the allowances and reliefs given to single persons and one and two-earner married couples in Germany with those given in the United Kingdom together with the width of the income band at each rate of income tax chargeable.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 October 1987]: The information requested is given in the tables, which are supplemented by explanatory notes.

Table 1

Allowances and Reliefs—Employees

United Kingdom £		Germany £ (see note 1)
Personal allowances	*(a)* Basic exemption (zero rate band)	
Single person 2,455	Single person	990
One-earner married couple 3,695	One-earner married couple	1,985
Two-earner married couple 6,150	Two-earner married couple	1,985

United Kingdom £	*Germany* £ *(see note 1)*
	(b) Minimum deduction for employment expenses, given to *all* employees, regardless of whether any such expenses are incurred or not.
	Single person and one-earner married couple 125
	Two-earner married couple 250
	(c) Employment income deduction
	Single person and one-earner married couple 105
	Two-earner married couple 210
	(d) Christmas allowance, given against end of year pay
	Single person and one-earner married couple 130
	Two-earner married couple 260
	(e) Minimum deduction for certain personal expenditures (regardless of whether any are incurred) eg donations, church taxes etc
	Single persons 60
	Married couple 120
	(f) (Complex) minimum deduction for "provident expenses" eg Social Security contributions, life assurance premiums etc. Minimum deduction 18 per cent of gross earnings less Christmas allowances (see *(d)*)—all employees

Notes:

1. Conversions from DM to £ sterling have been made on the basis of the latest available OECD estimates of purchasing power parity.
2. In Germany the principal relief for married couples is the "income splitting" system which normally reduces the tax payable by a married couple.
3. In Germany there are also child allowances, single-parent allowances, and various other comparatively minor personal allowances.

Table 2

Income Tax Scales

United Kingdom (all taxpayers)		*Germany (single persons —see Note 3 re married couples)*	
Rate per cent	*Band of taxable income £*	*Rate per cent*	*Band of taxable income £*
27	1-17,900	0	1-990
40	17,901-20,400		(see table 1—zero bracket amount)
45	20,401-25,400	22	990-1,750
50	25,401-33,300	22-56	1,750-28,840
55	33,301-41,200		*(see note 2)*
60	over 41,200	56	over 28,840

Notes:

1. Conversions from DM to £ sterling have been made on the basis of the latest available OECD estimate of purchasing power parity.
2. The tax in this band is computed by complicated arithmetical formulas, which have the effect of progressively increasing the marginal rate from just over 22 per cent. to just under 56 per cent.
3. As mentioned in note 2 to table 1, married couples are normally taxed on the income-splitting system. This will have the effect of doubling all the taxable income figures in this table for such married couples.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated expenditure in the current year on management and computer consultancy by *(a)* the Inland Revenue, *(b)* Her Majesty's Customs and Excise and *(c)* the Department of National Savings.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 October 1987]: The estimated expenditure in the current financial year on management and computer consultancy is as follows:

	£ million
(a) The Inland Revenue	12·5
(b) Her Majesty's Customs and Excise	4·3
(c) The Department for National Savings	0·54

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated expenditure of all Government Departments in the current year on management and computer consultancy.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 October 1987]: Comprehensive information on consultancy costs is not gathered centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate costs, but it is estimated that about £100 million will be spent on computer consultancy in 1987-88, and about £25 million on management consultancy.

Child Benefit

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate how many and what proportion of families with children receive more in child benefit than they pay out in income tax.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 October 1987]: In 1987-88, it is estimated that some 2¼ million families, about one third of the total number of families claiming child benefit, will receive more in child benefit than they pay in income tax.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Pension Schemes

Mr. David Howell asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will take steps to ensure that hon. Members who have taken their seats in the House following the 1987 general election have the right to choose personal pension schemes in place of the existing parliamentary pension arrangements.

Mr. Wakeham: The Social Security Act 1986 enables members of an occupational pension scheme to choose an appropriate personal pension scheme rather than remain

within their occupational scheme. In accordance with these provisions, all right hon. and hon. Members will have the right to choose a personal pension scheme in place of the parliamentary pension arrangements. As I confirmed in an answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) on 24 July 1987, at column *502*, the parliamentary pension scheme, and in particular the anomalies raised by the passage of the Parliamentary and Other Pensions Bill, has been referred to the TSRB. It is my intention that the House will be given an opportunity to consider the TSRB's report before 1 July 1988, so that Members may make an informed decision about their choice of pension scheme.

ENVIRONMENT

Rating Reform

Mr. Andrew Bowden asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his most recent estimate of the numbers of persons in England and Wales who fall under the following categories as defined in the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" *(a)* single pensioners and pensioner couples who are secondary tax units, *(b)* pensioners living in residential homes, nursing homes, hospitals and psychiatric units and *(c)* married women who are pensioners or who are married to pensioners and who are non-householders.

Mr. Howard: I refer my hon. Friend to annex C of the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" (Cmnd. 9714), which sets out key facts about the numbers of households and tax units, and (so far as *(b)* is concerned) to my answer to him today.

Mr. Andrew Bowden asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate the number of pensioners living in residential homes, nursing homes, hospitals and psychiatric units in England and Wales who will be exempt from the community charge.

Mr. Howard: It is not possible to provide a precise estimate of the number of pensioners in such institutions who would be exempt from the community charge. The statistics collected by the DHSS do not distinguish between those people who occupy such institutions as their sole or main residence—and would thus be exempt from the personal community charge—and those whose stay is temporary and who would remain liable at their main place of residence. The number is, however, likely to be in the region of 250,000-300,000.

Mr. Bevan asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information has been made available on the Government's proposals for reform of the rating system.

Mr. Howard: The main proposals in our Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" (Cmnd. 9714), published in January 1986, were summarised in a factual pamphlet and short audio-visual presentation made available last year. Our firm proposals for legislation, which were outlined in the Queen's Speech, have now been summarised in an updated, factual leaflet which is being made available in response to inquiries. Copies have been placed in both Libraries and are available from the Vote Office. An explanatory video is also available on request from CFL Vision, Chalfont grove, Gerrards Cross, Bucks, SL9 8TN.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he proposes to amend section 79 of the Local Government Act 1972 so that following his proposed introduction of a national non-domestic rate, ownership or tenancy of property or place of work ceases to be qualifications for election and holding office as a member of a local authority.

Mr. Ridley [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 October 1987]: No.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether he will provide England only versions of figures F1 to F5 and J4 to J8 of Cmnd. 9714 "Paying for Local Government" to take account of *(a)* 1987-88 community charge figures, *(b)* the most recent tax-benefit model and *(c)* most recent other data;

(2) whether he will provide versions of figures F1 to F5 and J4 to J8 of Cmnd. 9714, "Paying for Local Government", showing seperately figures for London, metropolitan areas, and shire areas, to take account of *(a)* 1987-88 community charge figures, *(b)* the most recent tax-benefit model and *(c)* most recent other data;

(3) whether he will provide versions of figures J4, J5, J7 and J8 of Cmnd. 9714, "Paying for Local Government", showing separately figures for pensioner couples, to take account of *(a)* 1987-88 community charge figures, *(b)* the most recent tax-benefit model and *(c)* most recent other data;

(4) whether he will provide versions of figures J4 to J8 of Cmnd. 9714, "Paying for Local Government", showing figures for households with net incomes of under £200 per week, to take account of *(a)* 1987-88 community charge figures, *(b)* the most recent tax-benefit model and *(c)* most recent other data;

(5) whether he will update annexes F and J of Cmnd. 9714, "Paying for Local Government", particularly to take account of *(a)* 1987-88 community charge figures, *(b)* the most recent tax-benefit model and *(c)* most recent other data such as the family expenditure survey.

Mr. Ridley [*pursuant to his replies*, 21 October 1987]: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Kemptown (Mr. Bowden) on Wednesday 21 October.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussion he has had with, or what representations he has received from the Audit Commission, about the likely effect of his reform of local government finance on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of local authorities.

Mr. Ridley [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 October 1987]: The Audit Commission submitted informal comments on the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" Cmnd. 9714 in November 1986. Those comments were considered with the other comments on the Green Paper in reaching the decision, announced on 15 December 1986, that the Government intended to proceed with its proposals.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions his officials have had with the Audit Commission about any increase in external audit effort as a result of the introduction of the community charge.

Mr. Ridley [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 October 1987]: None.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* those

authorities budgeting to make contributions from their housing revenue account to the general rate fund in 1987-88, and express those contributions as a percentage of total expenditure and in terms of their effect on the published 1987-88 community charge calculations.

Mr. Ridley [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 October 1987]: Those authorities reporting contributions from housing revenue account to general rate fund are as follows, with the amounts of the transfers shown in cash, as amounts per adult and as percentages of "total expenditure". This last measure overstates the value of the contributions since "total expenditure" is expressed net of transfers to the rate fund from the housing revenue account. The illustrative community charge projections I have published for each of these authorities is reduced by the "per adult" amount of the reported contributions. I have already stressed that those illustrative figures are not to be taken as predictions of actual community charges.

Housing revenue account contributions to rate fund revenue account 1987-88

	HRA to rate fund £000	*HRA to Rf per adult* £	*Percentage of total expenditure*
Greater Manchester			
Wigan	272	1·19	0·2
South Yorkshire			
Sheffield	27,697	68·69	10·8
Tyne and Wear			
South Tyneside	1,519	12·47	1·9
Sunderland	992	4·45	0·7
West Yorkshire			
Wakefield	1,700	7·24	1·2
Greater London			
Wandsworth	309	1·51	0·3
Barking and Dagenham	6,587	57·78	8·8
Bromley	2,139	9·14	1·8
Harrow	27	0·17	0·0
Havering	2,350	12·74	0·2
Hillingdon	2,281	12·74	2·1
Kingston-upon-Thames	1,242	11·72	2·0
Merton	5,728	44·51	7·5
Redbridge	93	0·52	0·1
Sutton	421	3·18	0·5
Avon			
Wansdyke	1,150	19·07	51·3
Woodspring	1,195	8·92	14·2
Bedfordshire			
South Bedfordshire	392	4·85	7·8
Berkshire			
Bracknell	866	13·06	25·2
Newbury	151	1·56	3·2
Windsor and Maidenhead	1,890	18·55	26·7
Wokingham	205	2·04	5·2
Buckinghamshire			
South Buckinghamshire	133	2·78	5·8
Cambridgeshire			
East Cambridgeshire	677	15·42	41·6
Fenland	400	7·53	13·6
South Cambridgeshire	622	7·22	31·7
Cheshire			
Congleton	340	5·30	9·3
Cleveland			
Langbaurgh	4	0·04	0·0
Cornwall			
Kerrier	100	1·50	2·5
Penwith	64	1·46	1·9
Restormel	79	1·26	2·0
Cumbria			
Barrow in Furness	62	1·09	1·2
South Lakeland	452	5·91	8·3
Devon			
East Devon	221	2·44	4·3
Exeter	165	2·13	2·9
North Devon	64	1·03	1·6
Plymouth	199	1·04	1·2
South Hams	84	1·53	2·2
Mid Devon	480	10·43	18·2
Torbay	376	3·96	4·4
West Devon	208	6·06	11·5
Dorset			
Bournemouth	525	4·29	4·3
Christchurch	100	2·95	4·7
North Dorset	82	2·11	4·8
Poole	146	1·49	2·2
Purbeck	100	2·97	6·7
West Dorset	230	3·58	6·8
Wimborne	296	4·95	9·0
Durham			
Wear Valley	66	1·33	1·1
East Sussex			
Brighton	35	0·31	0·2
Wealden	250	2·55	4·4
Essex			
Brentwood	78	1·41	0·7
Castle Point	61	0·94	1·4
Colchester	1245	11·54	22·0
Epping Forest	2200	24·58	38·1
Maldon	111	2·90	5·5
Rochford	500	8·82	16·6
Southend on Sea	370	2·96	3·1
Gloucestershire			
Cheltenham	780	11·73	14·7
Tewkesbury	95	1·47	3·9
Hampshire			
Gosport	50	0·88	1·1
Havant	501	5·71	8·7
Portsmouth	390	2·64	2·1
Hereford and Worcester			
Redditch	476	9·26	11·1
Worcester	132	2·29	2·6
Hertfordshire			
Dacorum	900	8·99	12·3
North Hertfordshire	73	0·87	1·3
Three Rivers	145	2·33	3·3
Welwyn Hatfield	677	9·31	9·9
Humberside			
Beverley	40	0·48	0·8
Isle of Wight			
South Wight	157	3·66	4·9
Kent			
Dartford	972	16·56	21·7

	HRA to rate fund	HRA to Rf per adult	Percentage of total expenditure
	£000	£	
Shepway	191	2·74	3·0
Tonbridge and Malling	800	10·55	16·1
Lancashire			
Lancaster	239	2·38	3·0
West Lancashire	300	3·78	5·6
Leicestershire			
Harborough	78	1·62	3·4
Hinckley and Bosworth	95	1·34	3·4
Melton	363	11·17	17·8
Oadby and Wigston	101	2·52	4·5
Lincolnshire			
Boston	100	2·47	3·3
South Holland	385	7·70	11·3
South Kesteven	525	7·00	10·8
Norfolk			
Breckland	400	5·24	11·2
South Norfolk	12	0·16	0·4
West Norfolk	150	1·54	2·4
North Yorkshire			
Hambleton	87	1·49	3·0
Ryedale	250	3·66	7·2
Scarborough	186	2·29	2·7
Oxfordshire			
Cherwell	247	2·80	6·0
South Oxfordshire	991	9·78	22·7
Vale of White Horse	95	1·16	3·6
West Oxfordshire	250	3·70	8·0
Shropshire			
Bridgnorth	46	1·17	2·7
North Shropshire	68	1·74	3·3
Somerset			
Sedgemoor	110	1·54	2·4
West Somerset	55	2·24	3·4
Staffordshire			
Staffs. Moorlands	650	8·89	15·9
Surrey			
Epsom and Ewell	1,111	21·28	29·9
Guildford	50	0·52	1·3
Reigate and Banstead	670	7·32	11·1
Runnymede	862	15·37	57·5
Spelthorne	510	7·15	10·2
Tandridge	750	12·63	23·5
Waverley	223	2·62	4·5
Warwickshire			
Stratford-on-Avon	35	0·44	0·8
West Sussex			
Arun	200	1·95	2·7
Chichester	390	4·83	8·5
Horsham	220	2·77	5·0
Worthing	71	0·91	1·0
Wiltshire			
West Wiltshire	251	3·22	6·8

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for each local authority the number of dwellings where the rates paid are equal to the community charge per person, using the figures from the exemplifications placed in the Library since 11 June.

Mr. Howard [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 October 1987]: The information available to me is for the numbers of domestic hereditaments in the following rateable value bands:

Less than £75
£75-£100
£100-£125
£125-£150
£150-£400
£400+

It is not, therefore, possible to say how many properties in each area have rate bills at or below the illustrative community charges for those areas.

National Heritage Memorial Fund

Dr. Michael Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make a statement on the funding of tne National Heritage Memorial Fund.

Mr. Ridley: Since its creation in 1980 the National Heritage Memorial Fund has played a significant role in safeguarding our heritage by acting as a channel of finance for the preservation or acquisition of items of outstanding merit which might otherwise be lost to the nation. We have made this possible with grant-in-aid to the fund totalling some £83 million to date, including an initial endowment of £12·4 million.

To enable the fund to continue with its valuable work I propose to make an additional £20 million available to it in this financial year, subject to parliamentary approval. With these extra resources the trustees of the fund will be able to maintain their present level of activity whilst restoring the fund's reserves to their original value in real terms.

Annual support from my Department and the Office of Arts and Libraries will continue at the present level of £3 million.

Cash Limits

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any changes to announce to his Department's cash limits.

Mr. Ridley: Yes, I propose the following changes, subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimates.

The non-voted cash limit for 1987-88 for new towns (DOE/NT1) has been reduced by £160 million from minus £145·146 million to minus £305·146 million to take account of disposals of property which are higher than forecast. The cash limit for 1987-88 for class X, vote 4 will be increased from £86·447 million by £20 million to permit additional funding for the National Heritage Memorial Fund and by £0·25 million in respect of repairing storm damage and tree planting in the royal parks. The Department's running costs limits in respect of the latter expenditure will be increased by £0·25 million from £147·911 million to £148·161 million. The revised cash limit for 1987-88 for class X, vote 4 will be £106·697 million. The cash limit for 1987-88 for class X, vote 2 will be increased by £2·75 million to enable the Countryside Commission to undertake the expanded tree planting scheme announced in my statement of 21 October. The balance of £137 million will be surrendered to the reserve.

The cash limit for class X, vote 2 will also be increased by £60,000 to enable the litter initiative within UK 2000 to continue and to cover a new international subscription.

This increase will be offset by a reduction of £60,000 in the cash limit for class X, vote 5 due to slippage on research programmes. At the same time the cash limit for class X, vote 5 will be increased by a token £1,000 to enable the chairman of the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council to be remunerated for his services. The revised cash limit for class X, vote 2, taking account of all changes, will br £199·318 million. The revised cash limit for class X, vote 5, taking account of all changes, will be £154·430 million.

Children's Play

Mr. Rathbone asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to report the Government's plan for Children's Play following dissolution of Play Board.

Mr. Moynihan: As I announced on 30 September, the Sports Council has agreed to accept responsibility for providing a national focus for the promotion and development of Children's Play. The council will be establishing a separate management committee to include representatives from the local authority associations and relevant national organisations concerned with children's play, to oversee this work.

Housing Support

Mr. Butterfill asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give a breakdown of the average housing support figures for *(a)* pensioners (head of household) and *(b)* others in the following categories (i) the public rented housing sector, (ii) home owners with a mortgage or other loan and (iii) home owners owning outright; and if he will further subdivide the resulting figures between rent rebates, rate rebates, housing subsidy and income tax relief on mortgage interest.

Mr. Waldegrave: Estimates of Government housing support in 1985, on the basis described for 1984 in pages 108 to 113 of *Economic Trends*, No. 393 are as follows:

Average housing support by type of household and tenure type: 1985

United Kingdom — *£ per year per household*

Household type	*Number of households in sample*	*Rent rebates*[3]	*Rates rebates*[4]	*Housing subsidy*[5]	*Mortgage tax relief*[6]	*Total housing support*
A. *Households headed by a pensioner*[1]						
(i) public sector tenants[2]	(1,022)	452	146	201	—	799
(ii) owner occupiers with mortgage	(142)	—	35	—	249	284
(iii) owner occupiers without mortgage	(1,063)	—	60	—	—	60
B. *Other households*						
(i) public sector tenants[2]	(1,113)	372	129	228	—	729
(ii) owner occupiers with mortgage	(2,519)	—	11	—	539	550
(iii) ower occupiers without mortgage	(519)	—	16	—	—	16
C. *All households*						
(i) public sector tenants[2]	(2.135)	410	137	215	—	762
(ii) owner occupiers with mortgage	(2,661)	—	12	—	524	536
(iii) owner occupiers without mortgage	(1,582)	—	46	—	—	46

Source: Central Statistical Office, from Family Expenditure Survey 1985.

[1] Of state retirement pension age (65 for a man and 60 for a woman).

[2] Includes tenants of local authorities, new town corporations, the Scottish Special Housing Association, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and housing associations.

[3] Includes rent element of housing benefit supplement.

[4] Includes rates element of housing benefit supplement.

[5] Housing subsidy is current expenditure less income on the housing revenue accounts of local authorities, and grants paid to the rest of the public sector.

[6] At the basic rate only. Includes relief on mortgage endowment and mortgage protection policies.

Note:

These figures do not include mortgage interest tax relief at rates in excess of the basic rate or supplementary benefit assistance with mortgage interest payments. Sound estimates for pensioner and non-pensioner households separately are not available, but over all owner occupiers with mortgages, the average amounts in 1985 are estimated at about £30 and £20, respectively.

Local Government Reform

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what central Government grants owed to the former Greater London council and the Inner London education authority are still outstanding.

Mr. Chope: A wide variety of Exchequer grants were payable to the Greater London council and are payable to the Inner London education authority. In the process of closing the GLC's accounts the London residuary body has estimated the amounts of grants due. In some cases these entitlements and arrangements for payment are the subject of discussion between the LRB and the respective Government Departments. In others, outstanding amounts do not become payable until audited claims have been received or Parliament's approval has been given. Exchequer grants to the ILEA for past years are subject to final revisions according to arrangements which vary from case to case.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many claims for redundancy payments or compensation from former employees of the Greater London council and metropolitan county councils have yet to be settled in full.

Mr. Chope: I understand that final payments are still outstanding in only two of over 6,000 claims for

redundancy payments or compensation from former employees of the GLC and MCCs. In both cases interim payments have been made.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment which newspapers were used by the London residuary body to give public notice of the 1985-86 accounts and related document.

Mr. Chope: *The Daily Telegraph* and *The London Evening Standard* were used to give notice of the public inspection period for both the Greater London council's 1985-86 accounts and the London residuary body's 1985-86 annual report and accounts.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the latest information he has on the current whereabouts of the items of historical and traditional association catalogued by the Greater London council and transferred to the London residuary body.

Mr. Chope: I understand that items in possession of the LRB are located in County Hall, in Kenwood House and in secure storage. Items forming part of the Crystal Palace collection have been transferred to the London borough of Bromley.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has about the current number of residential mortgages remaining with the London residuary body.

Mr. Chope: At the end of September 32,802 residential mortgages remained with the LRB.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if the Home Office, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Manpower Services Commission have now settled their outstanding accounts with the London residuary body.

Mr. Chope: These are matters for the Home Office, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Department of Employment.

Storm Damage

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on the number of trees felled in London by the storm on the morning of 16 October.

Mr. Moynihan: Damage has been extensive. Information is readily available only for the royal parks, where approximately 3,000 trees were blown down in the storm and of the order of a further thousand have been so severely damaged that they have to be felled.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has made of the damage in London caused by the storm on the morning of 16 October.

Mr. Moynihan: I refer to my right hon. Friend's statement yesterday on the storm damage on 16 October. It is too early to give estimates of the costs and extent of the damage generally.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions have taken place between his Department and London local authorities concerning the consequences of the storm on the morning of 16 October.

Mr. Chope: I refer to my right hon. Friend's statement yesterday afternoon on the storm damage on 16 October. My right hon. Friend has replied to the letter from the chairman of the Association of London Authorities.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what additional resources he intends to make available to London local authorities to deal with the consequences of the storm on the morning of 16 October.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Member to the statement by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State yesterday.

Residuary Bodies

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the salaries of chairmen and members of each of the residuary bodies *(a)* currently and *(b)* on appointment.

Mr. Chope: The information is as follows:

	Salary on appointment £ per annum	*Current salary £ per annum*
London Residuary Body		
Chairman:		
Sir Godfrey Taylor	50,000	54,155
Members:		
Mr. Alan Blakemore, CBE	12,000	13,084
Mr. Jack Esling	24,000	26,168
Mr. Wallace Mackenzie, OBE	12,000	16,355
Mr. Jack Wolkind, CBE	12,000	13,084
Mr. Michael Roberts	18,000	19,626
Councillor Sir Peter Bowness	6,000	6,542
Metropolitan Residuary Bodies		
Chairmen:		
Greater Manchester Merseyside West Midlands	17,600	19,064
South Yorkshire Tyne and Wear West Yorkshire	16,000	17,330
Members:		
All members	5,600	6,107

As an alternative to annual salary, co-ordinating committee members may claim a daily attendance allowance, which is currently £16·70 per day. This option is being exercised by one co-ordinating committee member.

Remuneration is subject to abatement, if applicable, in respect of public sector pension received.

Council House Sales

Mr. Wray asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what are his estimates of the present number of people who will be displaced from council houses as a result of the sale of estates, who do not have enough income to buy their own homes, will not be able to pay the rents demanded by private landlords, and are unable to obtain housing benefits.

Mr. Waldegrave: None. The Government's policies are aimed at increasing the supply of housing available at affordable rents, and at widening the choices open to council tenants.

Housebuilding

Mr. Wray asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many houses were built by the public sector for each year since 1980; and how many were built each year from 1973 to 1979.

Mr. Waldegrave: The numbers of dwelling completions in the United Kingdom in the years 1976 to 1986 appear in table 6.1(f) of "Housing and Construction Statistics, 1976-1986" and those for 1973-1975 in the corresponding table of the 1973-1983 edition. Copies are available in the Library.

Whale Products

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment for what purposes whale products are imported into the United Kingdom.

Mr. Moynihan: Imports of whale products are normally permitted only for personal or scientific purposes involving no commercial trade.

Common Land

Mr. Favell asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes to introduce legislation to remedy the problems arising from the misregistration of property as common land.

Mr. Moynihan [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 October 1987]: This is one of a series of recommendations contained in the report of the Common Land Forum, which was published by the Countryside Commission in September 1986. My right hon. Friend announced on 29 January 1987 that the Government accept the case for legislation based broadly on the forum's report and intends to introduce a comprehensive Commons Bill at a suitable opportunity when parliamentary time permits.

Storm Damage

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has made of the additional expense that will be incurred by local councils in consequence of the 15-16 October hurricane; and if Her Majesty's Government will offer any assistance towards these costs.

Mr. Ridley: No such estimate is yet available, but I announced to the House on Wednesday 21 October a package of measures designed to help local authorities affected by storm damage on 15-16 October.

In addition, I can confirm that the Government accept that those authorities will now be using up the funds they have set aside for contingencies. If there is any further emergency to which the Bellwin rules are applied in this financial year, we will add in the cost of the current emergency work in calculating whether authorities qualify for special grant aid. And we will ensure that there is not loss of rate support grant on spending above the threshold. This will apply to all authorities affected by the English storm whether or not they qualify for grant on this occasion.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

North Molton Primary School

Mr. Speller asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science, if he will visit north Devon; and if he will include North Molton primary school in his itinerary to discuss matters relating to primary education.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend has no plans at present to visit north Devon.

Education Reform

Mr. Straw asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will deposit the analysis of the responses to his consultation documents being prepared for him in the Library.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: No. We do not intend to issue summaries of all the responses received, although I do not at this stage rule out the possibility of doing so in relation to some aspects of the consultation.

Mr. Straw asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will arrange for copies of all responses to his consultation documents to be deposited in the Library.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I refer the hon. Member to the answer which my hon. Friend the Member for Mitcham and Morden (Mrs. Rumbold) gave to the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) on 21 October 1987.

Mr. Straw asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing each of the consultation documents published by him in respect of the forthcoming Education Bill, and in respect of each *(a)* the date of publication, *(b)* the closing date for receipt of responses, *(c)* the number issued of each document and *(d)* the number of responses from: (i) individuals and (ii) bodies and institutions.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The information is as follows:

Consultation document	*Date of publication*	*Closing date for responses*	*Number issued*	*Responses from individuals*	*Responses from bodies and institutions*
The National Curriculum 5-16	24 July	30 September	58,500	6,200	740
Charges for school activities	2 October	30 November	8,100	42	10
Collective Worship	7 July	11 September	424	252	81
Financial delegation to schools	20 July	16 September	10,197	199	340
Grant maintained schools	24 July	30 September	11,388	298	393
Admission of pupils to maintained schools	9 July	16 September	10,140	187	310
Changes in structure and national planning for higher education (polytechnics and colleges sector)	10 April	30 June	1,840	13	216

Consultation document	Date of publication	Closing date for responses	Number issued	Responses from individuals	Responses from bodies and institutions
Changes in structure and national planning for higher education (contracts between the funding bodies and higher education institutes)	8 May	30 June	2,750	5	142
Changes in structure and national planning for higher education (Universities Funding Council)	8 May	30 June	1,955	3	96
Maintained further education: Financing governance and law	7 August	9 October	6,750	30	220
Academic tenure and related matters	16 September	15 October	32	23	2
Organisation of education in inner London	11 September	16 October	3,922	3,407	719
Accounting and auditing in HE	20 October	30 November	588	0	0

DEFENCE

Service Bases (Nuclear Reactors)

Mr. Morley asked the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has about plans by the United States Defence Department to locate mini nuclear power reactors at Royal Air Force and Royal Navy bases in the United Kingdom currently loaned to the United States; what licensing procedures exist to permit the stationing of such nuclear reactors at land military bases in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: We are not aware that such plans exist or are being developed by any agency of the United States Government. I understand that the United States air force was studying a concept under the title of "Multi-megawatt Terrestrial Power Plant Program" for emergency generating capability in the event of disruption of commercial supplies by natural disaster, but the programme was cancelled by the Secretary of the Air Force.

Overseas Territories

Mr. Grocott asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the latest estimate of the defence costs attributable to defending the following remaining British dependent territories *(a)* Hong Kong, *(b)* Pitcairn, *(c)* Bermuda, *(d)* Anguilla, *(e)* British Antarctic Territory, *(f)* British Indian Ocean Territory, *(g)* British Virgin Islands, *(h)* Cayman Islands, *(i)* Falkland Islands, *(j)* Gibraltar, *(k)* Montserrat, *(l)* St. Helena and Dependencies, *(m)* South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, and *(n)* the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Those British dependent territories for which there are directly attributable defence costs are as follows:

1987-88 Estimated defence cost

	£ million
Hong Kong	55
British Indian Ocean Territory (Diego Garcia)	1
Falkland Islands (including South Georgia)	141
Gibraltar	79

We do not maintain forces exclusively for operations in the other dependencies and costs are not separately identified.

Training Centre, Arkansas

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Defence what plans exist to send British military personnel to the joint readiness training centre at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas.

Mr. Ian Stewart: One officer is currently at Fort Chaffee as a liaison officer between the British and United States army training organisations. There are no plans at present to send any other personnel.

Dowty Group

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been paid back to his Department by the Dowty Group in respect of alleged fraud over defence contracts.

Mr. Sainsbury: My Department's dealings with individual companies are subject to commercial confidentiality.

Contracts (Overcharging)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been recovered by his Department from companies found to be overcharging on contract work in each year from 1979 to date.

Mr. Sainsbury: Since 1979, the following refunds have been made by contractors following a post costing review of contract prices:

Year	£ million
1979	3·1
1980	0·3
1981	0·3
1982	1·8
1983	1·1
1984	14·5
1985	3·9
1986	2·2

Post costing is undertaken selectively to establish the outturn costs of a contract compared with the costs on which the contract price was based. If the analysis of the post costing reveals a lack of equality of information at the time the price was fixed there would be grounds for seeking a refund from the contractor. Such post costing reviews are only necessary for contracts placed non-competitively, the number of which we aim to reduce.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Arms Sales

Mr. Wray asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what criteria Her Majesty's Government apply to distinguish between weapons and equipment necessary for national defence and those which could be used for internal repression by countries under repressive regimes.

Mr. Mellor: Our policy is not to allow the export of defence equipment likely to be used for internal repression or to violate human rights. All exports of defence equipment are subject to strict licensing procedures. In considering applications for licences we look at each on its merits, and the human rights record of the country concerned would be one factor taken into account when deciding whether or not to grant a licence.

South Africa

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what British diplomatic support will be given to the United Kingdom-South Africa Trade Association visit to South Africa in November.

Mrs. Chalker: In keeping with our international undertakings, the United Kingdom-South Africa Trade Association mission is not receiving any financial support from us. Within those constraints we continue to provide certain limited services to British business visitors to South Africa, including members of the UKSATA mission, such as advice about the market and local contacts.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what has been the annual cost of maintaining a British diplomatic presence in South Africa in each of the last five financial years; and what has been the total number of staff employed in each of those years.

Mr. Eggar: The annual cost in each of the last five years of maintaining a British diplomatic presence in South Africa is shown, together with the numbers of staff employed.

	£ million	Staff numbers		Total
		United Kingdom based	Locally engaged	
1983	3·0	47	105	152
1984	3·2	46	99	145
1985	2·8	46	99	145
1986	3·5	45	103	148
[1]1987	3·9	43	103	146

[1] Estimated.

Guatemala Accord

Mr. Wray asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will instruct Her Majesty's ambassadors in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala to hold urgent talks with the Governments in those countries aimed at establishing what practical steps Britain could take to help the implementation of the Guatemala accord of August;

(2) if he will instruct the ambassador to Nicaragua to have talks with President Ortega of Nicaragua to discuss practical help which the United Kingdom can offer to Nicaragua in her efforts to support the accord of 27 August;

(3) if he will give public and practical support to the Guatemala accord by the five Presidents of Central American republics.

Mr. Eggar: We warmly welcomed the Guatemala peace agreement and pledged our continued support for the efforts of the central Americans to achieve a lasting solution to the region's problems. We, together with our community partners, established a formal political dialogue with the Governments of central America in 1984. As a result, there have been three meetings at ministerial level, and regular contact at ambassadorial level. Most recently, at our suggestion, a meeting was held in New York in September between representatives of the European Community and central American Governments to discuss implementation of the Guatemala accord.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Population Statistics

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the estimated numbers of women aged 15 to 44 years resident in each county and county borough (pre-1974 boundaries) in Northern Ireland in mid-1986.

Mr. Needham: The information is not available.

St. Mary's and St. Joseph's Training College

Mr. Beggs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish details of the financial allocation annually in each of the last three years for pastoral care to St. Mary's and St. Joseph's training college, Belfast.

Dr. Mawhinney: No such allocation has been made.

Health Boards

Mr. Beggs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to whom the area manager of a health board is responsible; and what scrutiny is made of his actions.

Mr. Needham: The general manager of a health and social services board is directly accountable to the board as his employer. He is also accountable on behalf of the board for the management of its funds to the permanent secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services in his role as accounting officer responsible to Parliament.

A number of key objectives are determined each year by the board for the general manager and his performance in meeting those objectives is assessed by the chairman acting for the board and by the permanent secretary to ensure equity and consistency between boards.

In addition, the board's financial affairs, and their administration by its staff, are subject to scrutiny by the auditors appointed by the Department of Health and Social Services and by the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Mr. Beggs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the bonus payments paid to the area manager of the Northern health board in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Needham: It is the Government's policy not to disclose personal information of this kind.

Mr. Beggs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the per capita revenue allocation for the Southern, Western and Northern boards for the next five to 10 years.

Mr. Needham: The actual level of resources available for the health and personal social services is decided annually through the public expenditure survey and the Secretary of State's decisions in allocating the Northern Ireland block. It is not possible therefore to identify the boards' revenue allocations and the consequent per capita funding over the next five to 10 years. However, the recently published regional strategy for the "Northern Ireland Health and Personal Social Services 1987-1992", a copy of which has been placed in the Library, is based on the assumption that over the period to 1992 the total level of resources across the Province will remain steady in real terms, with an enhancement for demographic pressures, estimated at 0·9 per cent. per year.

Mr. Beggs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what has the total capital allocation been to each area health board in Northen Ireland since the inception of the health boards in 1973.

Mr. Needham: The information covering the period 1 October 1973 to 31 March 1987 is as follows:

	£ million
Northern Board	19·6
Southern Board	17·3
Eastern Board	66·4
Western Board	18·0

Mr. Beggs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what has been the total revenue allocation to each area health board in Northern Ireland since 1973.

Mr. Needham: The information covering the period 1 October 1973 to 31 March 1987 is as follows:

	£ million
Northern Board	711
Southern Board	674
Eastern Board	2,399
Western Board	655

Mr. Beggs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the revenue allocation to the Eastern health board for its regional services.

Mr. Needham: It is not possible to define accurately what constitutes regional medical services because of medical advances and changing clinical practices. In addition, many regional services are provided at the major teaching hospitals and their costs cannot be identified separately.

Police Secondments

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many officers from police forces in England, Wales and Scotland were seconded to duties in Northern Ireland in each of the past three years.

Mr. Stanley: I shall answer shortly.

Terrorism

Mr. Maginnis asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) for how many of the 178 terrorist killings in Fermanagh and South Tyrone between 9 February 1971 and 6 October 1986 anyone had been made amenable for murder by 27 October 1986, and if he will make a statement;

(2) if anyone has been made amenable since 27 October 1986 for each of the terrorist murders in Fermanagh and South Tyrone unsolved at that time; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 October 1987, c *761*]: By 27 October 1986 the RUC had obtained convictions for offences in relation to 36 of these killings. None has been obtained since then.

We shall not cease in our endeavours to bring these evil men to justice.

EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment Benefit

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Secretary of State for Employment (1) how many suspensions of unemployment benefit pending inquiries into availability for employment were made *(a)* in May 1980 and *(b)* in the most recent month for which figures are available;

(2) how many refusals to pay unemployment benefit due to non-availability for employment were made *(a)* in May 1980 and *(b)* in the most recent month for which figures are available.

Mr. Lee: There are no records maintained to show the number of suspensions of unemployment benefit on the question of availability for employment. Statistics on the number of disallowances of unemployment on the same grounds are maintained, but are not compiled on a monthly basis. However, for the last quarter of 1980 the monthly average was 4,000, and for the last quarter of 1986 the monthly average over 12,000.

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is his policy on seeking the recovery of an overpayment of unemployment benefit where a question arises of a person's availability for work for a period during which he or she has been in receipt of unemployment benefit.

Mr. Lee: An overpayment of unemployment benefit is recoverable by the Secretary of State only where the independent adjudicating authorities have determined that the overpayment has been obtained by misrepresentation of, or failure to disclose, a material fact (Social Security Act 1986, section 53 (1)). It is the Secretary of State's normal policy to seek recovery in such cases.

Restart Programme

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the current success rate on the restart programme; and how many people find full-time permanent jobs within one month of their restart interview *(a)* nationally and *(b)* in Oxfordshire.

Mr. Cope: Between 9 April and 25 September 1987, 1,406,859 people had been called for a restart interview, of whom 1,021,700 had been interviewed.

The aim of restart interviews is to help unemployed people into employment by selecting the best way open to them from the wide range of employment, training and job search opportunities available. Around nine out of 10 of those interviewed are made offers that might lead to

employment, and 70 per cent. of those interviewed agreed at their restart interview to pursue the offer made to them. We do not know how many ultimately went into full-time employment.

Between 9 April and 25 September 1987, 15,331 people in the Berks. and Oxon. area had been called for an interview, of whom 10,811 had been interviewed. Seventy-one per cent. of the people interviewed agreed to pursue the offer made to them at their restart interview.

Job Clubs

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the average time spent by unemployed people in job clubs; and what are the benefit consequences of leaving the job club without having secured employment.

Mr. Lee: The average length of time spent in a job club by unemployed people is six weeks. Participants are encouraged to stay until they find a job, but if they leave before doing so their benefit entitlement is not affected.

In the current financial year to the end of August 1987 39,018 people passed through job clubs. Of these, 21,277 (54·5 per cent) found work and a further 5,025 (13 per cent.) took up a place on the community programme, a training scheme or the enterprise allowance scheme.

Coal Industry

Mr. Illsley asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many major injury accidents to persons on British Coal Corporation's colliery books in 1986-87, reported under the RIDDOR regulations, also satisfied the criteria for reporting under the previous NADOR regulations.

Mr. Cope: There were 982 major injury accidents in 1986-87 in coal mines. Of those, it is estimated that 687 would have been reportable under the previous NADOR regulations.

Railway Locomotives

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will estimate the numbers employed in the United Kingdom in the construction of railway locomotives and their component equipment, including engines.

Mr. Lee: In August 1987 there were an estimated 14,000 employees in employment in the railway and tramway vehicles industry (activity heading 3620 of the 1980 standard industrial classification) in Great Britain. The figure includes employees engaged in the manufacture of major sub-assemblies and the manufacture and repair of railway and tramway rolling stock.

The estimate is subject to considerable potential estimation error due to the relatively small number of employees in the industry.

Figures for the United Kingdom are not available.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Housing Benefit

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if from April 1988, under regulation 18(1) as calculated under regulation 16 and schedule 2 to the draft housing benefit regulations, housing benefit will be withdrawn from pensioners who are hospital in-patients for a period exceeding six weeks.

Mr. Portillo: The amount of housing benefit which a pensioner receives after he has been in hospital for more than six weeks will continue to depend on his income and the amount of eligible rent or rates he has to pay. For example, a pensioner who continues to receive income support will continue to receive maximum help with both rent and rates. Pensioners not on income support will be reassessed for housing benefit using a reduced applicable amount after six weeks in hospital, as part of the alignment of social security benefit rules. However, this will not necessarily mean housing benefit is reduced or withdrawn, and any downrating of other social security benefits they may be receiving will also be taken into account. Housing benefit could be withdrawn if the local authority decides in accordance with regulation 5(8) that the claimant does not intend to return home, or if that part of the dwelling which he normally occupies has been let or sub-let during his absence.

Girocheques

Ms. Abbott asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what procedures are followed when claimants of supplementary benefit and unemployment benefit report that they have not received the Girocheque which has been sent to them; what are the average waiting times for replacement Girocheques in such cases in England and Wales as a whole, North London region and South London; and how the delays experienced in his Department's Hackney office and in unemployment benefit offices in Hackney compare with the national and regional figures.

Mr. Portillo: Claimants reporting non receipt of supplementary benefit Girocheques are requested to call at the local office to give details of the circumstances of non receipt and to sign an undertaking to return the Girocheque should it subsequently arrive. Immediate replacements are given if appropriate. If not, appropriate consideration of replacement is deferred until a search is made to establish if the original Girocheque has been cashed.

No local or central records are held of average waiting times for replacement Girocheques and to obtain such records would incur disproportionate cost.

Procedures for unemployment benefit Girocheques are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment.

Benefits

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the current national average waiting times for *(a)* single payments under the supplementary benefit scheme, *(b)* new claims for supplementary benefit, *(c)* housing benefit, *(d)* family income supplement and *(e)* invalid care allowance.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that information is not available on the average clearance time for decisions on single payment or housing benefit claims. Figures for the other benefits are shown in the table following. Supplementary benefit figures are for the four weeks ending 22 September.

Figures for family income supplement and invalid care allowance were obtained by a special count of claims up to 24 August.

	Clearance time
Supplementary Benefit	6 days
Family Income Supplement	14 days
Invalid Care Allowance	12·4 weeks

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the current estimate for unclaimed benefit nationally; and how this is divided between different benefits.

Mr. Scott: For the major contributory benefits (such as retirement pension, widow's benefit, unemployment benefit) and child benefit virtually all those eligible are thought to claim their entitlement. Eligibility is difficult to establish for some of the non-contributory benefits, particularly disability benefits such as mobility allowance and attendance allowance.

For one-parent benefit, the latest estimate suggests that in 1984 about £5 million out of a possible £125 million was unclaimed by single parents who stood to gain. Available estimates also suggest that in 1983, supplementary benefit recipients claimed £4,590 million whilst others who were probably eligible did not claim around £570 million. Housing benefit take-up estimates suggest that in 1984 entitled recipients claimed £3,820 million and that £500 million was unclaimed. Estimates for family income supplement spanning 1983 and 1984 suggest that, on an annual basis, employees in employment received £105 million whilst a further £55 million could have been claimed.

Strictly, it is inappropriate to add up the figures listed above because they relate to different years. However, a broad annual estimate based on these years suggests that roughly £8·5 billion in income-related benefits was claimed whilst about £1 billion was unclaimed.

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy to list addresses of local advice centres on letters sent by his Department refusing benefit.

Mr. Portillo: It is not the Department's policy to list addresses of local advice centres on letters sent refusing benefits because we do not believe this is warranted. But we have decided that it is desirable for appellants to social security tribunals to be provided with the names and addresses of local agencies who may be willing to represent them at their appeal tribunal, as I announced in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory) on 24 July 1987, at column *710*. Procedural arrangements to implement these changes are in hand.

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many payments under regulation 30 of the supplementary benefit single payments regulations were made *(a)* in May 1980 and *(b)* in the most recent month for which figures are available.

Mr. Portillo: Supplementary Benefits (Single Payments) Regulation 30 did not take effect until November 1980. For the four weeks ending 23 December 1980, the first four-week period during which the legislation was current, 157 payments were made under Regulation 30, amounting to £6,689.

For the four weeks ending 22 September 1987, the most recent period for which figures are available, 4,139 payments were made, amounting to £387,099.

Social Fund

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services who will comprise the review panels on the social fund.

Mr. Scott: The social fund has a two-tier review process. First, an applicant who is dissatisfied with the decision on his application may apply to the social fund officer in the DHSS local office for a review of that decision. If the social fund officer is unable to change the decision in favour of the applicant the review will always be determined by an assistant manager in the local office. If the applicant remains dissatisfied he will be able to apply for a further review by an independent social fund inspector based outside the local office. The appointment and management of social fund inspectors will be a matter for the independent social fund commissioner who has yet to be appointed.

Mortgage Defaults

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people on supplementary benefit defaulted on their mortgage repayments *(a)* in May 1980 and *(b)* in the most recent month for which figures are available.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that the information is not available.

Claimant Advisers

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how cases will be referred to the new claimant advisers by supplementary benefit offices.

Mr. Portillo: The supplementary benefit adjudiction officer sends a form to the claimant adviser notifying him of unemployed claimants who appear from their history on benefit to need help in finding work.

Social Security Appeals

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what percentage of social security tribunals are determined in favour of the claimant; and what is the claimant success rate at social security appeal tribunals where the claimant *(a)* has a representative and *(b)* has no representative.

Mr. Portillo: Of the 125,838 appeals heard during 1986, 31,675 (25·2 per cent.) were decided in the claimant's favour; a representative attended at 27,282 hearings where the success rate for the claimant was 47·8 per cent.; the success rate of unrepresented appeals was 18·9 per cent., although this figure includes 41,539 hearings where the claimant attended (with a success rate of 32 per cent.) and 57,017 hearings where neither the claimant nor a representative was present (with a success rate of 9·4 per cent.).

Social Security Act

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when the levels of premiums under the new Social Security Act will be set.

Mr. Scott: My right hon. Friend will be making an announcement shortly.

Fraud Officers

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many fraud officers were employed in his Department *(a)* in May 1980 and *(b)* in the most recent month for which figures are available.

Mr. Portillo: Precise figures are not available but it is possible to calculate the amount of staff time employed on fraud work in the Department. In May 1980 the equivalent of 2,350 full-time staff were employed on fraud-related work, mainly in local offices, and in September 1987 the figure had risen to 2,920. The latter figure includes 500 additional staff for the extra effort against benefit fraud introduced in 1986.

Single Parents

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what were the average expenses claimed by single parents doing part-time jobs whilst claiming supplementary benefit, including child care and transport expenses, in the most recent year for which figures are available.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that information is not collected about supplementary benefit claimant's work-related expenses. Some analysis of lone parents' work expenses is contained in the report of a study[1] of the tapered earnings disregard for lone parents, which was commissioned by the Department and carried out by the social policy research unit of the university of York in 1982. A copy of the report is in the Library.

[1] Lone Mothers, Paid Work and Social Security: Occasional Paper on Social Administration 77.

Ms. Abbott asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many lone parents are currently affected by the requirement in the supplementary benefit regulations that they must register as available for full-time work once all their children reach the age of 16 years, whether or not those children are still at school; and if he will supply this information in respect of *(a)* London north region, *(b)* London south region and *(c)* England and Wales as a whole.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that the information requested is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Board and Lodging

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what percentage of board and lodging claimants in Oxfordshire have their full lodging costs met by his Department; and, of those who do not have their expenses fully met, what is the average shortfall.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that the information requested is not collected by individual local offices and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Health Cuts (Oldham)

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will set out for each year since 1982, what changes have been made in the National Health Service budget by Oldham district health authority in order to achieve savings; how much was saved each year by each of these changes; by how much staffing has been cut in each year as a result of each of these changes, and in what grades; and what plans there are for the current year in each of these respects.

Mr. Newton: On the basis of provisional figures for 1986-87 Oldham health authority's expenditure has risen since 1982-83 by 26·2 per cent., or nearly 6 per cent. in real terms. Between 1982 and 1986 the number of front line staff rose by nearly 7 per cent. These increases, together with an improved use of resources which is greatly to the credit of management and staff, made possible increases of 14 per cent. in the number of in-patient cases treated, 92 per cent. in day cases, 14 per cent. in out patient attendances and 22 per cent. in day attendances.

It is the responsibility of the Oldham health authority to manage its budget allocation to meet its policy objectives and maximise the effectiveness and efficiency with which its resources are used for the benefit of patients. The hon. Member may, therefore, wish to approach the chairman of the Oldham health authority for details of changes in services, the levels of activity to which they relate and any redeployment of moneys released by such changes.

Private Contractors

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how much has been spent in each of the past five years by his Department on work undertaken by contractors, showing what work is undertaken and in each case whether it was previously undertaken by permanent staff.

Mr. Portillo: The Department has some 1,360 budget holders who have delegated responsibility for getting work done within their allocated budget and for obtaining value for money. For some tasks this would involve the use of contractors. The detailed information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Severe Weather Payments

Mr. Wray asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether Her Majesty's Government will support Danish and other European Community Government proposals for mandatory aid to retirement pensioners and other needy social groups during severe weather conditions.

Mr. Portillo: The Government already provide help when it is very cold through the supplementary benefit exceptionally cold weather scheme. Last winter, we estimate that over 950,000 people received help, at a benefit cost of £10·2 million. Any proposals from the European Community would be considered on their merits.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Food Surpluses

3. **Mr. Hargreaves** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he will next meet the National Farmers Union to discuss the question of food surpluses.

Mr. MacGregor: I meet members of the National Farmers Union frequently to discuss agricultural issues.

Alternative Land Use

5. **Mr. Stevens** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has had from the Tenant Farmers Association regarding compensation to tenants when they have lost land to alternative uses.

Mr. Gummer: In a recent letter to my right hon. Friend the Tenant Farmers Association has called for increased compensation for tenants when land goes for development. I have also received representation from the Country Landowners Association expressing a contrary view.

32. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received about his plans for additional grants for planting trees on agricultural land.

Mr. Gummer: We have received many responses to the consultation document "Farm Woodland Scheme" issued earlier this year and hope to announce our intentions on the scheme to Parliament shortly.

Beef Industry

15. **Sir John Farr** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on his future plans for the beef premium scheme.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The reform of the beef regime negotiated last December during the British presidency of the European Community provided for the beef variable premium to continue for two years. The arrangements to apply in 1989 and beyond will be for consideration next year. Meanwhile, beef producers are benefiting from a substantial devaluation of the green pound and a 35 per cent. increase in the suckler cow premium.

17. **Mr. Temple-Morris** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he intends to meet the President of the National Farmers Union to discuss the beef industry.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My right hon. Friend the Minister meets the President of the National Farmers Union frequently and discusses the beef sector when appropriate.

Agriculture Industry

16. **Mr. Allen** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will take steps to establish an independent national agricultural support system to replace the common agricultural policy in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: No. The treaty of Rome provides for a common agricultural policy. The Government's approach is to work with our partners for its reform, to bring it into closer touch with market realities, and to reduce surpluses and their associated budgetary costs.

18. **Mr. Baldry** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to meet leaders of the agriculture industry in the near future.

Mr. MacGregor: I have frequent meetings with leaders of the agriculture industry.

34. **Mr. Colin Shepherd** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he will next meet the President of the National Farmers Union to discuss the sheep sector of the agriculture industry.

Mr. MacGregor: I maintain regular contacts with the President of the NFU on a wide range of issues, including the sheepmeat sector.

Cereals

20. **Mr. John Carlisle** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his policy on the reduction of cereal surpluses.

Mr. Gummer: I shall continue to pursue a policy of bringing cereals production more into line with demand by continuing price restraint, including through the application of automatic stabilisers, supporting measures to make intervention a safety net rather than an alternative market outlet and promoting the diversion of land out of cereals.

Food Policy

21. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement concerning his priorities with respect to food policy.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Our priority is to ensure that a plentiful supply of wholesome food of sound quality and adequate variety is available to the consumer at competitive prices. To this end we shall continue to encourage the development of an efficient and innovative food and drink industry whilst maintaining a comprehensive range of legislation controlling the safety, quality and labelling of food.

Farm Incomes

22. **Mr. Maclennan** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his latest assessment of the prospects for farm incomes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: It is too early to provide an assessment 1987, but as soon as we have any indication of the position we will make this known.

Common Agricultural Policy

19. **Mr. Marlow** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on Government policy with regard to the repatriation to individual countries of some financial aspects of the common agricultural policy.

Mr. MacGregor: The Government's prime objective is to achieve radical reform of the common agricultural policy which will deal with surpluses and their costs. All our efforts have been directed at bringing this about.

Milk Quota Leasing

24. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on milk quota leasing.

Mr. MacGregor: The Council of Ministers has now formally adopted a regulation allowing the operation of quota leasing. I am very pleased we have succeeded in securing a measure of flexibility that I know is of considerable importance to many dairy farmers.

Outgoers Scheme

25. **Mr. Hunter** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement about the working of the milk producers outgoers scheme.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The response to both the schemes which opened on 10 June has been very limited. This no doubt reflects the profitability of milk production and our flexible transfer arrangements, which enable British farmers who want to reduce their production to dispose of quota relatively easily. As previously announced, the national scheme closed on 16 October, and the community scheme will close at the end of the month.

Milk Marketing Board

26. **Mr. Barry Field** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any representations from the Milk Marketing Board seeking powers to enable it to increase the number of non-elected directors.

Mr. Donald Thompson: No.

Food Aid

27. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will consider repeating the free distribution of dairy products to those in need.

Mr. Gummer: The Commission has proposed to the Council of Ministers a permanent free food scheme to start in 1988, providing for distribution of products held in intervention stores to the most needy. The Council has not yet taken a decision. Meanwhile, I am exploring with charities the scope which there would be for release under the proposed arrangements of butter and beef from intervention stores in the United Kingdom.

Dairy Farmers

28. **Mr. Speller** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will visit north Devon to meet dairy farmers.

Mr. MacGregor: I have no plans at present to do so, but my right hon. Friend the Minister of State met dairy farmers on a visit to the region earlier this month.

Agricultural Land

29. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the progress of his Department's work to improve the objectivity of agricultural land classifications.

Mr. Gummer: My Department is now reaching the final stages of its consultations with the soil survey and land research centre on the improved agricultural land classification system. We plan shortly to consult external practitioners with a view to introducing the revised system early in 1988.

Dairy Industry

30. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what assessment he has made of the implications of the 1987 harvest for the profitability of surburban dairy farmers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: New crop supplies of feed grains should exceed domestic demand again this season, despite the effects of the wet harvest. Support prices are lower than last season and currently ex-farm prices are below the level of a year ago. However, it is too early to say how feed grain price movements over the season as a whole will affect the profitability of dairy farmers, and I am not aware of any data that refer specifically to those farming in the suburbs.

Mr. Latham asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will make a statement on the current problems of milk producers.

Mr. MacGregor: Although operating under the quota regime has posed serious problems for some producers, the dairy industry as a whole can look forward with more confidence following the measures agreed by the Council last December which should bring about a much better relationship between supply and demand. Average dairy farm income in England and Wales increased significantly in real terms in each of the last two years and is expected to increase further during the current year.

Harvest Yield

31. **Mr. McLoughlin** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the yield of the harvest.

Mr. MacGregor: My Department currently estimates the 1987 cereals harvest in the United Kingdom to be 22 million tonnes.

Fish Farming

33. **Mr. Colvin** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he will bring forward regulations for fish farming.

Mr. Gummer: A statutory framework for the regulation of fish farming already exists. This framework involves various controls over the setting up of farms, water abstraction and discharge, and fish movements. The Government intend to add to these controls by extending the requirement for water abstraction licensing by water authorities to fish farms producing fish for the table.

Animal Welfare

14. **Mr. Nicholas Baker** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proposals he has to deal with animal welfare; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: We are continuing to take steps to improve the welfare of farm animals, including codes and regulations on various aspects of welfare.

23. **Mr. Greg Knight** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received this year about the recommendations made by the Farm Animal Welfare Council.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My Department normally consults widely on the recommendations of the Farm Animal Welfare Council. This year I have received representations on the revised sheep code and the council's interim statement on new welfare regulations.

Milk Quotas

Mr. McLoughlin asked the Secretary of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many farms in the United Kingdom have milk quotas of *(a)* over 2 million litres, *(b)* between 750,000 and 1,999,999 litres, *(c)* between 500,000 and 749,999 litres, *(d)* between 200,000 and 299,999 litres, *(e)* between 100,000 and 199,999 litres, and *(f)* less than 100,000 litres.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The allocation of quota by size band in the United Kingdom is shown in the following table. Records are maintained for quota holders on the basis of entire holdings, which may comprise more than one farm.

Size group Litres	*Number of producers*
Under 100,000	10,862
100,000 to 199,999	11,672
200,000 to 299,999	8,637
300,000 to 499,999	9,805
500,000 to 749,999	4,887
750,000 to 1,999,999	2,782
Over 2 million	185

Intervention Stores

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if, pursuant to his answer of 13 July, *Official Report*, column *351*, he will provide a breakdown of the storage and related costs of maintaining European Economic Community food intervention stores.

Mr. Donald Thompson: A breakdown of United Kingdom storage and related costs by intervention commodity is set out. Records are not kept in a form which enables a breakdown by type of cost to be readily extracted.

£'000

	Cereals	*Butter*	*SMP*	*Beef*	*Total*
1983-84	30,573	9,078	3,766	526	48,623
1984-85	30,389	12,391	2,323	12,552	57,655
1985-86	81,366	16,206	880	26,143	124,595
1986-87	79,351	22,614	825	25,842	128,632

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give details by type and quantity of foodstuffs dumped as waste or used as animal feed intervention stores in each of the past five years.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Over the five years 1982 to 1986, 278,612 tonnes of skimmed milk powder were sold out of intervention for manufacture into animal feed. Sales of intervention grain of feed quality totalled 5·5 million tonnes. For the period 1982 to 1985 no butter was sold for animal feed, but 14,081 tonnes were sold in 1986.

Over the five years 1982 to 1986 2,100 tonnes of cereals damaged in store had to be dumped. There was no dumping of intervention beef and destruction of skimmed milk powder and butter over this period involved only extremely small quantities.

Sharks

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many basking sharks were taken from British territorial waters in each of the past five years; which countries took them; for what purposes; what is the estimated population of basking sharks in British waters; and if he will consider a total ban on their being fished.

Mr. Gummer: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Horticultural Marketing Inspectorate

35. **Mr. Jack** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will commission an annual report on the work of the horticultural marketing inspectorate.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I have no plans to commission an annual report on the work of the horticultural marketing inspectorate. Its work is closely monitored within my Department including through the MINIM system. Figures showing the number of inspections and resulting action taken by the Inspectorate are published quarterly by the Commission of the European Communities and can be obtained from its London information office at 8 Storey's Gate.

Sea Defences

Mr. David Porter asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will clarify the new arrangements for local authorities' funding of non-emergency sea defence work; if he will make a statement about sea defences; and if he will make it his policy to treat sea defence as a national responsibility, rather than a coastal authority matter.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 October 1987]: I am currently considering as the hon. Member is aware, the allocation between local authorities of the global capital sum available for this work and the Department will inform local authorities of the decision as soon as possible.

Proposals for coastal works are a long-standing local authority responsibility in view of their considerable local importance. When views were last canvassed on this—in 1985 — the strongly-held view of the authorities concerned remained that this responsibility should be left in local hands. The Government do, of course, make a significant contribution to the funding of capital work through a very high rate of grant, most authorities qualifying for the maximum rate of 70 per cent.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 23 October 1987

ENVIRONMENT

Poll Tax

Mr. Pike asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations he has received regarding the introduction of a poll tax; and if he will indicate the percentage in favour of, and the percentage against, such a change.

Mr. Howard: A summary of responses received by my Department before 31 October last, when the consultation 53period on the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" (Cmnd. 9714) ended, was placed in the Library on 15 December 1986. One thousand two hundred and seventeen responses were received. Though opinions varied, more than twice as many people wanted to abolish domestic rates as wanted to keep them. The community charge received considerably greater support than any other replacement for the rates. We continue to receive representation about specific aspects of our proposals as well as requests for further information.

Training Programmes (London Docklands Development Corporation)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for each training programme in, or related to, the area of the London Docklands Development Corporation, the contribution of that corporation to each, the numbers of persons recruited to and leaving each course, and the numbers obtaining full time employment respectively, each to the latest convenient date.

Mr. Trippier: The best information available to date on training initiatives in docklands to which the London Docklands Development Corporation has directly contributed is as follows:

(a) Docklands New Technology Centre (ITEC)
LDDC has contributed £400,000 over 3 years for premises and equipment. 72 people were trained in 1986, all of whom found jobs.

(b) Delta Youth Training Scheme and Job Club
LDDC has contributed £60,000, helping to expand capacity from 20 to 50 places. Two thirds of trainees have so far found full-time employment.

(c) Stepney Green Furniture Workshop
LDDC has contributed £135,000, helping to increase capacity from 25 to 70 places. Two thirds of trainees have so far found full-time employment.

(d) Bethnal Green Youth Training Centre
LDDC contributed £3,000 in 1986-87 helping to provide seven places. Those assisted have not yet completed their training.

(e) Shadwell Basin Training Project
LDDC contributed £78,000 in 1986-87 to help in the training of outdoor pursuits instructors. The training is still in progress.

(f) Docklands Community Development Project
LDDC contributed £40,000 in 1986-87. The training is still in progress.

(g) Newham Parents' Centre
LDDC has contributed £110,000 over three years. Of the 77 trainees assisted through the project, 13 have found full-time work, 20 are in part time jobs or other training, and 26 are still being trained.

The corporation has also grant-aided a number of voluntary sector projects with a training element; has assisted various relevant institutions to improve facilities; and through Docklands SKILLnet has this year helped support some 1,100 training places with a variety of training providers.

Statistics on the provision for training made by other agencies are not maintained by the corporation.

Storm Damage

Ms. Ruddock asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will reimburse the London borough of Lewisham for costs incurred within his area of responsibility, in meeting the emergencies which resulted from the hurricane which hit London on 16 October.

Mrs. Roe: I refer the hon. Member to the statement on Wednesday 21 October by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Block Grant

Mr. Barry Field asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has carried out further estimates of block grant payable to local authorities for 1987-88.

Mr. Howard: The Secretary of State's previous estimates of local authorities' entitlements to block grant were made in May 1987 following approval of the Rate Support Grant Supplementary Report (England) 1987-88. My right hon. Friend exercised his discretion under section 66(1) of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980, and made further estimates of the amounts of block grant payable on 20 October. He took account of the further information on expenditure or rateable value or both which he had received from 72 authorities on or before 19 October. The authorities concerned have been notified of the new estimates. I expect that revised payments will take effect from 6 November. The total of block grant payable to local authorities is now £8,749 million, £12 million less than the previous amount.

Liverpool (Ministerial Visit)

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on his recent visit to Liverpool.

Mr. Trippier: My right hon. Friend visited Liverpool on 4 August 1987.

In the morning he was given a tour of inner Liverpool, and then had discussions with the former leader of Liverpool city council, Councillor Harry Rimmer, and officials, followed by a press conference.

In the afternoon he toured the Albert dock and held discussions with the chairman and chief officers of Merseyside development corporation.

The Secretary of State then had a meeting with the Archbishop of Liverpool before returning to London after a political engagement.

Rating Reform

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if squash clubs and other sports facilities will

be exempt from the proposals contained in Cmnd. 9714 "Paying for Local Government", and in the subsequent consultation documents issued by his Department.

Mr. Ridley [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 October 1987, c. *820*]: Sports clubs which are charities will continue to be entitled to 50 per cent. relief from non-domestic rates as of right and will be eligible for up to another 50 per cent. at the rating authority's discretion. Other non-profit-making sports clubs will be eligible for 100 per cent. relief at the discretion of the local authority. The cost of mandatory reliefs will be met by the national non-domestic rate pool. The cost of discretionary reliefs will be met 50 per cent. by the pool. Therefore, local authorities should generally be no less inclined to grant reliefs than at present.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he proposes to make earlier rate support grant settlements in order to allow local authorities to take earlier decisions on levels of community charge.

Mr. Ridley [*pursuant to his answer*, 21 October 1987, c. *820*]: Rate support grant will be paid only for years up to and including 1989-90. Thereafter, we propose that revenue support grant should be the main source of Government grant for local services.

DEFENCE

Nuclear Propulsion Reactors

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for Defence what consultations he is having about the disposal of the Royal Navy's discarded nuclear propulsion reactors; with whom he will be discussing the matter before reaching a decision; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: No decisions have yet been taken on the disposal route for the reactor compartments of decommissioned nuclear submarines. The consultation arrangements will depend upon the route proposed. The spent fuel itself will be disposed of in accordance with existing arrangements.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Violence and Sex (Broadcasting)

Mr. Andrew MacKay asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has for strengthening the oversight of the portrayal of violence and sex in broadcasting; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: We propose to establish a new Broadcasting Standards Council, divorced from programme making, which will act as a focus for public concern about the portrayal of violence and sex on all forms of television and radio receivable in the United Kingdom. Responsibility for enforcing programme standards and for responding to complaints will remain with the broadcasting authorities, but the new council will be able to monitor the relevant programme standards and publicise its findings, where necessary, on individual programmes. It will also be able to initiate studies and research on the relevant programme standards. The new council will not be concerned with complaints about unjust treatment and the invasion of privacy, which are the responsibility of the Broadcasting Complaints Commission. The new council will be able to express general views about the portrayal of sex and violence in video works, but will not duplicate the functions of the British Board of Film Classification.

We intend to put the Broadcasting Standards Council on a statutory footing at the earliest opportunity, but to establish it initially in advance of legislation.

The broadcasting authorities and other interested bodies are being consulted. Further details will be announced in the light of those consultations.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Public Expenditure

Mr. William Powell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for the latest years now available, identifiable public expenditure by function in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and the United Kingdom expressed *(a)* in cash terms, *(b)* as a percentage of United Kingdom total identifiable public expenditure, *(c)* as an amount per capita and *(d)* as an amount per capita expressed as a percentage of the United Kingdom amount per capita.

Mr. Major: The term "identifiable expenditure" refers to expenditure that can be identified from official records as having been incurred in a particular country. Total identifiable expenditure accounts for just over 80 per cent. of total public departmental public expenditure.

The remainder, unidentifiable expenditure, includes expenditure on defence, overseas aid and other overseas services which are deemed to have been incurred on behalf of the United Kingdom as a whole. It also includes Government net lending to, and the market and overseas borrowing of, the public corporations (including nationalised industries), due to the difficulty of allocating this finance to expenditure in a particular country.

Tables 1 to 5 show figures of identifiable public expenditure according to main function in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. These are the only available figures comparing public expenditure by function in four countries of the United Kingdom. The analysis covers 1982-83 to 1986-87, the only period for which data are available on a consistent basis.

Table 6 compares, for the latest year, 1986-87, expenditure in the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland programmes with the total identifiable expenditure in the respective countries by function. It shows that identifiable expenditure has a wider coverage than expenditure within the responsibility of the Secretaries of State in the case of Scotland and Wales, and, in the case of Northern Ireland, it has a slightly wider coverage than the Northern Ireland programme in the public expenditure survey. This table also shows unidentifiable expenditure by function for 1986-87.

In some cases expenditure which cannot be separately identified for England, Scotland or Wales can be allocated to Great Britain rather than the United Kingdom; for example, the majority of the financng of expenditure by the nationalised industries can be allocated to Great Britain. In these cases it is appropriate to compare Northern Ireland allocated expenditure with that allocated to Great Britain. Tables 7a and 7b provide this analysis over the five year period.

The extent to which expenditure can be identified may vary from year to year and between countries. The

coverage of particular functions can also vary between countries: for example, in Northern Ireland, expenditure on arts and libraries is contained in the education category.

The tables use the terms and definitions of the last public expenditure White Paper "The Government Expenditure Plans 1987-88 to 1989-90" (Cm. 56) but they incorporate later information.

Table 1a

Identifiable public expenditure 1982-83

£ million

						As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure			
	England	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*	*United Kingdom*	*England*	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*
Agriculture, fisheries, food and forestry	694·7	190·6	78·1	144·1	1,107·5	62·7	17·2	7·1	13·0
Industry, energy, trade and employment	2,770·6	664·2	341·9	363·6	4,140·3	66·9	16·0	8·3	8·8
Arts and libraries	549·6	74·5	32·7	—	656·8	83·7	11·3	5·0	0·0
Roads and transport	4,371·8	536·1	323·0	110·8	5,341·7	81·8	10·0	6·0	2·1
Housing	2,709·6	686·9	125·3	161·9	3,683·7	73·6	18·6	3·4	4·4
Other environmental services	3,299·0	493·2	265·6	147·5	4,205·3	78·4	11·7	6·3	3·5
Law, order and protective services	3,319·1	410·6	171·9	381·2	4,282·8	77·5	9·6	4·0	8·9
Education and science	12,312·0	1,892·7	777·2	535·6	15,517·5	79·3	12·2	5·0	3·5
Health and personal social services	13,865·7	1,913·7	858·8	589·2	17,227·4	80·5	11·1	5·0	3·4
Social security	27,183·0	3,068·1	1,729·4	1,005·0	32,985·5	82·4	9·3	5·2	3·0
Other public services	840·2	196·4	78·5	52·9	1,168·0	71·9	16·8	6·7	4·5
Common services	353·7	30·5	22·4	2·3	408·9	86·5	7·5	5·5	0·6
Planning total	72,269·0	10,157·5	4,804·8	3,494·1	90,725·4	79·7	11·2	5·3	3·9

Table 1b

Identifiable public expenditure 1982-83

£ per head

						As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure per head			
	England	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*	*United Kingdom*	*England*	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*
Agriculture, fisheries, food and forestry	14·8	36·9	27·8	93·7	19·7	75·5	187·5	141·5	476·4
Industry, energy, trade and employment	59·2	128·5	121·8	236·4	73·5	80·5	174·8	165·6	321·5
Arts and libraries	11·7	14·4	11·6	0·0	11·7	100·7	123·6	99·9	0·0
Roads and transport	93·4	103·8	115·1	72·0	94·9	98·5	109·4	121·3	75·9
Housing	57·9	132·9	44·6	105·3	65·4	88·5	203·2	68·2	160·9
Other environmental services	70·5	95·5	94·6	95·9	74·7	94·4	127·8	126·7	128·4
Law, order and protective services	70·9	79·5	61·2	247·9	76·1	93·3	104·5	80·5	325·9
Education and science	263·1	366·3	276·9	348·2	275·6	95·5	132·9	100·5	126·4
Health and personal social services	296·3	370·4	305·9	383·1	306·0	96·8	121·1	100·0	125·2
Social security	580·9	593·8	616·1	653·4	585·8	99·2	101·4	105·2	111·5
Other public services	18·0	38·0	28·0	34·4	20·7	86·6	183·2	134·8	165·8
Common services	7·6	5·9	8·0	1·5	7·3	104·1	81·3	109·9	20·6
Planning total	1,544·4	1,965·8	1,711·7	2,271·8	1,611·3	95·8	122·0	106·2	141·0

Table 2a

Identifiable public expenditure 1983-84

£ million

						As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure			
	England	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*	*United Kingdom*	*England*	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*
Agriculture, fisheries, food and forestry	711·2	201·2	95·8	150·0	1,158·2	61·4	17·4	8·3	13·0
Industry, energy, trade and employment	3,136·1	614·8	327·1	376·0	4,454·0	70·4	13·8	7·3	8·4
Arts and libraries	593·4	75·2	34·6		703·2	84·4	10·7	4·9	0·0
Roads and transport	4,505·8	546·9	376·0	122·5	5,551·2	81·2	9·9	6·8	2·2
Housing	3,154·1	717·0	194·9	193·0	4,259·0	74·1	16·8	4·6	4·5
Other environmental services	3,469·2	525·7	274·9	167·3	4,437·1	78·2	11·8	6·2	3·8
Law, order and protective services	3,631·6	461·2	190·0	400·6	4,683·4	77·5	9·8	4·1	8·6
Education and science	12,973·0	1,973·2	820·0	565·6	16,331·8	79·4	12·1	5·0	3·5

						As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure			
	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Health and personal social services	14,711·2	2,036·2	916·0	634·8	18,298·2	80·4	11·1	5·0	3·5
Social security	29,407·8	3,327·7	1,884·3	1,094·3	35,714·1	82·3	9·3	5·3	3·1
Other public services	1,052·4	234·9	99·7	57·1	1,444·1	72·9	16·3	6·9	4·0
Common services	−147·5	−12·6	0·4	2·0	−157·7	93·5	8·0	−0·3	−1·3
Planning total	77,198·3	10,701·4	5,213·7	3,763·2	96,876·6	79·7	11·0	5·4	3·9

Table 2b

Identifiable public expenditure 1983-4

£ per head

						As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure per head			
	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Agriculture, fisheries, food and forestry	15·2	39·1	34·1	97·2	20·6	73·9	190·1	166·0	472·9
Industry, energy, trade and employment	66·9	119·4	116·5	243·7	79·0	84·7	151·0	147·4	308·3
Arts and libraries	12·7	14·6	12·3	0·0	12·5	101·5	117·0	98·7	0·0
Roads and transport	96·2	106·2	133·9	79·4	98·5	97·6	107·8	135·9	80·6
Housing	67·3	139·2	69·4	125·1	75·6	89·1	184·2	91·8	165·5
Other environmental services	74·1	102·1	97·9	108·4	78·7	94·0	129·6	124·3	137·7
Law, order and protective services	77·5	89·6	67·7	259·6	83·1	93·3	107·7	81·4	312·4
Education and science	276·9	383·1	292·0	366·6	289·8	95·5	132·2	100·8	126·5
Health and personal social services	314·0	395·4	326·2	411·4	324·7	96·7	121·8	100·5	126·7
Social security	627·8	646·2	671·0	709·2	633·8	99·0	101·9	105·9	111·9
Other public services	22·5	45·6	35·5	37·0	25·6	87·7	178·0	138·5	144·4
Common services	−3·1	−2·4	0·1	1·3	−2·8	112·5	87·4	−5·1	−46·3
Planning total	1,647·9	2,077·9	1,856·7	2,438·9	1,719·3	95·8	120·9	108·0	141·9

Table 3a

Identifiable public expenditure 1984-85

£ million

						As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure			
	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Agriculture, fisheries, food and forestry	683·3	230·5	99·6	160·8	1,174·2	58·2	19·6	8·5	13·7
Industry, energy, trade and employment	3,272·2	708·8	348·0	420·6	4,749·6	68·9	14·9	7·3	8·9
Arts and libraries	633·9	81·4	36·1		751·4	84·4	10·8	4·8	0·0
Roads and transport	4,722·2	563·6	328·7	122·3	5,736·8	82·3	9·8	5·7	2·1
Housing	3,264·5	656·3	137·1	211·0	4,268·9	76·5	15·4	3·2	4·9
Other environmental services	3,679·6	533·9	274·2	175·2	4,662·9	78·9	11·4	5·9	3·8
Law, order and protective services	4,118·2	501·4	210·4	431·0	5,261·0	78·3	9·5	4·0	8·2
Education and science	13,472·9	2,024·5	842·5	593·0	16,932·9	79·6	12·0	5·0	3·5
Health and personal social services	15,758·2	2,182·2	986·1	666·9	19,593·4	80·4	11·1	5·0	3·4
Social security	31,867·5	3,601·4	2,049·3	1,182·5	38,700·7	82·3	9·3	5·3	3·1
Other public services	1,169·2	248·3	103·0	60·9	1581·4	73·9	15·7	6·5	3·9
Common services	−82·1	−6·9	6·0	2·6	−80·4	102·1	8·6	−7·5	−3·2
Planning total	82,559·6	11,325·4	5,421·0	4,026·8	103,332·8	79·9	11·0	5·2	3·9

Table 3b

Identifiable public expenditure 1984-85

£ per head

						As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure per head			
	England	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*	*United Kingdom*	*England*	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*
Agriculture, fisheries, food and forestry	14·6	44·8	35·5	103·7	20·8	70·0	215·4	170·6	498·8
Industry, energy, trade and employment	69·7	137·7	124·0	271·4	84·1	82·8	163·7	147·4	322·6
Arts and libraries	13·5	15·8	12·9	0·0	13·3	101·4	118·9	96·6	0·0
Roads and transport	100·6	109·5	117·1	78·9	101·6	99·0	107·8	115·2	77·7
Housing	69·5	127·5	48·8	136·1	75·6	91·9	168·7	64·6	180·0
Other environmental services	78·4	103·8	97·7	113·0	82·6	94·9	125·6	118·3	136·9
Law, order and protective services	87·7	97·4	75·0	278·1	93·2	94·1	104·6	80·4	298·4
Education and science	286·9	393·4	300·1	382·6	299·9	95·7	131·2	100·1	127·6
Health and personal social services	335·6	424·1	351·3	430·3	347·0	96·7	122·2	101·2	124·0
Social security	678·7	699·8	730·1	762·9	685·5	99·0	102·1	106·5	111·3
Other public services	24·9	48·3	36·7	39·3	28·0	88·9	172·3	131·0	140·3
Common services	−1·7	−1·3	2·1	1·7	−1·4	122·8	94·2	−150·1	−117·8
Planning total	1,758·2	2,200·8	1,931·2	2,597·9	1,830·2	96·1	120·2	105·5	141·9

Table 4a

Identifiable public expenditure 1985-86

£ million

						As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure			
	England	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*	*United Kingdom*	*England*	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*
Agriculture, fisheries, food and forestry	689·0	250·6	106·1	155·0	1,200·7	57·4	20·9	8·8	12·9
Industry, energy, trade and employment	3,366·1	778·4	380·2	448·3	4,973·0	67·7	15·7	7·6	9·0
Arts and libraries	660·6	88·5	38·6	—	787·7	83·9	11·2	4·9	0·0
Roads and transport	4,759·6	582·7	340·5	122·2	5,805·0	82·0	10·0	5·9	2·1
Housing	2,866·3	614·7	126·1	227·3	3,834·4	74·8	16·0	3·3	5·9
Other environmental services	3,659·9	544·8	285·9	186·2	4,676·8	78·3	11·6	6·1	4·0
Law, order and protective services	4,176·0	525·5	215·3	470·4	5,387·2	77·5	9·8	4·0	8·7
Education and science	13,997·0	2,071·5	854·6	614·2	17,537·3	79·8	11·8	4·9	3·5
Health and personal social services	16,616·4	2,317·6	1,048·5	699·1	20,681·6	80·3	11·2	5·1	3·4
Social security	34,927·7	3,960·3	2,252·3	1,292·9	42,433·2	82·3	9·3	5·3	3·0
Other public services	1,290·8	255·2	106·9	63·4	1,716·3	75·2	14·9	6·2	3·7
Common services	−100·1	−9·0	3·2	2·3	−103·6	96·6	8·7	−3·1	−2·2
Planning total	86,909·3	11,980·8	5,758·2	4,281·3	108,929·6	79·8	11·0	5·3	3·9

Table 4b

Identifiable public expenditure 1985-86

£ per head

						As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure per head			
	England	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*	*United Kingdom*	*England*	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*
Agriculture, fisheries, food and forestry	14·6	48·8	37·7	99·5	21·2	69·0	230·0	177·9	469·1
Industry, energy, trade and employment	71·4	151·5	135·2	287·7	87·8	81·3	172·5	153·9	327·6
Arts and libraries	14·0	17·2	13·7	0·0	13·9	100·8	123·8	98·7	0·0
Roads and transport	101·0	113·4	121·1	78·4	102·5	98·5	110·6	118·1	76·5
Housing	60·8	119·7	44·8	145·9	67·7	89·8	176·7	66·2	215·4
Other environmental services	77·7	106·1	101·7	119·5	82·6	94·0	128·4	123·1	144·7
Law, order and protective services	88·6	102·3	76·6	301·9	95·1	93·2	107·5	80·5	317·3
Education and science	297·1	403·3	303·9	394·2	309·7	95·9	130·2	98·1	127·3
Health and personal social services	352·7	451·2	372·9	448·7	365·3	96·6	123·5	102·1	122·8
Social security	741·4	770·9	801·0	829·8	749·5	98·9	102·9	106·9	110·7
Other public services	27·4	49·7	38·0	40·7	30·3	90·4	163·9	125·4	134·2
Common services	−2·1	−1·8	1·1	1·5	−1·8	116·1	95·7	−62·2	−80·7
Planning total	1,844·7	3,332·3	2,047·7	2,747·9	1,923·9	95·9	121·2	106·4	142·8

Table 5a

Identifiable public expenditure 1986-87

£ million

						As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure			
	England	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*	*United Kingdom*	*England*	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*
Agriculture, fisheries, food and forestry	675·3	229·3	114·9	170·5	1,190·0	56·7	19·3	9·7	14·3
Industry, energy, trade and employment	3,844·5	912·7	490·5	419·3	5,667·0	67·8	16·1	8·7	7·4
Arts and libraries	755·2	94·8	40·7	—	890·7	84·8	10·6	4·6	0·0
Roads and transport	4,720·8	601·5	349·5	121·4	5,793·2	81·5	10·4	6·0	2·1
Housing	2,558·1	643·4	158·4	237·6	3,597·5	71·1	17·9	4·4	6·6
Other environmental services	3,907·4	593·2	326·4	197·6	5,024·6	77·8	11·8	6·5	3·9
Law, order and protective services	4,662·3	572·4	234·2	520·2	5,989·1	77·8	9·6	3·9	8·7
Education and science	15,227·6	2,250·1	931·6	700·0	19,109·3	79·7	11·8	4·9	3·7
Health and personal social services	17,944·7	2,454·1	1,131·2	761·3	22,291·3	80·5	11·0	5·1	3·4
Social security	37,306·0	4,264·6	2,405·4	1,402·1	45,378·1	82·2	9·4	5·3	3·1
Other public services	1,460·4	285·9	121·0	76·2	1,943·5	75·1	14·7	6·2	3·9
Common services	−81·4	−4·8	1·8	−0·1	−84·5	96·3	5·7	−2·1	0·1
Planning total	92,980·9	12,897·2	6,305·6	4,606·1	116,789·8	79·6	11·0	5·4	3·9

Table 5b

Identifiable public expenditure 1986-87

£ per head

						As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure per head			
	England	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*	*United Kingdom*	*England*	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*
Agriculture, fisheries, food and forestry	14·3	44·8	40·7	108·8	21·0	68·2	213·6	194·3	519·0
Industry, energy, trade and employment	81·4	178·2	173·9	267·6	99·8	81·5	178·5	174·2	268·0
Arts and libraries	16·0	18·5	14·4	0·0	15·7	101·8	118·0	91·9	0·0
Roads and transport	99·9	117·5	123·9	77·5	102·1	97·9	115·1	121·4	75·9
Housing	54·1	125·6	56·2	151·6	63·4	85·4	198·2	88·6	239·2
Other environmental services	82·7	115·8	115·7	126·1	88·5	93·4	130·9	130·7	142·5
Law, order and protective services	98·7	111·8	83·0	332·0	105·5	93·5	105·9	78·7	314·6
Education and science	322·2	439·4	330·2	446·7	336·7	95·7	130·5	98·1	132·7
Health and personal social services	379·7	479·2	401·0	485·8	392·7	96·7	122·0	102·1	123·7
Social security	789·5	832·8	852·7	894·8	799·4	98·8	104·2	106·7	111·9
Other public services	30·9	55·8	42·9	48·6	34·2	90·3	163·1	125·3	142·0
Common services	−1·7	−0·9	0·6	−0·1	−1·5	115·7	63·0	−42·9	4·3
Planning total	1,967·7	2,518·5	2,235·2	2,939·4	2,057·5	95·6	122·4	108·6	142·9

Table 6

Planning total analysed by territorial area 1986-87

£ million

	England	*Scotland (Total)*	*Programme 15*[1]	*Scotland other*	*Wales (Total)*	*Programme 16*[1]	*Wales other*	*Northern Ireland (Total)*	*Programme 17*[1]	*Northern Ireland other*	*United Kingdom*	*Non Identified*	*Total*
Defence												18,217·5	18,217·5
Overseas services												3,056·2	3,056·2
Agriculture, fisheries, food and forestry	675·3	229·3	179·2	50·1	114·9	94·6	20·3	170·5	168·9	1·6	1,190·0	1,161·3	2,351·3
Industry, energy, trade and employment	3,844·5	912·7	377·6	535·1	490·5	174·0	316·5	419·3	416·8	2·5	5,667·0	1,594·5	7,261·5
Arts and libraries	755·2	94·8	81·1	13·7	40·7	33·1	7·6				890·7	41·5	932·2
Roads and transport	4,720·8	601·5	599·7	1·8	349·5	285·1	64·4	121·4	121·4		5,793·2	−28·5	5,764·7
Housing	2,558·1	643·4	643·4		158·4	158·4		237·6	237·6		3,597·5	96·4	3,693·9
Other environmental services	3,907·4	593·2	586·3	6·9	326·4	319·3	7·1	197·6	197·6		5,024·6	173·3	5,197·9
Law, order and protective services	4,662·3	572·4	357·7	14·7	234·2	0·0	234·2	520·2	501·9	18·3	5,989·1	1,031·0	7,020·1
Education and science	15,227·6	2,250·1	1,560·3	289·8	931·6	780·3	151·3	700·0	698·5	1·5	19,109·3	81·5	19,190·8
Health and personal social services	17,944·7	2,454·1	2,454·1		1,131·2	1,131·2		761·3	761·3		22,291·3	26·7	22,318·0
Social security	37,306·0	4,264·6	0·0	4,264·6	2,405·4	0·0	2,405·4	1,402·1	1,390·6	11·5	45,378·1	432·2	45,810·3
Other public services	1,460·4	285·9	110·5	175·4	121·0	37·0	84·0	76·2	45·7	30·5	1,943·5	447·9	2,391·4
Common services	−81·4	−4·8	0·0	−4·8	1·8	0·0	1·8	−0·1	0·0	−0·1	−84·5	1,301·7	1,217·2

	England	Scotland (Total)	Programme 15[1]	Scotland other	Wales (Total)	Programme 16[1]	Wales other	Northern Ireland (Total)	Programme 17[1]	Northern Ireland other	United Kingdom	Non Identified	Total
Public expenditure on programmes	92,980·9	12,897·2	7,549·9	5,347·3	6,305·6	3,013·0	3,292·6	4,606·1	4,540·3	65·8	116,789·8	27,633·2	144,423·0
Privatisation proceeds												−4,403·0	−4,403·0
Planning total	92,980·9	12,897·2	7,549·9	5,347·3	6,305·6	3,013·0	3,292·6	4,606·1	4,540·3	65·8	116,789·8	23,230·2	140,020·0

[1] Programmes 15, 16 and 17 relate to the Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland programmes covered by the respective chapters of Volume II of the 1987 public expenditure White Paper (Cm. 56).

Table 7a

Identifiable Public Expenditure 1982-83 to 1986-87[1]

£ million

	Great Britain	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom identified	As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure: Great Britain	Northern Ireland
1982-83	90,175·0	3,595·8	93,770·8	96·2	3·8
1983-84	96,145·3	3,853·8	99,999·1	96·1	3·9
1984-85	104,110·6	4,137·1	108,247·7	96·2	3·8
1985-86	107,441·3	4,391·8	111,833·1	96·1	3·9
1986-87	115,032·2	4,701·3	119,733·5	96·1	3·9

[1] Financing of nationalised industries expenditure can be allocated between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and has therefore been included in this table.

Table 7b

Identifiable Public Expenditure 1982-83 to 1986-87[1]

£ per head

	Great Britain	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom identified	As a percentage of United Kingdom indentifiable expenditure per head: Great Britain	Northern Ireland
1982-83	1,646·5	2,338·0	1,665·3	98·9	140·4
1983-84	1,754·3	2,497·6	1,774·7	98·9	140·7
1984-85	1,896·1	2,669·1	1,917·3	98·9	139·2
1985-86	1,951·3	2,818·9	1,975·2	98·8	142·7
1986-87	2,084·1	3,000·2	2,109·4	98·8	142·2

[1] Financing of nationalised industries expenditure can be allocated between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and has therefore been included in this table.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Education Reform

Mr. Allen asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what provision he proposes to make in the national curriculum for educating young people on their rights to vote; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Government's proposals for a national curriculum do not include political education as a foundation subject. It may however be taught through the medium of foundation subjects such as history, or among the non-foundation subjects. We are aware of the need to use the national curriculum to help to encourage a sense of social responsibility among young people; this will be drawn to the attention of the working groups which also will advise my right hon. Friend on attainment targets and programmes of study for relevant subjects.

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received concerning the proposed legislation on charges for certain aspects of state school education.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Government's recent consultation document on charging for school activities was issued in the light of a number of requests from individuals, local authorities and the local authority associations for clarification of the law. The document was issued on 2 October, requesting comments by 30 November. Fewer than 50 responses have so far been received. Copies of the consultation document are available in the Library of the House.

Mr. Andrew Smith asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many responses he has received to each of the consultative documents on changes to the education system; what are the figures for each local education authority area; and what are the numbers and percentages of responses broadly for and against each of the proposals.

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend to the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) on 22 October. The information on the numbers of responses from each local education authority area could only be provided at disproportionate cost. The Department is still analysing the many thoughtful responses received to each of the consultation papers; many respondents have commented in some detail and responses could not readily be classified as requested.

Community Education

Mr. Matthew Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his policy for community education.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend will continue to support community education by encouraging and publicising good and successful practice. We believe that progress in this area is best achieved by local responses to local needs.

Schools (Annual Report)

Mr. Ken Hargreaves asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the outcome of his request to Her Majesty's senior chief inspector of schools to consider a new style of annual report based on the Inspectorate's observations over a full academic year.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Her Majesty's senior chief inspector of schools has set in train preparatory work aimed at developing a new style of annual report which will offer a view of the nature, quality and effectiveness of education in schools and colleges over a whole academic year rather than just one term. The inspectorate's programme for the academic year 1987-88 has of necessity been planned and launched without the benefit of this work. But I have asked the SCI to consider whether it would be possible to publish in 1989 a transitional report covering that academic year. The first full report in the new style will relate to the academic year 1988-89 and I hope to be able to publish it early in 1990.

PRIME MINISTER

DHSS Files (Access)

Miss Mowlam asked the Prime Minister if she will refer to the Security Commission allegations of *(a)* an improper computer link between the security services and Department of Health and Social Security offices in Newcastle and *(b)* improper access by security service officers to national insurance files.

The Prime Minister: No.

Equal Opportunities

Ms. Richardson asked the Prime Minister whether she will require the Civil Service to register with the Equality Exchange established by the Equal Opportunities Commission as an information network for employees, advisors and trainers interested in promoting equal opportunities for women in employment.

The Prime Minister: The equal opportunities division of the Office of the Minister for the Civil Service has registered with the Equality Exchange and circulates useful information to departmental equal opportunity officers. It is a matter for individual Departments to decide whether to register separately with the Equality Exchange.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Staff Training

Mrs. Gillian Shephard asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to improve the training of social services staff.

Mr. Newton: I am glad to be able to announce that we intend to introduce a special training support programme for social services management and staff working with elderly people. This will cover both residential and domiciliary care, including home help organisers. The aim is to improve the quality of care, and the cost-effectiveness of these services.

The programme will involve expenditure of £10 million in 1988-89, of which 70 per cent. will be met by a specific Government grant. Detailed arrangements will be discussed with the local authority associations.

This new measure complements a wide range of other initiatives already under way to improve training in the field of child abuse and the training of social services management generally. We look forward to receiving shortly proposals from the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work for reform in arrangements for the training of all staff in the social services, including the qualifying training for social workers. We are grateful for the considerable work the council has put into preparing its proposals, to which the Government will give careful consideration.

AIDS

Mrs. Gillian Shephard asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what funds are being made available to meet the cost of services for people with AIDS or HIV infection; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: In addition to the overall increase of 8·8 per cent. in 1987-88 in allocations to regional health authorities for hospital and community health services as a whole, including needs arising from AIDS and HIV infection, the Government have already made additional allocations totalling £6 million to the three regional health authorities on whom demands arising from AIDS have fallen disproportionately. These are North-West Thames, North-East Thames and South-East Thames. The first of these alone had well over half of all AIDS patients in England at the end of September; the three together accounted for over four out of every five.

We have been keeping the position under careful review, and have decided to make available to these authorities a further £6·5 million in 1987-88 in recognition of the special extra demands placed upon them. North-West Thames will receive £3·9 million; North-East Thames £1·6 million; and South-East Thames £1 million.

We also propose to make available a further £1·1 million in 1987-88 to the Public Health Laboratory Service to meet extra costs arising from HIV testing and monitoring the spread of infection, and a further £200,000 for associated work at the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control.

Benefits

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has received advice from the Social Security Advisory Committee on the operation of regulations governing unemployment benefit payments to those regularly engaged in seasonal work; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: No, but I understand that the Committee will shortly complete its consideration of the operation of the seasonal workers' regulations, and will then report to my right hon. Friend.

Child Care

Ms. Abbott asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many lone parents currently benefit from the provision in the supplementary benefit regulations which allows child care expenses reasonably incurred to be deducted from the calculation of earnings; and if he will supply this information in respect of *(a)* London north region, *(b)* London south region, and *(c)* England and Wales as a whole.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that information about the number of lone parents who currently have child care expenses deducted from the calculation of their earnings is not available.

Ms. Abbott asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what representation he has received regarding the effects on working lone parents of the provision in the draft income support regulations which does not deduct necessary child care expenses when calculating net earnings; (2) if he will amend the draft income support regulations so as to allow expenses incurred in connection with the care of another member of the family to be deducted from gross earnings where they are reasonably incurred in order to undertake paid work; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: We have received a small number of representations on this subject. The reforms of the income-related benefits in April 1988 will produce arrangements that are easier to understand and to operate and put the basic rules for the three income-related benefits—income support, family credit and housing benefit — on a common basis. The treatment of work expenses in these three benefits will be in line with those that currently apply in family income supplement and housing benefit, the main income-related benefits for people in work. At the same time we intend to increase to £15 the amount of part-time earnings a lone parent can have without reducing entitlement to income support. We expect many to gain from the simpler rules and higher disregard of earnings. Those who might otherwise receive less help at the point of change will have the level of state support maintained under transitional arrangements.

Disabled People

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to take action on matters within his area of reponsibility raised in the report of the Spastics Society, "Disabled People and the 1987 General Election," a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: I have studied the report with interest but the specific issues it raises are primarily the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department.

Cervical Smear Testing (Liverpool)

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he received the report of the Liverpool health authority following its investigation into errors in cervical smear testing; what action he is taking to assist those who were the victims of these errors; what plans he has to ensure they will not be repeated in Liverpool or elsewhere; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The report of the independent review into problems arising from cervical cytology screening at The Women's hospital, Liverpool, was received by Liverpool health authority on 22 September 1987. The Department received a copy of the report at the same time.

Liverpool health authority spared no effort in tracing the women affected and provided the staff, equipment and facilities necessary for their care. Special clinics were set up to enable these women to be seen as quickly as possible. Arrangements for counselling women who need further treatment is continuing.

The Department is currently preparing fresh guidance for the National Health Service on cervical cancer screening which includes advice on quality control procedures in cervical cytology laboratories and also fail-safe mechanisms for the follow-up of abnormal smears. The hon. Member will wish to know that the findings of the Liverpool report are being taken into account. The guidance, in the form of a health circular, will become available before the end of the year.

Liverpool Health Authority

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he last met the chairman of the Liverpool health authority; what subjects were discussed; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I met the Chairman of Liverpool health authority, Mr. James Fitzpatrick, in the House on 7 July this year and discussed at length problems arising from cervical cytology screening at The Women's hospital, Liverpool, between March 1983 and December 1985.

Mr. Fitzpatrick was chairman of the independent review into the incident and his review team is to be commended for producing such a thorough report. Its findings are being taken into account in the circular on cervical cancer screening to be published shortly.

Schizophrenia

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what resources his Department makes available to assist schizophrenia sufferers; what representations he has received about the funding of self-help groups and day centres for schizophrenia sufferers; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: A substantial proportion of the £1 billion we will spend this year on mental illness services will be used for the care and treatment of people with schizophrenia.

In addition we expect to spend about £1 million in 1987-88 on continuing research into the care and treatment of mentally ill people, much of which will be relevant to sufferers from schizophrenia; in 1986 we decided also to set aside an extra £0·5 million for six new research studies in mental illness, all including people with schizophrenia and one devoted exclusively to this group; these studies are now getting under way. Earlier the Department funded three action projects specifically aimed at achieving better co-ordination of after-care for sufferers from schizophrenia; the results are now becoming available and will be used to improve co-ordination nationally.

In recent years we have received a few enquiries from voluntary organisations about the availability of central funding for local services provided for sufferers from

schizophrenia. We have advised that under section 65 of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968 applications for funding for local schemes should be made to district health authorities or local authority social service departments. We make a contribution under section 64 of this Act by grant-aiding the central administrative costs of the National Schizophrenia Fellowship (current grant £91,000 per annum) and the Northern Schizophrenia Fellowship and the North West Fellowship (current grants £20,000 per annum each).

Hospital Services

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received expressing concern over the financial position of district health authorities; what plans he has to ensure that such authorities do not reduce essential hospital services; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: We have received representations from a number of health authorities and hon. Members on health authorities' budgets.

Health authorities are required to operate within their budgets. This entails balancing the cost of increasing activity against other calls on them. It is for health authorities to decide on suitable measures which will enable them to sustain activity with their budgets, without detriment to essential services.

Voluntary Advice Services (Retraining)

Mr. Dykes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will reconsider his refusal to fund a short-term training team to meet the retraining requirements of the voluntary advice services which have arisen as a result of the changes in the social security system.

Mr. Portillo: The legislative framework within which the Department operates makes no provision for financial assistance to voluntary advice agencies. There are no plans to introduce legislation to change this.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Iran

Mr. Wareing asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will give the value of the United Kingdom's exports to, and imports from, Iran in each year since 1979; and if he will give a breakdown of the value of goods and services entering into trade between the two countries during the same period.

Mr. Atkins: The Overseas Trade Statistics records visible trade only. The information available is in the following tables.

United Kingdom Trade with Iran 1979-1986

	£ million
1979	
Total imports	242·8
(of which)	
Petroleum, petroleum products and related materials	209·0
Textile yarn, fabrics made-up articles NES and related products	12·0
Vegetables and fruit	7·9
Total exports:	231·8
(of which)	
Road vehicles	51·5
Power generating machinery and equipment	24·5
General industrial machinery and equipment NES and machine parts NES	21·3
1980	
Total imports:	107·2
(of which)	
Petroleum, petroleum products and related materials	85·7
Textile yarn, Fabrics made-up articles NES and related products	11·3
Metalliferous ores and metal scrap	1·9
Total exports:	392·7
(of which)	
Road vehicles	114·1
Power generating machinery and equipment	49·8
Medicinal and pharmaceutical products	34·2
1981	
Total imports:	154·4
(of which)	
Petroleum, petroleum products and related materials	146·5
Textile yarn, fabrics made-up articles NES and related products	2·3
Vegetables and fruit	1·7
Total exports:	402·8
(of which)	
Road vehicles	118·4
Power generating machinery and equipment	53·1
Medicinal and pharmaceutical products	46·5
1982	
Total imports	225·9
(of which)	
Petroleum, petroleum products and related materials	213·6
Vegetables and fruit	2·8
Power generating machinery and equipment	2·8
Total exports	333·6
(of which)	
Road vehicles	87·9
Power generating machinery and equipment	51·1
Medicinal and pharmaceutical products	23·9
1983	
Total imports:	100·6
(of which)	
Petroleum, petroleum products and related materials	82·4
Power generating machinery and equipment	8·2

	£ million
Textile yarn, fabrics, made-up articles NES and related products	2·2
Total exports:	630·7
(of which)	
Road vehicles	152·3
Power generating machinery and equipment	117·2
General industrial machinery and equipment NES and machine parts NES	56·8
1984	
Total imports:	368·6
(of which)	
Petroleum, petroleum products and related materials	323·3
Power generating machinery and equipment	26·1
Textile yarn, fabrics, made-up articles NES and related products	4·5
Total exports:	703·4
(of which)	
Road vehicles	120·4
Power generating machinery and equipment	115·5
Other transport equipment	65·8
1985	
Total imports:	63·3
(of which)	
Petroleum, petroleum products and related materials	26·3
Power generating machinery and equipment	24·0
Textile yarn, fabrics, made-up articles NES and related products	3·7
Total exports:	525·6
(of which)	
Road vehicles	98·8
Power generating machinery and equipment	62·8
General industrial machinery and equipment NES and machine parts NES	51·6
1986	
Total imports:	100·3
(of which)	
Petroleum, petroleum products and related materials	52·8
Power generating machinery and equipment	26·4
Textile yarn, fabrics, made-up articles NES and related products	7·9
Total exports:	399·4
(of which)	
Power generating machinery and equipment	72·1
General industrial machinery and equipment NES and machine parts NES	64·2
Road vehicles	50·2

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics 1986 figures provisional.

Cross-border Mergers

Mr. Wareing asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the proposals of the European Commission in respect of cross-border mergers.

Mr. Atkins: The European Commission put forward a draft Regulation on the control of concentrations between undertakings (the "Merger Control" Regulation) in 1973. Various amendments have since been made to the text, on which explanatory memoranda have been deposited in the House. The European Commission have asked the Council to reach a decision by the end of November on whether or not to continue discussions on the draft regulation.

US Trade

Mr. Wareing asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has made to the Government of the United States of America in respect of the likely effects upon British trade of the Common Trade Bill currently before the United States Congress; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: The Government are working closely with the European Commission and our Community partners to ensure that the US Administration and Congress are fully aware of the Community's serious concern that a number of provisions in the draft trade legislation currently before the Congress would have a damaging effect on trade, and to emphasise that the Community will act if necessary to safeguard its rights under the GATT.

Llanelli Radiators

Mr. Roger King asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what progress there has been on Rover Group's plans to dispose of Llanelli Radiators; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: Austin Rover Group Ltd. announced on 15 October that it had concluded an agreement for a management led employee buy-out of its Llanelli Radiator operation. This follows a decision announced last November (*Official Report*, 21 November 1986, columns 379-380) to seek a purchaser for the plant.

Following the completion of the sale of Llanelli Radiators the Government will accept no further responsibility for ensuring the obligations of the company are met.

Whale Products

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster which fully manufactured goods currently imported into the United Kingdom contain whale products.

Mr. Alan Clark [*pursuant to his reply*, 22 October 1987]: Fully manufactured goods are not separately identified in the Overseas Trade Statistics by reference to their containing whale products.

"Spycatcher"

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has regarding the number of copies of the book "Spycatcher" imported into the United Kingdom to date.

Mr. Alan Clark [*pursuant to his reply*, 22 October 1987]: Figures are not available on the import of individual books.

TRANSPORT

A3 (Hindhead)

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley asked the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to make an environmental impact assessment of his proposals for the A3 at Hindhead.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: An environmental appraisal was undertaken prior to public consultation. The need for a more detailed assessment and an ecological study will be kept under review.

British Railways Board

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will list *(a)* the members of the British Railways Board, *(b)* the criteria for selection of members, *(c)* the relevant qualifications of present members, *(d)* the number of Trades Union Congress-nominated places and *(e)* how many trades Union Congress-nominated places are held by women.

Mr. David Mitchell: The names of the 13 current members of the British Railways Board are set out in its annual report and accounts for 1986-87, a copy of which was laid before the House. The criteria for appointment are set out in section 1(3) of the Transport Act 1962. The five full-time executive members, including the chairman, are all career railwaymen. The eight part-time non-executive members, of whom two are women, come from a wide variety of business and commercial backgrounds.

Appointments are made by my right hon. Friend after consultation with the Chairman. No organisation or individual has the right to nominate candidates, though suggestions are always considered carefully.

Stansted Airport

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals he has to encourage the greater use of Stansted airport by charter flight operators.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: My right hon. Friend has no specific proposals in mind; the 1985 White Paper "Airports Policy" (Cmnd 9542) described how the development of Stansted airport would be needed to meet the estimated demand on the London airports system. The rate of growth of Stansted and which airlines will use it are primarily matters for the civil aviation market itself to determine.

Settle-Carlisle Line

Mr. Pike asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he now expects to announce his decision on the future of the Settle—Carlisle line.

Mr. David Mitchell: Shortly.

Railways

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will tabulate such information as is available to him as to the revenue turnover of each of the national railway systems of the Member States of the European Economic Community in either pound sterling equivalents, or ecu, together with the related sum derived from all public funds and its percentage of costs together with the equivalent figures for capital investment.

Mr. David Mitchell: The most recent information available to my Department on the revenues, costs and public subsidy levels of the European Community's railway systems is contained in the Eighth Commission report on the transposed annual accounts of railway undertakings for 1984, (COM(87) 311 final), a copy of which is in the Library of the House. There are substantial variations between countries in accounting systems and in the arrangements for financial support, and the figures contained in the report only provide a broad comparison. We have no equivalent figures for capital investment.

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will tabulate for each financial year from 1982-83 the total revenue support for the British Railways Board in both actual sums and at 1987 prices.

Mr. David Mitchell: The figures for Government support for the British Railways Board taken from the final claims for grant in compensation for the public service obligation under EEC Regulation 1191/69 and section 3 of the Railways Act 1974 and for level crossings grant under EC Regulation 1192/69 from 1982 to 1986-87 are given below; 1984-85 is a 15-month period reflecting a change in the British Railways Board financial year. The figures for 1985-86 and 1986-87 remain provisional; final claims have not yet been agreed. The following table also includes payments by the passenger transport executives under section 20(4) of the Transport Act 1968, as reported in the British Railways Board annual report and accounts.

	Cash £ *million*	*1987-88 prices* £ *million*
1982		
PSO Grant	819·7	1,036·9
Level Crossings Grant	18·6	23·5
PTE Payments	69·9	88·4
1983		
PSO Grant	853·6	1,028·2
Level Crossings Grant	19·4	23·4
PTE Payments	77·8	93·7
1984-85		
PSO Grant	1,065·9	1,227·4
Level Crossings Grant	23·0	26·5
PTE Payments	103·2	118·8
1985-86		
PSO Grant	820·0	882·6
Level Crossings Grant	19·7	21·2
PTE Payments	76·8	82·7
1986-87		
PSO Grant	713·9	746·0
Level Crossings Grant	18·3	19·1
PTE Payments	72·5	75·8

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate is available to him of the reduction in rail fares required to bring about a switch of passenger traffic of 2, 5 and 10 per cent., respectively, from road to rail; and what estimate he has of the respective increases required in Exchequer support for British Rail.

Mr. David Mitchell: There are in general no reliable estimates available of changes of this magnitude. The effect would vary widely from area to area depending on rail market share and other factors.

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment has been *(a)* made by his Department and *(b)* submitted to his Department by British Rail as part of the Channel tunnel construction programme of the cost of improvements to the London-to-Dover main line needed to permit a 150 m.p.h. maximum speed over its straight sections; and if he will make it his policy to authorise the necessary expenditure.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have asked the British Railways Board to carry out by next June a study of the best way of improving capacity and service quality, including speed,

on the route between London and the Channel tunnel for both domestic and international traffic. The study will include estimates of cost.

We expect the board's investments in connection with the Channel tunnel to meet the usual criteria for investment in their commercial sectors.

Buses

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport what restrictions or conditions he or London Regional Transport places on the disposal of garage accommodation transferred to contractors to London Regional Transport or to subsidiaries of London Buses Limited.

Mr. David Mitchell: LRT retain their property interests until they are no longer required for operational purposes when they are disposed of by LRT at best market value.

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport what form of primary or secondary legislation he expects to place before Parliament in order to implement his proposals for the deregulation of stage carriage services within the area of London Regional Transport.

Mr. David Mitchell: The licensing of local bus services in London can be abolished by Order subject to affirmative resolution under section 46 of the Transport Act 1985. I am considering whether any additional measures might be desirable.

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport what additional tests, or other examinations, including those of health, are applied to holders of public service vehicle licences by *(a)* London Buses Ltd., *(b)* subsidiaries of London Buses Ltd. and *(c)* other contractors to London Regional Transport, respectively; and if he will make a statement concerning his policy for maintaining standards of bus driving in the London area.

Mr. David Mitchell: In order to qualify for a PSV driver's licence applicants must demonstrate their competence by passing a stringent driving test and must satisfy the statutorily independent traffic commissioners as to their physical and mental fitness and good character before a licence is issued. This is a standard requirement for all operators. Other recruitment standards and tests are matters for bus operators themselves.

London City Airport

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will request the Civil Aviation Authority to postpone authorising commercial flights to and from London City airport until initial safety exercises have taken place involving airport safety teams and local fire, ambulance and police services.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Civil aviation safety regulation is wholly the responsibility of the Civil Aviation Authority. I understand from the authority that arrangements at London City airport satisfy the authority's requirements for the grant of an aerodrome licence for public transport.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Salmon

Mr. Onslow asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what reports he has received from water authorities in England and Wales about the incidence of salmon poaching since the passing of the Salmon Act 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: We are in regular contact with the water authorities on a range of issues concerning the enforcement of salmon and freshwater fisheries law. The most-up-to-date statistics available on poaching are for 1986, during which year water authorities mounted a total of 781 prosecutions for offences concerning salmon and migratory trout. When the new measures introduced by the Salmon Act 1986 have been in force long enough to permit an assessment of their impact, it is our intention to invite the Salmon Advisory Committee to examine their effectiveness.

SCOTLAND

Inshore Fishing

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland, *Official Report*, 21 July, column *127*, he will state what recent discussions there have been between Her Majesty's Government and officials of the European Commission on the Inshore Fishing (Prohibition of Carriage of Monofilament Gill Nets) (Scotland) Order 1986.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: There have been no such discussions on this matter since August 1986.

Forestry

Sir Hector Monro asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he is now in a position to respond to the Nature Conservancy Council's report "Nature Conservation and Afforestation in Britain".

Mr. Rifkind: I have sent the following letter, setting out the Government's views, to the NCC's chairman, Mr. William Wilkinson.

"Dear Mr. Wilkinson,

1. I am writing to let you have the Government's considered response to the recommendations contained in your report "Nature Conservation and Afforestation in Britain".

2. We are indebted to you for producing this comprehensive, clear and helpful view of the interaction between forestry and nature conservation. We particularly welcome the importance attached throughout the report to the need for balance in addressing the issues raised. Forestry and nature conservation have important roles to play in the development of the countryside and it is the Government's policy that forestry should take place in ways that are compatible with other land use interests, including nature conservation.

Forestry policy

3. Your report has come at a time when rural areas in Britain are facing important changes as a result of the need to tackle agricultural surpluses within the EEC. Along with other reports on the future of the countryside, it was a useful contribution in our consideration of policies for the rural economy and environment which resulted in the publication "Farming and Rural Enterprise". Our conclusions on the positive role that forestry has to play as an alternative use for agricultural land were outlined in the document "Farming UK" which formed part of that publication. We propose an expansion of the traditional forestry programme—to 33,000 hectares a year — with due regard being paid to

environmental considerations. We shall also be encouraging the planting of an increased proportion of trees on low ground of better quality.

4. I hope you will welcome this new emphasis which should offer opportunities for landscape and habitat diversity, including a greater use of broadleaves. We also expect broadleaved woodlands to feature strongly in our new scheme to encourage the development of farm woodlands.

5. In the context of encouraging farmers to plant trees, your report suggested that a review of the present tax incentives for forestry should be carried out. We have taken careful note of what you have to say in this regard. Since your views were published, however, the Public Accounts Committee has reported on a review by the Comptroller and Auditor General on the objectives and achievements of the Forestry Commission which also touches on the question of fiscal incentives for private forestry. We shall be responding to the Committee's report very shortly. I am sure you will understand, therefore, that I cannot comment on the point about forestry taxation at this stage.

SSSIs

6. We welcome and support the continuing co-operation between the Forestry Commission and the Nature Conservancy Council on the management of the large number of SSSIs on Commission land, as evidenced by the Declaration of Intent signed by both bodies in 1986. We share your concern that SSSIs should, within the terms of the 1981 Act, be protected from damaging operations. I am pleased to note from your report that only one SSSI has in fact been damaged by forestry, and that, I understand, was accidental. I do not believe it would be reasonable, therefore, to put an absolute ban on planting within SSSIs. Unlike the case of NNRs, nature conservation is not the primary land use within SSSIs and the right course is to consider each case on its merits. I very much hope that there will continue to be the closest co-operation between your Council and the Forestry Commission to resolve cases where a balance had to be struck between nature conservation and other interests, with cases being referred to Ministers where this does not prove to be possible.

Controlling afforestation

7. As regards methods for ensuring that forestry developments take place in harmony with nature conservation, we do of course have well-established guidelines and mechanisms in place. There is already a strong commitment to conservation on the part of the Forestry Commission—both in its own operations and in its handling of private sector proposals—and it has sought over the years to adopt a balanced and flexible approach in considering each new issue as it arises. The Commission is required to consult, as appropriate, with the Agriculture Departments, local planning authorities and other statutory authorities on applications for grant-aid or felling licences and on draft plans of operations containing planting and felling proposals. The Nature Conservancy Council is consulted whenever a proposal falls wholly or partly within a National Nature Reserve, an SSSI or an area formally proposed for such designation to ensure that conservation factors are fully considered. Special arrangements for consultations on forestry proposals within Environmentally Sensitive Areas have also been introduced after discussion between the Forestry Commission and your Council. To take a recent example, because of the importance which your Council attaches to the flow country of Caithness and Sutherland, the Forestry Commission has further extended its formal consultations with you to embrace all applications for grant aid in these two districts to allow time for the nature conservation interest to be defined more clearly, and I am now giving careful consideration to the proposals you have made in that regard in your report 'Birds, Bogs and Forestry'. Local authorities are also encouraged to consult widely, for example with voluntary conservation groups.

8. Under the terms of a Ministerial Direction, where objections are raised which cannot be resolved, the application has to be referred to the Commission's Regional Advisory Committee, which makes further efforts to find a solution acceptable to all the parties; as you know, ways of widening the representation of non-forestry interest on these Committees and of making them more publicly accountable have been the subject of a review by the Forestry Commission, and I hope that an announcement can be made reasonably soon. It is also important to bear in mind that where an authority consulted under these procedures maintains its objections to an application beyond the Regional Advisory Committee stage, the Forestry Commission may over-ride them only with the endorsement of Ministers. There are therefore important safeguards for the environment built into the present procedures.

Planting licences

9. Your report proposes the introduction of a system of planting licences to strengthen the existing controls which operate through the forestry grant schemes. As I have said above, however, we consider that the present procedures have generally proved to be an effective form of control. That the private sector supports this voluntary approach is evidenced by its remarkably good record over the years; there have been very few instances where the consultation procedures have been side-stepped and the grant forgone. The Government therefore considers that there is insufficient evidence to suggest a need for the existing arrangements to be supplemented by statutory controls such as planting licensing, although this will be kept under review.

The wider countryside

10. There has been an important shift of emphasis on the part of the Forestry Commission in recent years in response to changing perceptions on environmental matters, including nature conservation, and in the light of advice it has received from the Nature Conservation Council and other statutory authorities such as the Countryside Commissions. The statutory remit of the Forestry Commissioners has been extended to include a duty to endeavour to achieve a reasonable balance between timber production and the environment. That is not to suggest that the pursuit of this new duty will necessarily avoid conflicts of interest in every instance, but the Government believes that such conflicts will be reduced as the Forestry Commission's policies and practices develop. In this connection, I was pleased to learn that discussions have begun between the Forestry Commission and yourselves aimed at the provision of constructive advice on nature conservation issues in the wider countryside. Such a move can only be to the benefit of rural development and, with goodwill and a realistic approach on both sides, should lead to a better mutual understanding.

Return on investment in new planting

11. Your report placed some stress on the need to determine criteria for estimating an acceptable return on timber production, both for the Forestry Commission's own planting and as a qualifying threshold for grant-aid. It also suggested that the grant-aid function should be used as a regulator to achieve a reasonable balance between afforestation and other land uses in any county or district. Taking this last point first, the Government takes the view that the best method of achieving an acceptable balance between forestry and conservation, and of taking account of other legitimate land-use interests, is through the present consultation system rather than by means of regulation. The current conditions for grant-aid involve the careful examination of applications to ensure, as far as practicable, that proposals are sensibly drawn on nature conservation, land use and landscape ground before the consultation process is begun. The Forestry Commission is also required to satisfy itself that the proposed planting scheme is silviculturally suited to the site and will produce a utilisable crop of timber. Market forces also infuence the choice of species, and the main requirement for the wood-processing industry is for softwood. There is no evidence that setting a financial rate of return would in general help to safeguard nature conservation interests. It could, for example, militate against the use of broadleaves in many circumstances since these produce a lower return on all but the most fertile lowland sites. The Government would not therefore wish to stipulate acceptable rates of return which are, and should remain, matters to be determined by those investing in forestry.

12. As far as the Forestry Commission's own planting is concerned, a financial return on investment is calculated for each site taking into account such factors as soil and site characteristics and the species to be planted. However, this is only part of the evaluation process. Other factors have also to be considered, including employment, effective integration with agriculture, environmental safeguards and, where appropriate, opportunities for public access and recreation.

Increased planting of better agricultural land

13. Your report recommends a closer inter-relationship between forestry and agriculture, and the planting of enclosed agricultural land. This is in line with the Government's report "Farming UK", which confirmed our commitment to increasing the proportion of planting which takes place on low ground of better quality than hitherto. In addition, the consultation paper on the Farm Woodland Scheme proposed measures which should increase planting on agricultral land. In recent years, most planting has taken place in Scotland, and last year I announced changes in the criteria for the approval of agricultural land for forestry which are already providing new opportunities for planting, including, in certain circumstances, planting on enclosed agricultural land. There are few agricultural restrictions on new planting in England and Wales. The Forestry Commission will also keep in mind the need to encourage planting on better quality land in their regular reviews of grant rates.

Design and management of forestry schemes

14. I note that the report is deeply critical of "blanket" afforestation; however, we believe that there can be scope for large-scale afforestation, provided that a balance is reached with other relevant land use interests. New planting—on whatever scale—should continue to reflect the economic, landscape and nature conservation needs of the locality, and we agree entirely with you that appropriate design and management practices should be adopted in all forestry schemes. Applicants for grant aid are required to provide sufficient information in the draft plan of operations, which forms part of the application, to determine whether a reasonable balance can be achieved with other land use interests. This draft plan is sent to the appropriate statutory authorities for comment under mutually agreed arrangements, and those authorities are encouraged to give copies to, and seek views from, local interests including voluntary conservation bodies. Because the plan of operations prepared under the present system should take account of conservation factors where appropriate, we do not feel it is necessary to adopt your suggestion for a separate conservation plan.

15. We are certainly in total agreement when it comes to the need to develop and adopt silvicultural practices which minimise the adverse impacts of forestry on the environment. I know that the Forestry Commission has devoted considerable effort to this over the years. For example, the techniques of ploughing have been developed to minimise soil erosion; planting well back from stream-sides has also been promoted as good practice for some time, as has the avoidance of fertiliser run-off and the minimum use of pesticides.

Increasing the nature conservation value of forests

16. The Government fully endorses the suggestion that the Forestry Commission should continue its efforts to maximise benefits for wildlife within existing forests. To this end conservation plans have been drawn up for all Commission forests with the help and assistance of a wide range of voluntary and statutory conservation organisations, including the Nature Conservancy Council. The recommendation in your report for establishing experimental conservation areas could be useful in both a research and a demonstration sense, although the Forestry Commission intends to apply good conservation practice to all its forests.

17. While changes in attitude and approach towards conservation will be reflected in new planting where measures are considered from the inception of a scheme, because of the long-term nature of the industry it will take some time for dramatic changes to be seen in existing forests. Opportunities for diversification and modification will occur, however, when felling commences, and advantage can be taken at the time of subsequent restocking to introduce positive conservation measures.

Research

18. I am pleased to record that the research activities recommended in the report are being covered by the Forestry Commission's wildlife conservation research studies. I am also glad to learn that joint programmes of research between the Commission and the Nature Conservancy Council have been started and that opportunities will be sought to do more. Your Council's membership of the Forestry Research Co-ordination Committee, which we established in 1982, gives you the opportunity to comment on the Commission's research programmes, to the mutual benefit of both bodies. We commend such co-operation and look to its continuing development.

Training

19. The Government fully endorses the suggestion that opportunities should be taken for forestry staff in the public and private sectors to receive training on management for nature conservation. I understand that the Forestry Commission has already run courses with help and advice from the Nature Conservancy Council.

Conclusion

20. May I conclude by expressing once again the Government's gratitude for the helpful suggestions in your report. These have provided us with a timely and important contribution to the debate on the role of forestry in the countryside. It is appropriate that I should have directed my last remarks to the subject of training since this is of crucial importance if we are to continue to build upon the progress already made in protecting our natural heritage. I know that you have this question of education and the promotion of a more positive attitude to nature conservation very much in mind, and I would like to assure you that the Government supports most warmly all constructive attempts to achieve this very desirable objective."

Electricity

Mr. Bill Walker asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the external financing limit for the South of Scotland electricity board in the current financial year.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend proposes to make the following change to the external financing limit of the South of Scotland Electricity Board in 1987-88 :

	£million
Previous limit	84
Revised limit	125
Change	41

The increase in the limit reflects the board's requirement for additional borrowing to cover higher than expected nuclear costs falling within the current year.

EMPLOYMENT

Job Training Scheme

Mr. Grocott asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list, by area, the numbers of additional staff recruited by the Manpower Services Commission in order to administer the jobs training scheme.

Mr. Cope: No additional staff were recruited by the Manpower Services Commission to administer the new job training scheme.

New Towns

Mr. Grocott asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the levels of unemployment in each of the new town development corporation areas in *(a)* 1970, *(b)* 1975, *(c)* 1980 and *(d)* the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Lee: Following is the available information. Unemployment statistics for these areas are derived from the ward-based system and are available only since June 1983. The table therefore shows for June 1983 and the

latest date for which figures are available, the numbers of unemployed claimants in the local authority wards which most closely correspond to new town development corporation areas. The comparison is affected by the change in the compilation of the unemployment statistics in March 1986.

New town development corporation areas	*Unemployed claimants 9 June 1983*	*Unemployed claimants 10 September 1987*
Milton Keynes	6,841	5,750
Telford	9,413	8,055
Aycliffe and Peterlee	12,761	12,386
Cwmbran	3,022	2,865
Peterborough	7,918	6,888
Washington	4,333	4,266

Industrial Tribunals

Mr. Grocott asked the Secretary of State for Employment what was the average remuneration of panel members of industrial tribunals in *(a)* 1977, *(b)* 1982 and *(c)* the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Nicholls: Lay members of industrial tribunals are paid on a sessional basis and their remuneration reflects the number of sessions that they sit. Members are expected to sit once every three weeks. The information on average payments is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. The fees per session paid to members were £20 in 1977, £43 in 1987 and £67 for the year ending 31 March 1987.

Mr. Grocott asked the Secretary of State for Employment what were the salaries paid to *(a)* the permanent chairman and *(b)* the part-time chairmen of industrial tribunals in (i) 1977, (ii) 1982 and (iii) the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Nicholls: Regional chairmen of industrial tribunals were paid a salary of £12,500 in 1977, £22,750 in 1982 and £41,500 as at 31 March 1987. The comparable figures for full-time chairmen of industrial tribunals were £11,750, £20,750 and £31,850 respectively, excluding London weighting. Part-time chairmen were paid fees of £45 per session day in 1977, £94 in 1982 and £145 in 1987, excluding London weighting.

Mr. Grocott asked the Secretary of State for Employment what was the total amount of compensation paid to claimants by industrial tribunals in *(a)* 1977, *(b)* 1982 and *(c)* the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Nicholls: Figures for 1977 and 1982 are not available. The total amount of compensation awarded in unfair dismissal, sex and race discrimination and equal opportunity cases for the 12 months ending 31 March 1987 was £5,125,573.

Mr. Grocott asked the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of successful claimants in industrial tribunals were reinstated to their jobs in *(a)* 1977, *(b)* 1982 and *(c)* the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Nicholls: The proportion of successful applicants in unfair dismissal cases who were reinstated or re-engaged was 4·5 per cent. in 1977, 3·8 per cent. in 1982 and 4·5 per cent. in the 12 months ending 31 March 1987.

Mr. Grocott asked the Secretary of State for Employment what was the average amount of compensation paid to successful claimants in industrial tribunals in *(a)* 1977, *(b)* 1982 and *(c)* the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Nicholls: The median award in unfair dismissal cases was £350 in 1977, £1,201 in 1982 and £1,805 for the 12 months ending 31 March 1987.

Mr. Grocott asked the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of applicants to industrial tribunals had their cases upheld in *(a)* 1977, *(b)* 1982 and *(c)* the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Nicholls: Of those claiming unfair dismissal the figures were 30·8 per cent. in 1977, 30·7 per cent. in 1982 and 33·7 per cent. for the year ending 31 March 1987. For all jurisdictions for the period ending 31 March 1987 the figure was 40·7 per cent. Figures for all jurisdictions are not available for 1977 and 1982.

Mr. Grocott asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many cases were heard by industrial tribunals in *(a)* 1977, *(b)* 1982 and *(c)* the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Nicholls: 18,962 in 1977, 16,602 in 1982 and 13,124 for the 12 months ending 31 March 1987.

Mr. Grocott asked the Secretary of State for Employment what was the total cost of administering *(a)* the industrial tribunals and *(b)* the employment appeal tribunal in (i) 1977, (ii) 1982 and (iii) the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Nicholls: £4,541,000 and £184,000 respectively for the 12 months ending 31 March 1977; £8,830,000 and £452,000 for the 12 months ending 31 March 1982; and £12,913,658 and £723,069 for the 12 months ending 31 March 1987. The 1977 and 1982 figures exclude accommodation and associated services which were borne by the Property Services Agency. In the case of the Employment Appeal Tribunal the figures also exclude judicial salaries which are borne by the Lord Chancellor's Department.

Equal Opportunities

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is *(a)* the proportion of working time allocated to his departmental equal opportunities officer for equal opportunities duties, *(b)* the other duties carried out by the departmental equal opportunities officer, *(c)* the proportion, and the amount of the departmental budget allocated to equal opportunities work, *(d)* the number of occasions when the departmental equal opportunities officer meets equal opportunities officers from other Government Departments each year, *(e)* the guidelines issued to departmental training officers and equal opportunities officers to promote the use of section 47 of the Sex Discrimination Act and *(f)* what action has been taken to facilitate job share, part-time working and parental leave.

Mr. Nicholls: The information is as follows:

(a) 20 per cent. (but the five sectors within the DE Group also have equal opportunities officers); *(b)* personnel policy, including recruitment, promotion, management development and terms and conditions of

employment; *(c)* the information is not available because it cannot be separated from personnel and training costs; *(d)* about four times a year at meetings run by the Office of the Minister for the Civil Service; *(e)* general advice is given in our personnel handbook. Demand for single sex training is met by Civil Service College courses and DE HQ workshops; *(f)* a policy agreed with the Trade Unions to increase opportunities for part-time work, including job-sharing, has been widely publicised and implemented successfully. Applications for special leave for childcare, maternity etc. are dealt with sympathetically and quickly.

Restart

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many persons nationally and in each region, have been selected for interview under the restart programme in each month since the programme started, and cumulatively up to the latest date; and of these how many had their benefit stopped; how many were placed in a job; how many were placed in a training scheme or programme; and what percentage each of these represents of the total number selected for interview.

Mr. Fowler: I will reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Tourism

Mr. Onslow asked the Secretary of State for Employment what support from public funds is received by the British Tourist Authority and the regional tourist boards; and what plans he had to review this.

Mr. Nicholls: Support from public funds in the current financial year is as follows:

— Grant-in-Aid to the British Tourist Authority £21·4 million.

— Grant-in-Aid to the English Tourist Board £23·3 million including £12·0 million for the scheme of assistance ot tourism projects operated under Section 4 of the Development of Tourism Act 1969.

Subventions to the English regional tourist boards by the English tourist board from its grant-in-aid will amount to £2·7 million. The board will make further funds available to the regiona! tourist boards for specific marketing projects. The regional tourist boards also receive funding from local authorities.

Government funding for the British tourist authority and the English tourist board is reviewed annually as part of the public expenditure survey. Allocations for 1988-89 are currently being determined as part of this review.

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

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SCOPE OF THE INDEX, ARRANGEMENT AND ABBREVIATIONS

This index is derived from the House of Commons Library's Parliamentary On-Line Information System (POLIS), and the subject terms used are based on those used in POLIS. There are often changes in column numbering, etc, between the daily part or weekly Hansard (which simply collects together the daily parts without revision) and the bound volume. The index for the bound volume is revised to take account of these changes.

Scope and arrangement of the Index

Oral and Written Parliamentary Questions are indexed under subject headings and the names of Members asking and Ministers replying to them. Questions are not listed under the names of Departments replying. Departmental listings can be arrived at indirectly by looking under the names of the Minister(s) of that Department. There are, however, the headings 'Northern Ireland', 'Scotland', and 'Wales' under which one can find not only most Questions answered by the Northern Ireland Office, Scottish Office, Welsh Office but also Questions about these areas of the United Kingdom which are answered by other Departments. Ministerial statements are indexed under subject headings, under 'Ministerial statements' and the names of Ministers making them and Members speaking on them. General debates are indexed under broad subject headings and under the names of all Members and Ministers taking part. Debates on legislation (Bills, Orders, Regulations etc.) are indexed under the name of the Bill, Statutory Instrument etc, under subject headings and under the names of those taking part.

Rulings and Statements by Mr Speaker and his deputies are brought together under the heading Speakers rulings and statements.

Other contributions by Mr Speaker and his deputies appear under the heading Speaker.

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The date of each item except Parliamentary Questions is inserted immediately before the reference.

Members' names are given in the form by which they prefer to be known and are printed in bold italics. Under their names, entries are arranged under one of the two headings *Debates etc* (to include interventions on statements, points of order and so on) or *Questions*.

Abbreviations

Bills 1R = first reading, 2R = second reading, Money res = money resolution, Com = Committee stage, Rep = Report stage, 3R = third reading, amendt/amendts = amendment/amendments, * = matter taken formally, without debate.

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